# The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

## Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in Diversity)

by

GIFT MASENGWE

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in the subject

**SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF H WOOD

(June 2020)

**Table of Contents**

Lastly, I want to dedicate this study to my whole family for being an encouragement to me. May you take steps of success from this?

**Publications on some of the material in this study**

*Before study was undertaken*

Masengwe, G., Machingura, F. & Magwidi, E. 2012. 'An Excavation on church governance: The question of autonomy in the light of the disempowered African church converts in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe'. *Journal of Research in Peace, Gender and Development* 2(9), pp. 185-194

*During the study period*

Masengwe, G., Chimhanda, F.H. and Hove, R. 2018. 'Women, marginality and the Bible: Sexism in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe', pp. 278-289. BIAS 22: *Bible in Africa Studies.* Bramberg University Press

Masengwe, G. & Chimhanda, FH. 2019. 'Towards authentic transformation in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe'. *HTS Theological Studies,* Vol. 75, Iss. No. 1, Art. a4776, pp. 1-11

Masengwe, G. & Chimhanda, F.H. 2020. 'Postmodernism, identity and mission continuity in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe', *Verbum et Ecclesia,* Vol. 40, Iss. No. 1, Art. a1906, pp. 1-10

*Pending Submissions*

Masengwe, G. (forthcoming). 'From idealism to realism: The journey of the church at the crossroads towards a common heritage'. *Alternation* 17, 1/2 (reviewed – 2019) pp. 1-11

Masengwe, G. and Wood, H. 'Mission and ministry through the Ladies Circle in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe'. *HTS,*, pp. 1-18

**Declaration**

Name: **Gift Masengwe**

Student number: **58527494**

Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy in Systematic Theology**

Thesis Topic: **The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe:**

**Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in Diversity)**

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I have committed myself to avoid plagiarism on every level of my research and have fully cited, according to the Harvard Method, every source that I used, including books, articles, internet sources and images.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____ **Pretoria , South Africa** _____
PLACE

_____          _____**15 June 2020**_____
SIGNATURE: Gift Masengwe                                DATE

**Certificate of the editor**



SA**WRITERS'**COLLEGE
ONLINE COURSES FOR A CAREER IN WRITING

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

**WILLEM OLIVER**

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

**THE PROOFREADING AND COPY-EDITING COURSE**

COURSE TUTOR:
**DI SMITH**

COLLEGE DIRECTOR:
**NICHOLA MEYER**

CERTIFICATE
SAWC 6240

DATE: 26/07/2016
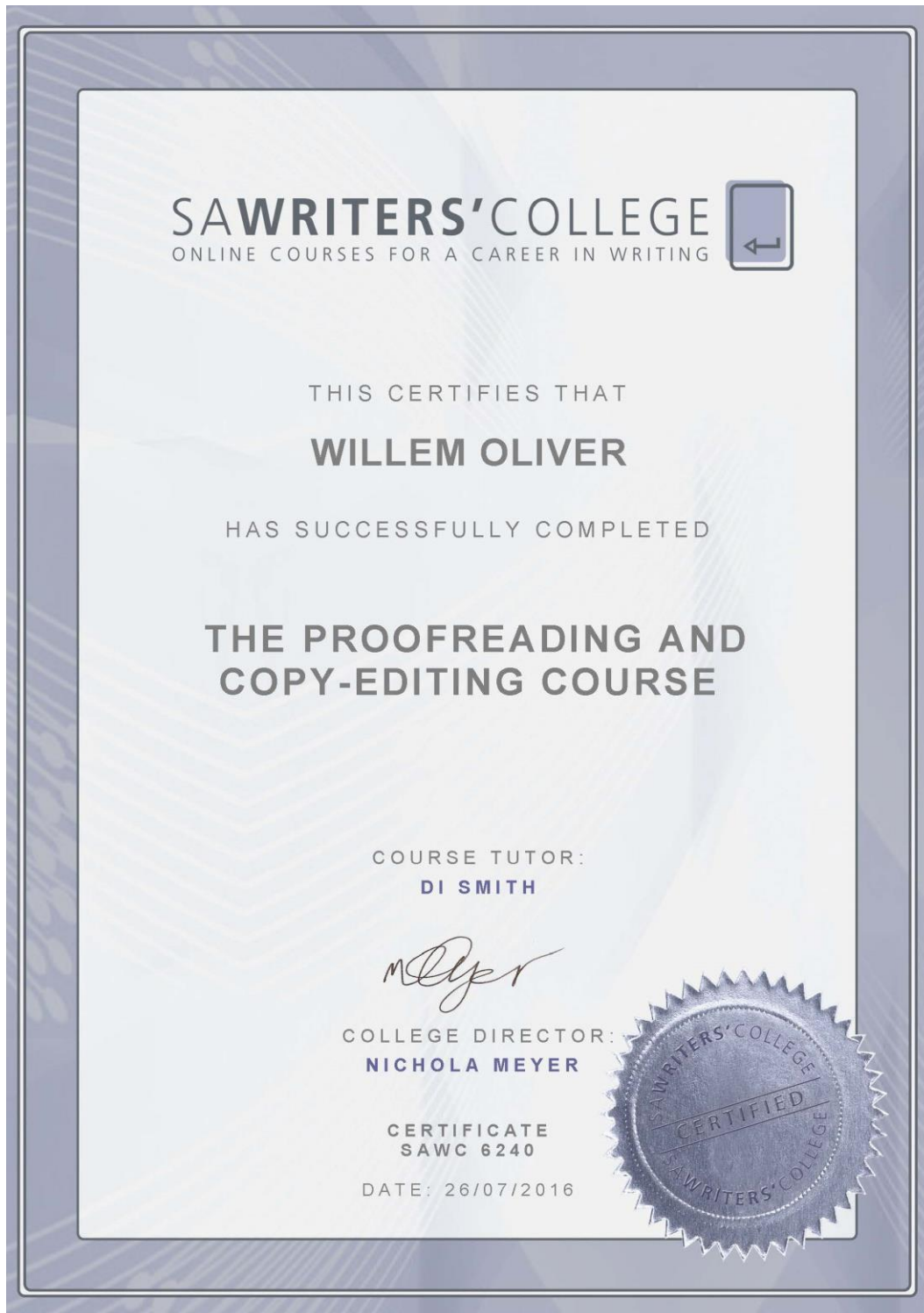
**Release Form**

**University of South Africa (UNISA)**

**Name of author**:

Gift Masengwe

**Title of Thesis**:

The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe: Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in Diversity)

**Programme**:

Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Theology

**Paper grant**:

Permission is hereby granted to the University of South Africa (UNISA) Library to reproduce single copies of this paper and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific researches only. This author does not reserve other publication rights and the project nor may extensive extracts from it be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

*Masengwe*

**Gift Masengwe**

**2020**

**Approval Form**

**University of South Africa (UNISA)**

The undersigned certify that she has read and recommended to the University of South Africa (UNISA) for acceptance, this thesis entitled *The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe: Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in Diversity)* submitted by Gift Masengwe, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Theology.

**Prof H. Wood**.........................................................

Supervisor

Date: 2020

## Abstract

The study of the Church of Christ's 'Identity- and Mission-Continuity' in the Zimbabwean context explores how the Christian faith should be interpreted and contextualised in Africa. The Church of Christ in Zimbabe (COCZ) is a Christian movement claiming to be representative of the ethos of the Church that was founded by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentcost. The thesis raises critical questions of Christian identity and transformation in missionary founded churches like the COCZ in an attempt to contribute towards a locally based study of the Church. Consciousness to being a Church founded by Jesus Christ has implications for Christian unity (oneness) and ecumenism in the COCZ, and its wider Christian networks[1]. Use of its theological tenets, which are indeed congruent with its projected identity, to explore its history when it came to Zimbabwe in relationship to its founding charism helped because of scarcity of literature on the history of Christian denominations in Zimbabwe.

This thesis has followed four objectives that are related to the four stages of experiences by the Church Jesus Christ founded, namely, the (1) early Church, (2) reformation evangelism, (3) missionary enterprise and, (4) contemporary (African) expressions of the faith. This study has investigated the origin and reasons for the formation of the Church in the midst of others; and why its missionaries chose Zimbabwe where there were other denominations. Local experiences of the Church after the departure of white missionaries motivated this study with questions on how the process of inculturating the gospel in the COCZ raised, especially the tension between continuity and discontinuity, linking and delinking, similarity and dissimilarity as well as diversity and diference. Creative synthesis on what Jesus intended; what missionaries brought; and what the God of history is doing in the contemporary life and efforts of the Church were implied and/or explicated.

Using a two-pronged approach to the study, the thesis has, first, unearthed (primary) documents like minutes from church board meetings by Europeans (with misionary thinking that developed from these origins), to contextual (secondary) documents (on how local theologians in the context have engaged the different Christian doctrines in the Zimbabwean context). Secondly, an empirical method was used to interview and distribute questionnaires to a number of individuals, inclusive of those who were in the COCZ leadership and ordinary members. Data collection tools were semi-structured, giving respondents freedom to express themselves and/or their views on what the COCZ was doing and what they believe must be done. Data from interviews and questionnaires were correlated with views expressed in the written sources. The data was interpreted heuristically, in order to give light to new knowledge that was being formed in the process. As an interpretive tool, hermeneutics (the phenomenological approach using *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* - for verbatim transcription) was made key in looking into the context, culture and religion of the COCZ.

The thesis attempted to create a dialogue by relating identity, communal ontology and epistemology to the empirical study findings, literature and the methodology. Ecology and gender were some of the indispensable aspects of theology, crucial for human survival, harmony and peace that were discussed because they were neglected in the COCZ. The thesis also revisted differences and similitudes found in the gospel in relationship to the intended and unintended

---

[1] Unity and oneness expressed in John 17 ["*Et Unum Sint*" – That they may be one], emphasise the sociality of the Godhood through the doctrine of *perichoresis*, which is unity of the Godhead in the economy (our) of salvation.

cultural contributions of the Ndebele and Shona so far, with the purpose of repositioning the COCZ within its own transformative framework. This helps the Church with a strategy of how to model its theology in an African context and how to learn from its past with the view to transform itself for the 21st century Zimbabwe.

The study is not exhaustive on the nature, history and mission of the COCZ, and many avenues like hermeneutics, church polity, public theology, conflict studies and church doctrine can be carried out using the COCZ as a case study. In all, the study has laid a foundation for the contextualization, evangelization, inculturation and incarnation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the COCZ in a postmodernist society.

**Key Terms**

Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, inculturation, aggiornamento, incarnation, Africanisation, evangelization, African Cultural hermeneutics Approach, Restoration Movement, Christian Identity, Christian Mission, Diversity, Protestantism, post-modernism

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ACHA | (an/the) African Cultural Hermeneutic Approach |
| ATR/C | African Traditional Religion (and Culture) |
| CAM | Central Africa Mission |
| CBACC | Colenbrander Avenue Church of Christ |
| COC | Church of Christ (American or New Zealand versions) |
| COCs | Churches of Christ |
| COCZ | Church of Christ in Zimbabwe |
| ECM | Emerging Church Movement |
| GRDC | Gweru Church by the Gweru Rural District Council |
| NAOS | National Administrative Operational Structure |
| NC | National Council |
| NEC | National executive committee |
| NRMs | New Religious Movements |
| RC | Regional Council |
| RCC | Roman Catholic Church |
| RE | Reformation Evangelicalism |
| RM | Restoration Movement |
| RT | Restoration Theology |
| SGA | Second Great Awakening |
| STT | Social Transformation Theory |
| TT | Transformation (Incarnational) Theology |
| UCMS | United Christian Missionary Society |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNISA | University of South Africa |
| USA | United States of America |
| WC | Western Christianity |
| ZCC | Zimbabwe Council of Churches |

**Abbreviations of Biblical books used in this Thesis**

All the references to the Bible refer to the New International Version or are personal translations.

| OT Book | Abbreviation | NT Book | Abbreviation |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Genesis** | Gn | **Matthew** | Mt |
| **Exodus** | Ex | **Mark** | Mk |
| **1 Samuel** | 1 Sa | **Luke** | Lk |
| **1 Kings** | 1 Ki | **John** | Jn |
| **Psalm** | Ps | **Acts** | Ac |
| **Proverbs** | Pr | **Romans** | Rm |
| **Ecclesiastes** | Eccl | **1 Corinthians** | 1 Cor |
| **Isaiah** | Is | **2 Corinthians** | 2 Cor |
| **Jeremiah** | Jer | **Galatians** | Ga |
| **Ezekiel** | Ez | **Ephesians** | Eph |
|  |  | **Philippians** | Php |
|  |  | **Colossians** | Col |
|  |  | **1 Thessalonians** | 1 Th |
|  |  | **1 Timothy** | 1 Tim |
|  |  | **2 Timothy** | 2 Tim |
|  |  | **Hebrews** | Heb |
|  |  | **Revelation** | Re |

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1. Introduction

The first chapter positions the thesis into major themes and the manner of procedures taken. These include background information, the research problem, aims and objectives, delineation (limitations and delimitations), rationale (justification), methods and methodology, a preliminary study of literature, defining key concepts and the thesis structure. The chapter demonstrates the need for research and identifies the gap in knowledge in both the statement of the problem and the study of literature.

## 1.1 Background Information

The study examines the meaning of the establishment called 'Church' in view of what was established before the body broke in, among others, the eastern orthodox and western catholic parts (1054 CE), Roman Catholics and Protestants (1517) and Protestants and Pentecostals at Azusa Street (1807). Thus, the idea of continuity and discontinuity with what Christ came to establish is controversial as many Churches continue to be called 'Church of Christ', but the question is about how this particular faith-confession called 'Church of Christ' (in Zimbabwe) is similar and different from the Church that Jesus Christ has established (Mt 18:18). The early Church was seen as united and ecumenical, and represented closely what Christ wanted to establish. This is supported by an early 20th-century Roman Catholic theologian, Alfred Loisy (dead 1940). Loisy was excommunicated for subversively formulating and publicising that 'Jesus [Christ] announced the Kingdom of God – what came then was the Church [which is found nowhere]' (Loisy 1929:153). This is because Jesus Christ upheld the unity of the Kingdom of God and in fact he prayed for its unity and oneness (Catholic *Et Unum Sint – Jn 17*). The idea of uniting the Church after the Protestant Reformation by the Churches of the Restoration Movement (RM) is here contrasted by the continuous splintering of the RM family or group of Churches inclusive of the Church of Christ (in Zimbabwe). The questions are: Why is the Church continuing to splinter?, What are they searching for?, Why do Churches continue to splinter, because a closer look at their internal structures indicates that there are more similarities rather than differences, and what

divides them is minute compared to what connects them? For this reason, there is a need to explore why it is necessary to carry out this study.

### 1.1.1 Practical Need for the Study

This Chapter explores the identity and mission of the COCZ from approximately four entry (access) points, namely (1.) the founding of the Church in Jesus Christ and the history of Christianity until the eve of reformation; (2.) new foundations in the Protestant reformation, Restoration Movement and missionary expansion into New Zealand and Australia; (3.) the missionary mandate of New Zealand, United States of America and Australia into Zimbabwe; and (4.) the Zimbabwean Church of Christ mandate into contemporary Zimbabwe and beyond.

> ➢ *Entry points*

Firstly, the Church of Christ believes that it (Church of Christ) was founded by Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost. Thus it involves the sharing in the mission of God (mis*sio Dei) t*o the whole world (ad *gentes),* in and through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Spirit of God. Christians understand that human beings were created in the image of God (*imago Dei*), but sin crept into the world through Adam and Eve and tarnished the divine image in the life of human beings. Humanity was created with creation dignity, as it was created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). This identity was recovered and restored by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ came to restore the *imago Dei/Christi* in the life of human beings. Thus, identity was provided in terms of the creation and baptismal categories, which are the *imago Dei* and *imago Christi.* The Church of Christ was established at Pentecost and has already existed for more than 2,000 years. Traditions have been developed and changes have taken place through variegation in the world, which is a useful treasure for the heritage of the Church of Christ. The Church tradition attests to the experience of the Church that Jesus Christ pronounced, and there are seven ecumenical Church councils that took place before the Church entered the Reformation, followed by the splintering that the Restoration Movement (RM) attempted to stop. Divisions in the Church prompt us to evaluate if the Church of Christ carries the tenets of the Church Jesus Christ prayed for (Jn 17), which was formed at Pentecost (Ac 2).

Secondly, the COCZ, as well as the RM, emerged from new foundations in the USA. This revival began in the 1830s with the SGA. Four major diverse denominations emerged: The Brethren, the Apostolic Churches, the Disciples/Churches of Christ/Christian Churches and the Seventh Day Adventists. In their diversity, all four these movements had two common tenets: A fervent attempt to restore the New Testament Church and the Second Coming of Christ (Fiedler 1995:98). The revivals produced differing concepts. The Brethren concluded that the original Church could not be restored, but believers could represent the original Church through biblical simplicity. The Disciples adhered to strictly restoring congregational principles. The Apostolic Churches appointed apostles to replace Jesus Christ before he returned. The Disciples were influenced by the Brethren, especially on faith principles and financial support, with the emphasis on lay ministry. For this reason, the COCZ, probably with a Calvinistic influence, bases its identity and mission on the normativity of scripture in the Church (Shaw 1996:129; Olbricht 1995). The restorationist revivals therefore led to protestant missionary work based on the centrality of Christ's death for human salvation, the need to be born again and reaching out to the world before the second coming. For this reason reason, President Jonathan Edwards stated: 'We cannot reasonably think otherwise than that the beginning of the great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in [the United States of] America' (Edwards 1930:128). In other words, the Church of Christ expanded into other countries of the world such as New Zealandd and Australia where they grew roots and raised resources to carry out isionary work in other countries.

Thirdly, the Church of Christ that went into other countries such as New Zealand and Australia grew roots there and raised resources to do missionary work in developing nations like Zimbabwe. They began with missionary work in developing countries like Africa and South America. The recipient communities, however, acquired cultural aspects of the sending countries, making the approaches and the accommodation of local cultures different (Savage 1983). While some of the cultural aspects that the local communities in Africa adopted were not necessarily bad, they undermined the possibility of local cultural resources and institutions to grow. It can be surmised that missionaries (from a variety of denominations) did their best to accommodate local resources: The use of the name *Mwari* from the Njelele, Matonjeni *Mwari* cult, is testimony to this.

Fourthly and finally, the COCZ is attended by the Shona-Nguni people, who are black African Bantu people. The Bantu value human life and community. The Bantu value human life and community. The natural world and the environment are useful for communal and individual vitality. The *Unhu/Ubuntu* (communal ontology and epistemology) philosophy's agenda is for the attainment of full humanity. The Church among the Bantu is therefore expected to help believers to attain full humanity through the institution. Full humanity is attained when one's self identity is affirmed. This identity can be explored in terms of contextualisation, Africanisation and inculturation, and in particular, through incarnation. For them, incarnation is a creative dialogue of *Unhu/Ubuntu* and the gospel. This aspect does not fully exist in most of the mainline protestant denominations such as the COCZ.

*1.1.1.1 The Church of Christ in Contemporary Zimbabwe*

A lack of contextualisation, Africanisation and inculturation has affected the COCZ's relevance and effectiveness at the onset of the new millennium. The government opened a religious space by accepting African Traditional Religions and Culture (ATRC) to be taught in public schools from the 1990s, which ended the dominance of the missionary religious instruction. The spiritual landscape, however, continued to change, with an accelerated religious intrusion of Pentecostalism in the early 2000s, which opened up more religious space, which was later enshrined in the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution. The Zimbabwe 2016 International Religious Freedom Report (2016) states:

> The constitution [referring here to the 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution Chapter 4, Part 2, Sub-section 60, Article1-4, 'Freedom of Conscience'] prohibits religious discrimination and provides for freedom of religion, including the freedom to practice, propagate, and give expression to one's religion, in public or in private and alone or with others…In October several religious and civil society groups organized and hosted the Second Regional Interfaith Dialogue in Harare which focused on the importance of dialogue in fostering inclusivity and diversity for religious groups.

This has necessitated the emergence and growth of new religious movements (NRMs), mostly neo-Pentecostal Churches. NRMs have brought in a new kind of diversity that has affected continuity and discontinuity in most missionary Churches, which, in this study, is believed to have affected the COCZ's identity and mission. The missionary Church no longer has the monopoly of space they used to have in the past, as they are opposed by more vibrant competitors who are licensed

by law to proselytise the indigenous population. The missionaries have therefore created problems for the COCZ.

*1.1.1.2 Challenges the Church of Christ was Left to Face*
The missionary Church has left the COCZ with a faith that had three major challenges, namely that (1.) the COCZ is found in particular regions of the country and not others; (2.) it depends on foreign funding and has no local initiatives to raise resources; and (3.) the adoption of a new set of laws has has not eased lack of evangelism drives.

Firstly, the COCZ was located in specific regions of the country as was most missionary Churches but was unfortunately not prepared (through nationalisation) to become significant in the post-independence era. Pentecostal Churches appeared after Zimbabwe attained independence from colonial rule in 1980 but, with propensity for identity and mission, were more relevant and successful compared to the COCZ. The COCZ was run and guided by foreign missionaries, some of whom had become nationals. Western support only came to Zimbabwe as long as the missionaries continued to lead the Church. When the government stopped renewing permits of missionaries operating in the country, such support became scarcer and scarcer. In the COCZ, missionaries continued to lead and control the Church until most of them have left the country. Even then, missionaries who stayed behind continued to use African proxies to colour wash the constellation of missionary projects as require by governent yet missionaries ran all the activities from behind. This has weakened the Church who was in the process of integrating itself into the developing theological and religious landscape. The Church also failed to integrate itself into the developing global economic environment. This failure made the Church unable to be economically competitive to run its own local programmes, and ecumenically visible to meaningfully contribute to national, regional and international concerns.

Secondly, the economic challenge seems paramount and relates to mission success and identity. The COCZ's mission and identity were defined, controlled and implemented by foreign mission boards in the USA and New Zealand who had never set foot on African soil. This translates into superficial Christians (Masengwe, Machingura & Magwidi 2012). Yet, only a Church that is

controlled and run by locals, taps into all the resources that can make it 'soar on wings like eagles' (Is 40:31). Transformation of the religious space is therefore imperative.

Thirdly, the COCZ has recently endorsed a constitution (COCZ 2015) that focuses on evangelism, to 'increase its evangelistic programmes in the nation'. The COCZ is itself evangelical in origin, although the RM's founding charism was not evangelism *per se*, but bringing the existing denominations into one, united Church. The RM was therefore evangelical, as bringing denominations together was in obedience to Christ's evangelical message of unity (Jn 17). Evangelisation as the process of spreading the good news of salvation is the acme of the Church's mission. Chimhanda (2013:1-4, cf. John Paul II in *Ecclesial in Africa* [EV] 1995), argues that evangelisation, incarnation and inculturation are mutually inclusive concepts, but not identical. Pope John Paul II understood that 'wherever the Church is, it is in mission – mission is not just out there'! (Avery and Marsh 2002:151; Stamoolis 2001:107). In the same way, the COCZ targeted areas, places, communities, individuals and groups that were not evangelised.

However, evangelisation in the COCZ has remained problematic due to inherited attitudes and practices that presently compromise mission success. Thus, the national council (NC) of the COCZ has finally adopted new approaches to mission continuity that accepts people-group diversities within the multiple cultural and personal expressions of the Christian faith. Doing mission with people of diverse backgrounds poses a challenge for identity: 'Empirical research has shown that [leaders] worldwide generally perceive diversity as a problem and as a phenomenon that brings more disadvantages than advantages' (Maier 2002:2). Diversity generates feelings of mistrust, unease, tension and lack of cohesiveness (Maier 2002:2).

*1.1.1.3 The Challenge of Population Demographic Diversity to the Church*
Zimbabwe has two major Bantu sub-groups from the black African race, namely the Shona and the Nguni (Kuper, Hughes & Van Velsen 2017). It also has sixteen official languages, with an estimated 17.2 million people in Zimbabwe, according to the World Population Review (2019). This report also states that Bantu-speaking ethnic groups account for 98% of Zimbabwe's population. The largest group is the Shona, comprising of 78%, followed by the Ndebele on 20%. The report adds: 'There are also other Bantu ethnic groups, including [the] Venda, [the] Tonga,

[the] Shangaan, [the] Nambiya and [the] Kalanga' (World Population Review 2019). To begin with, the Shona have six dialects – Zezuru, Karanga, Ndau, Manyika, Kalanga and Korekore. Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007:277) elaborate:

> The Shona-speaking groups included a number of sub-ethnic/linguistic groups: the Karanga inhabiting the southern parts of the plateau; the Zezuru and Korekore inhabiting the northern and central parts of the plateau, now constituting the administrative provinces of Mashonaland West and Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central; and the Manyika and Ndau in the east, the area now known as Manicaland. The political and economic relationships among the various groups inhabiting the plateau were always dynamic and changing.

The Nguni comprise of the Ndebele in Bulawayo, the Xhosa of Mbembesi in Matabeleland North and the Shangani in South East Zimbabwe. The Ndebele incorporated most of the disparate Shona tribes in Matabeleland and Midlands. These include the Tonga tribes in the Zambezi. The same has happened for other black African tribes from Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi who were assimilated into the major tribes in the areas they domiciled (Hughes 1999:533-552). For instance, Malawians in Mberengwa became Shona, while those in towns retained their languages and adopted English (Makoni, Brutt-Griffler & Mashiri 2007:25-49).

Besides minorities from the Bantu sub-groups, as stated by the World Population Review (2019), there are also white people (less than 1%) from Britain, Greece, Portugal, France and the Netherlands. The percentage of whites reached 4.3% in 1975 but dropped since then. There are also mixed races, commonly called *coloureds*, who account for about 0.5%. Altogether, Europeans and Asians do not exceed 4%. Due to these identities, there are notable disparities (that began during the colonial era and are now being perpetuated and exacerbated by neo-colonialism and worsened by neo-liberalism) in urban drift, education, skills, the standard of living and health and the way of life.

The significance of this demography can be seen when we review the work of the COCZ during the colonial era. The COCZ started in Bulawayo in the late 1890s, and slowly expanded in the urban centres; in fact attempted to create a miion centre in Bulawayo which remains a centre of controversy between the COCZ and the non-instrumental Church of Christ When government opened rural areas for educational and health services in the early 1900s, the Church took over

Zvishavane where it built the Dadaya Mission. It also took Matsai in Bikita, where it built the Mashoko Mission. When American missionaries joined the New Zealanders, missions quickly increased and the Church took over Gutu – Devure and Chidamoyo in the Hurungwe district. The American missionaries also send missionaries to the Zambezi, among the Tonga of Binga and the Lozi in Zambia. However, the Church grew faster and bigger among the Shona compared to the Ndebele and Tonga put together. This has led ministers of religion from the Ndebele region to be frustrated by the high levels of insecurity when employed among people of a different ethnic background, as most of their members in their region are Shona today. This needs us to understand the colonial strategy whch weakened rather than strengthened indigenous religious engagement.

### 1.1.1.4 Vestiges of Colonial Christianity in the Church of Chrisst in Zimbabwe

Currently the COCZ remains challenged by neo-colonial stereotypes that negated Bantu (cultural) and Christian values. For this reason, the COCZ has struggled with deep and twisted spiritual conditioning, with a strong imprint on inequality, oppression, exploitation, humiliation and inhumanity. Masengwe *et al.* (2012:185-194) indicate that Church members lived an artificial Christian life as they backtracked into the ATR when disaster struck. Even in the 2016-2018 partial split, neo-colonial stereotypes were regarded as being responsible for provoking high levels of conflict in the COCZ (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2018:1-11). From September 2018, efforts were made to amend the compromised relations, without much success. The COCZ, thus, can be regarded as a Church that has a history of conflict (Jirrie 1972), with negative impacts on ethnic and racial dissimilarities. In a paper on sexism and ethnocentrism, Machingura and Nyakuhwa (2015:92-114), using Galatians 3:28, indicate that there is a need to strive for unity and equality in the COCZ. These and other questions are going to continue to bedevil the work of the COCZ; hence an exploration of identity- and mission-continuity in a diverse context can be a first step towards addressing important issues of evangelisation and growth in the Church today.

### 1.1.2 Geographical Landscape of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

This study was carried out in Zimbabwe, and statistics were taken from there.

Data for statistical landscaping were obtained from regions through the fellowships of ministers of religion in the country. The reports were given at a national Conference by representatives of regions that included Harare (Brian Banzi 2018; Misheck Svodziwa 2018), Bulawayo (Promise Nyati 2018), Matabeleland rural (Famalous Zhou & T. Hlambelo 2018), Binga (Alec Sandu 2018), Victoria Falls (Noel Chishamhu 2018; Christopher Mudenda 2018), Gweru-Kwekwe (Shelton Mafohla 2018), Masvingo (Clifford Chateya 2018), Zvishavane (Themba Madzore 2018), Mashonaland West (Nicholas Kakava 2018), Mashonaland Central (Admire Rukodzi 2018) and Manicaland (Tivaringire Dangiri-Nhenga 2018). The figures that were read to the house are captured below without further verification with the regions.

| Region | Ministers | Congregations | Members |
|--------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| Harare | 35 | 29 | 2386 |
| Bulawayo | 10 | 14 | 1470 |
| Matabeleland Rural | 4 | 17 | 603 |
| Binga | 29 | 25 | 1250 |
| Victoria Falls | 1 | 1 | 39 |
| Gweru-Kwekwe | 10 | 11 | 1700 |
| Masvingo | 10 | 8 | 1013 |
| Zvishavane | 22 | 84 | 4200 |
| Mash West | 10 | 25 | 1250 |
| Mash Central | 4 | 9 | 425 |
| Manicaland | 6 | 7 | 289 |
| Total | 102 | 263 | 15638 |
| *Marginal error (+16%)* | | *43* | *2500* |
| Grand Total | | 306 | 18138 |

The figures that were presented showed that Harare, the latest to be evangelised in the list, has about 30 churches of about 2500 people, and Bulawayo, the first to be evangelised has only 14 Churches of not more than 1500 people. For rural areas, Zvishavane deservedly has the highest number of members at about 4200 and 68 churches. Demographic data for Mashoko, Devure and Chidamoyo were not directly accessible hence the marginal error of +16% for about 43 Churches and 2500 people. In all, this study indicates that the COCZ has just more than 18,000 members in a country of 17.2 million people, which translates to 0.001% of the national population.

### 1.1.3 Conceptual Need for the Study

Inculturating the gospel in time and space in the COCZ is still not adequately studied (Jirrie 1972) despite an immensity of literature on inculturation (Mbiti 1969; Pobee 1992; Nyamiti 1973; Oladipo 2006; Kuckertz 1981; Lane 1992; Luzbetak 1988; Behemuka 1989; Bourdillon 1993; Wanamaker 1997). Neither social nor Christian identities have adequately been addressed in the mission of the Church (Bhebhe 2016; Masengwe *et al*. 2012; Togarasei 2016:113; Machingura & Nyakuhwa 2015). However, literature on cultural hermeneutics has attempted to come close to addressing the context of inculturation in missionary Churches in Africa, although social issues such as gender (Sanneh 2008; Kanyoro 2001; 2009), politics, poverty and disease have taken the limelight (Russell 2004:3; Pope John Paul II 1995a; Benedict XVI 2011b). Kanyoro (2002:13) accentuates that, '[i]n some instances culture is like a creed for the community identity. In some instances, culture is the main justification for difference, oppression and injustices'. For this reason, the African Cultural Hermeneutics Approach (ACHA) is here used in the 'analysis and interpretation of how culture conditions people's understanding of reality at a particular time and location' (Kanyoro 2002:9), and it 'presents the best example of engendered cultural hermeneutics available today' (Kanyoro 2001:10); '"Culture" is a concrete social phenomenon which represents the essential character of a particular nation' (Holiday 2000:38).

From the study of literature, philosophical theories of hermeneutics indicate that culture is not static, as Paul Ricoeur (1981:52) argues: '[L]ife appears as a dynamism which structures itself'. For instance, Bantu-African people knew and worshipped the high God, *Mwari*, before missionaries brought Christianity (Daneel 1970; Bourdillon 1993). Chimhanda (2013:5) adds, 'The Mwari cult is traced from agrarian people of Tanzania in the lake region in the vicinity of Mt. Kilimanjaro'. When Christianity came, the Shona Bantu Christians considered and 'named God Mwari' (Chimhanda 2013:5). Christianity, as is the interest of this study, depicts continuity and discontinuity with indigenous religions and cultures. It is therefore important to bring the indigenous aspect of culture into this discussion, given that Christianity came with a Western culture that destroyed rather than built African people. Jeremy Punt (1999:313) avers that culture is 'dynamic and accommodating, liberating and oppressing, socializing and alienating, useful and irrelevant'. Therefore, '[v]ernacular hermeneutics questions the missionary condemnation of

indigenous culture, affirming the presence of religious truths in such cultures before the advent or introduction of Christianity' (Punt 2006:15). Gandhi (1998:147) avers: '[T]he reversed scramble for cultural primacy only serves to reinforce the old binaries which secured the performance of colonial ideology in the first place'. Local systems are important in hermeneutics because 'indigenous cultures carry along with their enlivening aspects a baggage of feudal, patriarchal and anti-egalitarian traditions' (Sugirtharajah 1999:106-107; cf. West 1999:41). This is because culture has a dual nature. In this case, culture empowers and disempowers, accommodates and alienates. In interpreting culture, Ricoeur (1970:27-33) attests that the 'hermeneutic field…is [also] internally at variance with itself'. Interpreting culture, which is dynamic and using hermeneutics, which is at variance with itself, means that earlier conclusions remain subject for further examination.

Following the hermeneutics of faith, suspicion and engagement developed by Ricoeur (1981:6, 223, 240, 268), scholars have discovered that, in order to liberate people from the culture of post-colonial Christian domination, there is a need to analyse, resist and reconstruct people's theologies based on reading the Bible within the people's contexts and using a method that is at variance with itself. Ricoeur (1981:6) presents this in the following way:

> Thus, according to one view, hermeneutics is construed as a restoration of a meaning addressed to the interpreter in the form of a message. This type of hermeneutics is animated by faith, by a willingness to listen, and it is characterised by a respect for the symbol as a revelation of the sacred. According to another view, however, hermeneutics is regarded as the demystification of a meaning presented to the interpreter in the form of a disguise. This type of hermeneutics is animated by suspicion, by a scepticism towards the given, and it is characterised by a distrust of the symbol as a dissimulation of the real.

This comes with the realisation that 'mission is one of the major components of colonialism and cultural imperialism practiced by both female and male missionaries in the nineteenth century and beyond who sought to "transplant" both their Churches and their culture as they preached the gospel message' (Russell 2004:3).

The COCZ has been confronted by the growing number of African converts and leaders who did not have a strong grounding of their faith with their Bantu identity. Accepting a faith that does not pay enough regard for the quintessence of the Bantu identity, which is the Shona *Unhu* or Xhosa

*Ubuntu* (personhood) ethic, makes Christian identity inconsequential. A rooted Christian identity with a Bantu *Unhu/Ubuntu* ethic is a process of defining how people relate and should relate with each other in the society, resulting in the statement *Munhu Chaiye* (true or genuine person) among the Shona. Magosvongwe (2016:160) defines *Munhu Chaiye* as follows:

> His [sic] whole being exudes and encapsulates the totality of humaneness in addition to being cultured – socialized holistically to uphold the fundamentals of harmonious co-existence. Impliedly, civility, politeness, tsika [good manners], respect, and kindness are deeply embedded in the, and inextricably interwoven with, social engineering that is underscored by interdependency with the community.

These concepts (of personhood) were explored by white religious ethnographers, and were not applied to specific Churches, making the study of the COCZ an important endeavour (Bourdillon 1986; Huffman & Murimbika 2003; Kuper, Hughes & Van Velsen 1955; 2017; Ranger 1967; 1968; I983; Posselt 1935; Hughes 1956). A Senegalese proverb states, 'The chameleon changes colour to match the earth, the earth doesn't change colour to match the chameleon'[2]. African culture, especially the Bantu ethic, attests to the understanding that one becomes a person with and for others. Christian identity is, to a greater extend, a continuation and perhaps an elaboration and refinement, in terms of the special revelation in and through Christ, of what the Bantu knew and practised in response to their awareness of the high God, *Mwari*. Christianity came and took some Bantu values, especially the name, *Mwari*. It gave Christianity the privilege of correcting, rejecting and expanding Bantu values in relationship to our full humanity in and through Christ (Nyamiti 1973:19). Unfortunately, paternalism has set in.

To address the problems of Western paternalism in African Christianity, ACHA is introduced here as an interpretative approach that changes the colour of Christianity to adapt to that of the African society, the soil upon which the seed of religion, herein Christianity, is planted. This is compatible with the assertion of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The First Synod of African Bishops (Rome 1994) claims that cultures are *praeparatio Evangelii* or *Logos Spermatikos* (cf. Pope John Paul II 1995b). Thus, Sanneh (2001:43) argues, '[N]o culture was fundamentally alien to the source of life and truth, and therefore mission was an assurance of continuity with that insight'. Christian faith promised a new beginning. This presented a challenge and a promise – an ability to

---

[2] https://www.inspirationalstories.com/proverbs/senegalese-the-chameleon-changes-color-to-match-the/

complete and fulfill earlier ages' tendencies, and 'it signalled a fresh point of departure in the religious and ethical life' (Sanneh 2001:43). This encourages cultures to self-affirm and to self-transform their morals. This can be linked and delinked to earlier efforts of indigenisation at the COCZ that had no implications for inculturation and incarnation, although they were purposed at evangelisation.

In the COCZ, John Mark Pemberton, the Chairperson of the Central Africa Mission and director of the Hippo Valley Christian Mission, in his missionary reports, provides insights on the indigenisation of the COCZ (cf. Masengwe & Chimhanda 2018:6). The focus of Pemberton was on the changing of white missionaries to become African ministers and elders. This study goes beyond just change of race and persons to the core of the Church's teachings. Thus, the social transformation theory (STT) and ACHA can provide genuine suggestions for progressive ideas on transforming the COCZ rather than adopting Pemberton's suggestions. In genuine transformation, the COCZ is not only indigenised, but it is also internally changed, as its theology as well as its spiritual and theological mission are redefined by African perspectives of religion like the ATR that is integrated into the WC to fully address the local people's spiritual challenges. The product of such genuine transformation is the blending of the ATR and WC to a theology that makes the incarnation of Jesus Christ a lived reality. Incarnational theology can be presented in the form of African integrated Christian theology or simply an African model of transformation theology (to be elaborated on in the methodology Chapter).

### 1.1.4 The Rationale/Justification of the Study

Christianity came in a Western garb, while early missionaries tried to alienate people from their culture, denigrating people's essential cultural values and religions as fetish, idolatry and pagan, yet no culture is a *tabula rasa* (a clean slate) concerning the knowledge of God and salvation. Christianity was to come and give us a new (special) revelation in Jesus Christ, as this revelation was a continuing process for Africa. Rather, baseline studies indicate that limited theological reflection and scholarship affect the ecclesiological development of the denomination as well as its own distinct identity and mission (Bhebhe 2016; Masengwe *et al.* 2012). Zimbabwe has been caught up in new religious and spiritual developments, hence the need to clearly define the theologies and doctrines undergirding the establishment and continued existence of the COCZ

(Jirrie 1972). Leadership, stewardship and management failures in many countries, societies and situations have affected the identity and mission of many organisations, and in this case, the Church. The missionary Church's lack of immersion and integration into the local images and philosophies of the religious structures are affecting the way in which the classical teachings of the COCZ link and delink with the past in the denomination (Bosch 1991; Walls 2015; Jenkins 2011).

Karl Rahner, a Catholic existentialist theologian, sees salvation in Christianity transcending the idea of an absolute religion, for in Christ, God's redeeming quality is not exclusively Christian, but is in other faiths as well. He writes,

> Anonymous Christianity means that a person lives in the grace of God and attains salvation outside of explicitly constituted Christianity…Let us say, a Buddhist monk…who, because he follows his conscience, attains salvation and lives in the grace of God; of him I must say that he is an anonymous Christian; if not, I would have to presuppose that there is a genuine path to salvation that really attains that goal, but that simply has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. But I cannot do that. And so, if I hold if everyone depends upon Jesus Christ for salvation, and if at the same time I hold that many live in the world, who have not expressly recognized Jesus Christ, then there remains in my opinion, nothing else but to take up this postulate of an anonymous Christianity (Rahner 1988).

Pope John XXIII, on inclusivity of other religions, calls for a theology sensitive to the signs of the times. He therefore advocates for the process of *aggiornamento* (an Italian word meaning 'to up-date by going back to the founding charism'). In the same vein, restoration of the COCZ means that the point of departure is to go back to its roots (original charism) in Christ and the pristine Church. Furthermore, the historical developmental aspects have already existed in the ecumenical Church of the seven ecumenical councils, the Reformation and the RMs.

Resurrection is the story seen to set out the transcendental conditions for every human situation, for by it every human story is ensured that there is no final death to end one's story, as Jesus' story clearly indicates. This is evident of 'a positive place in God's salvific plan' as individuals undergo an 'infinite horizon of experience' in their continuous search for God (Bosch 1991:481). Thus, Pickstock (1998:266) argues: 'Even if the world would come to an end, his [Christ's] story would

still continue'. This calls Christians to examine the interlocking influences of culture with the African religion for an African convert (Bourdillon 1993).

The significance of ancestors made African converts, 'Christians by daylight who backslide into cultural beliefs and practices in situations of illness and death' (Chimhanda 2013:13). The COCZ's identity and mission are examined in the context of its elaboration, extension and continuation of the Bantu ethics of communalism, (w)holism and vitality (Magesa 2014). The continuity of the Church's identity and mission in relation to general revelation presents the peculiarity of Christianity in correcting or rejecting some Bantu *Unhu* values in relation to full (special) revelation in and through Christ. Continuity takes account of improvements (restoration) of the COCZ in relation to the context of diversity of its foundation in Christ, Reformation Evangelicalism (RE), American Foundations (i.e. RM), New Zealand missionary thrust (to Zimbabwe) and Christian unity (ecumenical thrust).

This leads us to ask a number of questions: Where is continuity and discontinuity in the COCZ, and what elements need to be renewed in light of the gospel to make Christians at home in their own culture? What is the element of reciprocity between the local and the universal Church (Catholic)? What new understanding is the local Church adding to the universal understanding of the gospel to address local needs using new expressions? How is the local culture important for the life of the Church (incarnation, evangelisation and inculturation)? How is the COCZ's identity keeping in line with its mission when it enters different contexts? Europeans do not have to be apologetic for condemning African religion and culture, especially the question of ancestral spirits. In fact, Africans have to be apologetic because a possibility is that they may have, at one time, attempted to worship, or worshipped, ancestors before Christianity came. If they worshipped ancestors (and if they did), it was before the coming of Christianity. However, what role do ancestors currently play in the life of an African Christian? If ancestors are devils at death, where Christ is the mediator of their lives, why should the Church waste time christening people today? Upon this, the study is justified.

## 1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The COCZ was founded by missionaries who came from New Zealand, and later on from the USA. It was instituted and based on the RM's late-18th and early-19th centurt religion, reflecting on the founding charism of the early Church. The founding charism has four stages: 1) The Church founded by Jesus Christ and the mission of the early Church; 2) the RM and the formation of the Church of Christ; 3) the missionary mandate in New Zealand and other parts of the world; and 4) its new expressions in contemporary Zimbabwe. The questions are: Why did they form a new Church when there were other Churches? Why did it come to Zimbabwe where there were other Churches? In fact, what did it bring with it in its missionary mandate? Was there any continuity, discontinuity, difference or diversity in its message? In this way, is what is being done what is supposed to be done? What happens currently in the COCZ thus needs to be questioned as to whether it is in accordance with the founding charism, the missionary mandate and in answering the new contextual needs. The formation of the Church in the 1st century and over the years has not been static, as contemporary situations have put forward new problems and questions that need to be addressed. Using the idea of the historical developmental approach to revelation, Pope John XXIII, in *Pacem in Terris* (Pope John XXIII 1963)*,* advocates that it was imperative for the Church to be sensitive to the signs of the times. He referred to 'signs of the times' as *aggiornamento* (mentioned above). Christianity came with a special revelation, but also with its own problems, as early missionaries failed to separate their culture from their religion, forgetting that African Religion was 'prepaeratio evangelion' for the coming of Christianity (John Paul II 1995).

The study keeps on digging into the past to stay clear of the identity- and mission-continuity of the COCZ. The COCZ has a role and mandate to its members and society.  Thus, the founding of the COCZ through the RM and the missionary mandate constitutes the vision and mission of the COCZ to the new needs of the Zimbabwean people. This prophetic role is a spin-off of the Old Testament prophets who were not contented with the tipping of scales (cf. Amos) in addressing social dissatisfactions against the poor. Similarly, the COCZ has digressed from its founding charism and missionary mandate, adapting to new situations. We learn something from the RCC on adapting to new situations. This theology is going to be used in interrogating the COCZ's reference to the New Testament models of faith, new foundations of the Church, and the missionary mandate to Zimbabwe at the colonial incursion. This interrogation produces a new

thinking on the new expressions of faith, to address new challenges and needs that remain faithful to early Church motivations and the new foundations of the 18th-century movement.

The founding charism of the COCZ has problems with human interventions, especially the colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial cultures of the West, which Africans have internalised, and thus demands for a new evangelisation of the alienated cultures of the African people from their own cultures and new expressions of the gospel to answer people's needs. The Shona high God, *Mwari* (Ndebele, *Umnkulunkulu*), is a 'communio sanctorum [who] is worshipped as a universal God who gives rain and sunshine to all and is thus responsible for the fertility of humans and the land' (Chimhanda 2014:35). The practice confirms the God-human-nature interrelatedness and relationality in the theology of land trajectory. Christianity adopted the name wholesomely. This is interesting for our discussion on interlocking cultures as this disagrees with misleading terms that were used to describe the ATRC, such as 'primitive, savage, fetishism, juju, heathenism, paganism, animism, idolatry, and polytheism' (Awolalu 1976:5). The negation of local forms of faith, however, did not end with the demise of colonial suppression, despite the interlocking trajectory of cultures. As Ramsamy (2005:18) suggests, '[T]he interlocking effect of racial privilege at individual, group, institutional and cultural/symbolic levels creates a powerful barrier to lifting the veil of privilege that obscures racism'. Naidoo (2016:11) adds: 'Black theology is a transformative methodology for raising critical awareness in order to assess the veracity of truth claims that produce seemingly all-powerful and interlocking structures that inhibit the God-given selfhood of ordinary Black people'. John Pobee calls this inculturation *kenosis* (self-emptying) and *skenosis* (tabernacling the soul of your religion), which goes against alienating the African race as they knew God and were religious although they did not have the special revelation in Christ (Pobee 1992). Chimhanda views that cultures have an interlocking effect as seen in the religious effect of inculturation, enculturation and acculturation on human spirituality, pedagogy, comparisons and apologetics (Chimhanda 2014:34; 2011b:122; cf. Nyamiti 1973:29-30). Christianity, wherever it went, interlinked or delinked with indigenous cultures and religions, as Sanneh (2015:43) argues:

> Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity was committed to monotheism, but, unlike both of them, it makes translation the original medium of its scripture. And translation opened Christianity to secular influences as well as to the risk of polytheism – Christians adopted as their own the names of God of other people.

The degree to which Christianity became integrated into a particular culture was important for assessing the success of Christian preaching. It was also important for determining the issue of religious compromise. Once an entire culture opened itself to the Christian presence it was possible for the missionary to influence and mould that culture without fear of total rejection, though that did not resolve the problem of syncretism.

The *Mwari* (*Muali*) cult is traced back to the agrarian Bantu of Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Mount Kilimanjaro (Chimhanda 2014:35; 2011b:82-84; Daneel 1970:24). Christian adoption of the name affirms the assumption that missionaries believed that culture was *preparatio evangelion* (Nyamiti 1973:18), as Christ preceded them (with special revelation) through general revelation. Acknowledgement of the presence of God through the promotion of terms and concepts (syncretism) upholds the goodness of some practices among the people. However, there are certain practices that Christianity condemned, which might be cultural rather than revelatory, and there are things that were outright bad, and were also condemned by locals and the Church. For instance, if black Africans really worshipped ancestors as missionaries claimed, such practices need to be abolished and be replaced with veneration. It must be understood that worship, forgiveness of sins and the taking of a life is a prerogative of God alone. For the Shona, sin was undone (forgiven) by the payment of reparations (*mushonga wengozi kuiripa*), because of the concept of retributive justice (*kupfuka/ngozi*). Such punishment would take time to be realised, but when they do, all people will be able to state why someone is undergoing punishment (*chisi hachieri musi wacharimwa* and *chinamanenji hachifambisi*) (Chimhanda 2014:36-37). Shona orientation to sin is similar to the biblical and Christian orientations where sin is undone by reparations before forgiveness can be granted by the long-suffering good God. There can be similar notions about worship and death as well. This study examines what possibly needs to be accepted, rejected, adjusted and blended into the Christian religion from the Shona religion. This helps in delineating from the Shona religion, spiritualities, similarities and differences, to ascertain what we are learning, so that Shona Christians would not remain superficial, and would not go back to the Shona religion when they face problems.

In the period between 2000 and 2018, the COCZ went through a leadership vacuum created by the sudden withdrawal of missionaries from Zimbabwe, resulting in leadership strife and struggle to own and control Church property and/or dis/inheritance of the mission stations. Church leaders are

fighting and disagreeing over shrine construction, constitution making and programme control. These members do not identify with Western Christianity which came in the Western garb. African leaders feel that they have to do things that are contextually relevant and beneficial to the local populace. Rather, it denigrated black African Christians, meaning that they could not feel at home in the Christian Church. The COCZ experienced a paradigmatic shift in the way it performed worship rituals, how it defined its space in the national religious landscape and how Church leaders, especially ministers of religion, pursued continued ministerial formation by acquiring higher academic qualifications. This has been used to redefine the founding charism of the COCZ, the missionary mandate and the new expressions of faith in the ensuing Zimbabwean context. Questions were asked above, which I am not going to anwer directly: Why did they form a new Church when there were other Churches? Why did it come to Zimbabwe where there were other Churches? In fact, what did it bring with it in its missionary mandate? Was there any continuity, discontinuity, difference or diversity in its message? In this way, is what is being done what is supposed to be done?  This study thus proposes to address the problem of transformation in the COCZ by answering the following research question: *How is the transformation of the founding charism of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ) underpinning the identity and mission of the Restoration Faith that is also informed by local spirituality for dis/continuity in diversity among the Bantu-Shona Christians?*

Based on this question, this study proposes to answer the following questions:

1. What does being the Church of Christ mean as founded by Christ, and how does this differ with other Churches?
2. What has the COCZ promoted, rejected or expanded from the Shona-Nguni Bantu ethic for the fulfilment of the Church's founding charism and missionary mandate?
3. How does the Bantu ethic of *Unhu*, in creative dialogue with the 'gospel of life' expand the view about the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe in particular, and the universal and ecumenical Church in general?
4. How can the COCZ better restore and understand its founding charism and missionary mandate so as to transform itself and the contemporary society?

These questions are critical if we are to come up with a more robust model of transformation (incarnation) theology, that is, inclusive of experiences and perspectives of the black African person. Such a consideration is crucial for the future and meaningful contribution of the Church to the nation.

## 1.3 The Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore and review the continuity and discontinuity with identity and mission in the COCZ. This takes account of inculturation (contextualisation and Africanisation), that is, incarnating the gospel in time and place (incarnation and evangelisation). The three terms – evangelisation, inculturation and incarnation – are mutually inclusive but not identical. As MacDonald (2003:105) relates that 'The liturgy is the epiphany of the Church, and so the epiphany of God', it follows that 'the inculturation of the liturgy is central to the manifestation of the Church, not only to itself, but also to the world'. This is not a suggestion that liturgy can be changed whenever it suits one. MacDonald (2003:203) particularly argues: 'It is important to note that every liturgy is meant to be an inculturated liturgy'. Thus, in *Ecclesia in Africa*, it is indicated that 'a Church that is not fully inculturated is not worth living' (Pope John Paul II 1995b:33). For that to happen, the Church cannot employ a monolithic approach to Africanisation, as there are many dialogues with Western techno-scientific advancement and missionary evangelisation to carry. Bantu cultures, or black African worldviews, were disintegrated by both colonialism and neo-colonialism, oppressing African converts with Western imperial Christianity. This study explores the continuity and discontinuity of the COCZ with African and Western cultures.

## 1.4 The Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to bridge existing gaps on Christian identity in mission cited in the problem statement, namely:

1. To state the contemporary understanding of the COCZ's Christian identity and mission from its founding charism.
2. To assess the local expressions of the Shona to promote the fulfilment of the COCZ's founding charism and missionary mandate.
3. To evaluate how African values and spirituality (on evangelisation, incarnation and inculturation) contribute to an ecumenical understanding in the COCZ.

4. To suggest how the founding charism and missionary mandate in the contemporary society continues to restore and transform the COCZ's continuity in diversity.

## 1.5 Methodology and Methods

Research methodology is a general approach used in carrying out a research project (Leedy & Ormrod 2015:389). Data collection and collation are done through literature reviews and interviews. As interviews deal with people, the ethical issues are explained in Chapter 3. There are three approaches to research, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed. This study follows mainly the qualitative and phenomenological method of data analysis. A little quantitative approach is utilised in *Atlas.ti* 8, where the verbatim tool is applied for structured storytelling data, capturing and analysing processes in Chapter 4. Data collection and collation is done through literature reviews and interviews. This method is appropriate for a creative dialogue in the COCZ for continuity and discontinuity on things that have been passed on from generation to generation, especially things that failed to die after a century of missionary domination and colonialism, like the versatility of the ATR in the use of the term *Mwari*. African Christians, despite interlocking cultures, have remained African. Splintering is a sign that the African culture was denied space in the African Church, and Africans grope in the darkness, looking for the true Church that would address their salvation in their own context. The study of Systematic Theology is multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, intra-disciplinary (in dialogue with biblical hermeneutics, ecclesiology, missiology, eschatology, ethics and practical theology) and interdisciplinary (including historical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, philosophical and political perspectives). The theological loci of Systematic Theology demonstrate how the major doctrines of the Christian faith underpin the COCZ identity and mission. These include the doctrine of God, providence/creation, revelation, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology. This is achieved by a critical analysis and synthesis of data gathered from literature and interviews, using biblical and cultural hermeneutics to test knowledge and to make judgements. With the presumption that there is no *exegesis* without *eisegesis*, the study of literature and methodology is elaborately treated in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

**1.6 Delineation**

The study seeks to investigate the experiences of the African converts on the work of God in the COCZ over the period of 2000-2018. The COCZ's missionary mandate in Zimbabwe was to spread the good news of salvation, which was not only to proselytise African converts into the Church, but an opportunity to improve the people's quality of life. This is orthopraxis, where the gospel is translated into practice, which is broadly evangelisation. Pope John Paul II wrote about the *Gospel of Life – Evangelium Vitae* (Pope John Paul II 1994), where he states that human life is inviolable and that every human being has an inalienable right to dignity and life. This was achieved for the African population during colonialism through pioneering in education and health programmes. The Church further assisted with national and social development at independence.

The COCZ's missionary mandate and faithfulness to the founding principles of the pristine Church and its new foundations have not been examined in the current and future context of the Church in the nation. One asks the question: What is God doing through local converts to bring an understanding of Christ in the Church and in the world? This understanding is facilitated by the living presence of Christ in believers through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the economy of salvation, the Holy Spirit influences renewal, restoration and transformation in the Trinitarian *koinonia* (unity).

The Church of Christ lays emphasis on the transforming presence of Christ who is celebrated and finds highest expression in the Eucharist. Jesus Christ is both the link and meaning of life to the entire life of human beings (Eliade and Adams 1987:277-278). John 17:21, *That they may be one, as we are one – Et Unum Sint* (cf. Pope John Paul II 1995b) – forms part of the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus in which ecumenism becomes a baptismal task. That is why George Wiegel (1998:24-25) argues:

> [T]he 'real world' is the human universe that has been redeemed and transformed by the atoning death of the Son of God. The Church is not 'here' and the 'real world' there; the story of the Church is the world's story, rightly understood…Reality is cruciform, and…the story of the world is, in the final analysis, the story of the Paschal Mystery.

This quotation indicates that the presence of Jesus Christ in the world influences and challenges national, religious, economic, social and political landscapes penetrated by the *Missio Dei or*

*Missio Christi*. The work that Jesus carried out and continues to carry out, was and is the work of the three Persons of the Godhead. Thus, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was the death of the Father and the Holy Spirit as well. The Holy Spirit is the agency through which the work of the Godhead is carried out. This relationship is closely defined by the term perichoresis (originally Greek) meaning that the fellowship of the Godhead is not only an embrace of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but that they co-penetrate, enter, permeate and dwell in each other; making them one, in being, in intimacy and friendship, or the interpenetration of the three Persons of the Godhead in what Mansini (1988:293-306) on Karl Rahner's theology calls *opera ad intra* (internal works of God); and *opera ad extra* (external works of God). Rahner states: 'The Immanent Trinity is the Economic Trinity, and vice versa' (Jowers 2006:421). On the other hand, St. Irenaeus (130 CE - 202 CE) is the proponent of the concept of the economy (*oikonomia*) of salvation (Tiessen 1993), which originally meant "organization of the divine life" during the Nicene dogma, and later on was narrowed to the divine plan of salvation (Agamben 2007:51). Thus even the Holy See (1995:312) refers to it as the "economy of Revelation". Evangelisation is therefore the process of incarnation and inculturation as Christ becomes manifest in the lives and cultures of the recipient communities. *Missio Dei* in Africa thus reflects how Christ authentically develops the values and ethics of the African people to contribute towards all of humanity, the heritage and lessons rooted in the cultures and experiences of the indigenous people.

### 1.7 Limitations to the Study

The study faced a number of limitations. Due to financial constraints for travelling costs and subsistence, the researcher could not afford to hire research assistants to facilitate discussions. Due to the problems of data dilution by Church politics, the researcher had to interview people in only four distant Church-regions, namely Chiredzi, Harare, Gweru-Kwekwe and Bulawayo.

Secondly, the researcher presumed that resistance from some quarters of the Church, especially those who considered themselves as the other, was going to compromise the study. In fact, one wing of the Church that broke away from the General Conference of the COCZ was not keen to participate. No reasons were obtained, although it was felt that those who declined on the basis of the split would not necessarily have participated even when members worshipped together. The

study, though, focused on descriptions and reflections of experiences by the COCZ members in their mission, identity- and mission-continuity in a diverse context.

Finally, the researcher is a member of the COCZ, and thus has an insider's perspective to mission and identity challenges taking place. As a former chairperson of the ministers' fraternity, transforming systems and structures of the COCZ have been pursued passionately over the years. This affects the mission and identity in a diverse society. Being a black male, a member of the COCZ clergy, student, and belonging to the Bantu-Shona group, the researcher brings with him some pre-emptive and presumptive knowledge of gender, clerical and ethnic identities that can affect the content and analysis of the study. This baggage has implications for *eisegesis* in the interpretation of data.

However, limitations were minimised by the use of descriptive approaches to data capturing, such as the use of verbatim tool transcriptions and editing to capture thematically what was said by interviewees. Literary studies aided in the study rigour, reliability and relevance. Data was triangulated using literature, interviews and observations.

## 1.8 Preliminary Literature Review

An existing body of knowledge, which raises the credibility of this study (Neumann 2000), is presented in Chapter 2. The COCZ's mission and identity is explored in view of its foundations in Christ and the early Church, the Reformation and the new foundations in the USA, the missionary thrust in New Zealand and Zimbabwe and the continuity of mission and identity in a diverse context. The purpose of the literature review is to add established ideas and knowledge to this study. Literature by white ethnographers was carried out in Churches other than the COCZ, and this study wants to fill this gap through both the study of literature and a phenomenological study of mission and identity in the COCZ.

Further, the literature review is guided by study objectives. The relevant documents that would support the study objectives were collected. The literature review synthesises published materials pertaining to the topic under study, while sources are acknowledged through both in-text references and the Bibliography. By doing this, the researcher witnesses to the fact that he has

gained skills in the areas of information seeking and critical appraisal. Information seeking involves effective search skills of literature through the internet, Church documents, Church minutes, journal articles, books and unpublished material. Critical appraisal is the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies.

Above all, the collected literature should address the research problem, guide the study design and be motivated by the research goals (Bickman and Rog 2008:219).

**1.9 Ethical Considerations**

The extraction of data from the COCZ members by using verbal interviews went beyond the stating of the relevant ethical approval and the obtaining of the informed consent. All participants were assured of the researcher's commitment to protect their rights during and after the interviews. The study was assigned the second level of risk, which is a minimal risk. The researcher ensured that the study and interview scope were properly introduced in the consent forms. The process also ensured that participants had read the information sheets and asked if they had any questions or areas to be answered and clarified, while thorough information was given about confidentiality and the completion of the consent form. This section is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

**1.10 Description of Key Concepts in the Study**

The following concepts are explored in this Chapter:

- *The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe* (*COCZ*): The COCZ is a mission Church that can be described by theological, social and political/legal terms (Sengers 2012:55). Firstly, the COCZ is a 'group of the faithful who, at the commandment of Jesus Christ, regularly assemble to study the scriptures, to celebrate the Sacraments [especially the Lord's Supper], and to preserve the Apostolic tradition (Acts 2: 42)' (Sengers 2012:55). Secondly, the COCZ is a Christian religious organisation that is accommodated in society with a message and vision for all people in society. Lastly, the COCZ is guided by a constitution and registered as a religious organisation with political space and legal protection to operate within the geographical space of Zimbabwe. In fact, it is an institution that is governed by a national constitution, presided over by a National Conference Council and headed by a national executive committee (NEC). The elevation of elders in the Church presents a

residual teaching of a Calvinistic system of presbyters, although the COCZ uses it for lay ministry. In this way, the COCZ fulfils its historical and theological mandates, has continuous relevance to society and is legally and politically organised according to the laws of Zimbabwe. However, the COCZ may also be classified as a Protestant mission Church of the 19th century that entered into the Zimbabwean religious landscape. It is historically related to Churches of the RM, Church of Christ Non-Instrumental and the Disciples of Christ, and it is classified among a group of the Independents. This means that the COCZ has its own ambiguities and controversies, and that this position should not be a temptation for us to look at the COCZ as a homogeneous family of congregations because individual members sometimes vacillate between conservatism and liberalism, because the Church is a heterogeneous community (Manyonganise 2016:21). In studying the COCZ, due to its classification with the Independents, one will be doing himself/herself the favour of dealing with a genuine heartbeat of Restoration Theology (RT) and not merely a theologically nominalised Church of the RM that is still regulated by doctrines created by humans. This does not mean that other Churches in this family are less so, but it is justified by the perception that Christ is alive today and leading his Church, continuing to transform it in order to continually impact people's lives. Finally, in *phenotyping* the Church, the COCZ is founded on Christ because of its emphasis on Christian unity. Christ prayed in his High Priestly Prayer for Church unity, that is oneness (cf. Jn. 17:21). The COCZ therefore is classified as an ecumenical Church as it follows the Christological foundations of the early Church that emphasise Christian unity and unending fellowship. The COC, at its formation in the USA, and the consequential formation and support for worldwide ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches and the World Convention of the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches, has always emphasised Christian unity. Thus, accepting the essentiality of other denominations as authentic expressions of the one, true Church of Jesus Christ is fundamental for the COCZ. In everything, Jesus Christ is seen as the supreme object of worship, devotion and source of salvation for all members. The Somabhula Conference Centre (SCC) offers a methodology for the Church to remain faithful to its traditions, characterised by strong Christian education, hospitality, community service, worship, contemplation, discernment, justice and diversity (Bass 2006). With these attributes, the study posits that the COCZ's SCC construction serves as

its quest for Christian identity and mission, characterised by its attributes of transformed RT for an African Church.

- *Founding charism*: This expression aims to capture the intentions of encouraging the religious community or order to authentically renew itself so as to point itself towards a continuity of tradition as understood from its origins. In essence it means that accepting the tradition is accepting its history and spirituality. This is seen as a manifestation of the face of God. The faith community has lived and persisted on the basis of these origins. It is, however, a special mission (in the founding origins) that directs the vocations of spirituality within a faith community. For this study, the Great Commission and the Day of Pentecost encapsulate the intended mission of the Church. As far as this is concerned, the founding charism helps those who have been carried away – intentionally and intentionally – from the original paths of the Christian faith community despite their physical standing within the Christian Church. In this way, the founding charism is an inspiration by the Holy Spirit to renew our religious belief. Religious belief is a gift of the Holy Spirit, especially Christian fidelity to the origins (the Great Commission; the Day of Pentecost), the founder (Christ) and the founding charism (the Kingdom of God). The RCC started this process in the early 1960s, and all the popes and cardinals that followed have encouraged the Church's religious orders to make an effort to renew their religious families in fidelity to the RCC and their male or female founder (Catholic News Agency – CNA 2018). Going back to the foundations is therefore an acknowledgement of the past and an acceptance of the nature of our Christian faith as our acceptance of the Triune God into our lives. Believers, who truly want to live a fulfilled Christian life within the confines of the original charism, should know that a lot of distortions and errors demand correction. In the COCZ, social transformation has posed challenges that no believer was prepared to face. New technology, the information society, globalisation and liberalisation, among others, have led the Church to focus on spiritual and religious actions that address such political and social agitations. This has affected genuine spiritual aspirations among believers, and hence many Christians made mass exoduses from the traditional Churches to NRMs, affecting the Christian witness and mission in traditional Churches. The courageous who remained, have boldly called to remedy the damage that social upheavals have done to the Church. Renewal here refers to a reconstitution of the Church's fidelity to the founding

charism, the founder and the ecclesial context in which it originally was handed down. The community of faith is an important context with regards to the controversies that arise over a period of time.

- *Christian identity*: The COCZ has been challenged by the changing religious landscape of Pentecostalism and its impact on the Zimbabwean society. The Churches that have impacted Zimbabwe, as Kottak and Kottak (2013:429) concur, have identities of their own, associated with what they have as theirs and what they own, their systems of leadership and their leaders, the articulation of their theologies and histories, the growing numbers of members in the country and dynamic methods of membership acquisition and united centres of operation and power, among others. A COCZ Christian identity relates to how both commonalities and differences from other Christians, in terms of whom its members are, how they articulate their theology, ethnic personalities, society, religious institutions and geographical specificities (Chitando 2010:116). In a way, this study accepts the plurality of Christian identities and the development nature in the manner that they are perceived. In this context, the thesis streamlines the notion of identity along the experiences of transformation in the COCZ in response to the religious malaise in the country and the influence of the RT on its beliefs, practices and context.

- *Christian mission*: Christian mission in Zimbabwe is concerned with contemporary Protestant missionary work. However, a lot can be learned from the Catholics in this regard. The Protestant Christian mission began with the Lausanne Congress of 1974, which regards mission as designed 'to form a viable indigenous Church-planting and world changing movement' (Lausanne Movement 2004). It gave missionaries authority to cross geographical boundaries to convert and proselytise followers from other religions. The congress upheld the imperative in Jesus' Great Commission to the disciples (Mk 16:15-18; Mt 29:18-20). Mission is believed to be a summary of Jesus Christ's ministry model for all Christian ministers. The early Church experiences that culminated in the Jerusalem council (Ac 15) are key, as well as the contextualisation that allowed non-Jewish/non-Hebraic cultures to receive the gospel without hindrance. The missionary movement purposed at following the early Church patterns by planting Churches across cultures that would become what Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) and Henry Venn (1796-1873), in their independent formulations of the 'three-self' define as indigenous Church: '[S]elf-

supporting, self-governing and self-propagating' (in Shrenk 1981:168). They were 'senior secretaries of the largest American and European missionary societies respectively, exerted far-reaching influence on missionary theory and practice' (Shrenk 1981:168). They passed their beliefs and practices on to an indigenous Church, which could easily be understood by new believers. However, this could not happen without controversies, as Protestant missionaries spread religious liberty, education, medical aid and democracy. Thus, *Christianity Today* (2014) states: 'Areas where Protestant missionaries had a significant presence in the past are on average more economically developed today, with comparatively better health, lower infant mortality, lower corruption, greater literacy, higher educational attainment (especially for women), and more robust membership in nongovernmental associations'. For Catholics, Vatican II marks the new form of evangelisation, which emphasised inculturation, liberation theology and liturgical forms as key to 20th- and 21st-century missionary work. They emphasise that the community needs to be met with the Christian message in their cultural context. The period has produced key documents on mission such as *Evangelii nuntiandi* by Pope Paul VI and *Redemptoris missio* by Pope John Paul II. This period has seen an increased number of priestly training and commitment in Europe and North America, following the commitment of Pope Benedict XVI to re-evangelise that part of the world. Christian mission is therefore obedience to the call of Christ to share the gospel in time and space through God's wisdom, strength and resources. Christian mission is the joy of obedience, reliance and love of Christ to share the gospel of love and reconciliation to an unloving and cruel world (2 Cor 5:14-21). The gospel is carried out by human hands rather than by an experience of a blinding light like in the case of the apostle Paul (Ac 1:8-9).

- *Continuity in diversity*: This is evangelisation, which is part of, and presented as mission/service to the community. The COCZ began to have challenges with diversity from 2000 onwards. These problems can be traced back to the history of colonialism and independence. At independence, Zimbabwe entered a new world economy. The past history of war, hate and abuse led the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front government under Robert Mugabe to act like an insurgency. This happened at the time that globalisation and liberalisation was taking place. The information society also boomed with the expansion of the computer industry. These events significantly transformed the

national, economic, political, moral and spiritual landscape. The Church was hit hard by economic challenges, especially the hardships that came about with the 1990 economic structural adjustment programme. Frontal assaults of the decade between 1990 and 2000 robbed individuals of security and dignity (Maposa, Sibanda & Makahamadze 2010:250). Suffering affected the way people spent their Christian faith and this affected how the Church carried out its mission as demanded by its identity. The political, economic and social crisis in Zimbabwe can be associated with a lack of moral intelligence. Political and religious leaders failed to deal with the impending global trends due to their backward planning. In politics, the 2008 electoral fraud was a survival strategy (Sibanda & Masaka 2010), which represented the spirituality in society. This led to the isolation of Zimbabwe and thus to economic failure. This was worsened by natural and geological conditions such as droughts and a lack of required inputs. The ecumenical Church in the country influenced the government of Mugabe to sign the Global Political Agreement that formed the Government of National Unity with the Movement for Democratic Change, in what some called a 'marriage of convenience…masked with uncertainty' (Sibanda & Masaka 2010). The Church played a significant role in emerging with the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe. This study is engaging TT which assumes that the resources we have should be used to improve the conditions of the people's lives. This is part of God's mission to the world.

- *The Restoration Movement (RM)*: RT is derived from the RM, which is a product of the SGA in the USA (Randall 1983:360). The RM was a theological action in the USA led by fathers who were formerly members of a divided Church, and through the RM sought to restore the Church to its pristine apostolic form. This discourse was presumably imposed upon the African people and yet the fathers of the RM themselves were ambivalent of 18th-century revivalists, fanatics and enthusiasts saying that 'revivals are divested of those miraculous powers which otherwise they would possess, and are incapable of being made seals of attestations to the mission of any of our textuaries' (Randall 1983:363). The theology, however, sought to confront the fall of the Church, which was separated from its original state, prohibiting people to live authentically Christian lives as the children of God. The RT thus sought to dismantle the doctrines and creeds that were formulated by the hierarchy and power in the RCC and was carried into the Churches of the Protestant movement. In this study, RT is presented as a re-launch of a spiritual awakening in the

contemporary society of the African Bantu, to affirm their identity as the foundation of the COCZ's theological, religious, cultural and political transformation. The transformation project carries much importance in equipping the COCZ to the prevailing opportunities and challenges in contemporary Zimbabwe. The reconstruction of theology by Villa-Vicencio (1992:14) may be seen as affirming that a Church in a transforming context also needs to be transformed to translate the values of its gospel message into the practices and language of the people, and to be clearly understood by gospel recipients as calling them to play the same role in transforming the society. The RT continues to summon the COCZ members to proactively engage in relevant gospel communication for a contemporary Zimbabwean society and to integrate a judicious Transformation (Incarnational) Theology (TT) that is cultivated by ACHA in order to increase the Church's identity and mission. To reach this point, the COCZ needs to make a critical evaluation of itself, its theological reflection, its Christian identity and the call of God for the future of the Church in the country.

- *Transformation Theology*: TT is not clearly differentiated from the transformed RT as it is a theology that faithfully articulates the Christian gospel to a particularly contextualised society. This is a new field being developed to help Christians make sense of their faith in a rapidly plural society and formulated to present Christ in a sensible and practical way, without arrogating any past or current theologies of the Christian Church. It differs from other liberation theologies which were formulated by first raising daggers on the existing theological hierarchies and powers to emerge as protest theologies. TT arises from systematic, practical and philosophical theologies, and its hermeneutical axiom is located in God's power of transforming the Church as he transforms the people's society and thus moves with the transformation of society. As stated by Mr Hart in his teaching at a 2016 COCZ August national conference, 'Methods are many and Principles are few; Methods change but Principles never change' that has been translated into the church's hermeneutics adage, is the base upon which TT is built.. This takes place through the living presence of the Christ, who makes every situation of struggle a new situation of success by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is here to be discovered as the material and formal object of a Christian's life. It is a transformation of both the methods of understanding and interpreting the gospel to convict sin in the lives of people in a transforming society by changing our methods of gospel communication and evangelisation. TT accepts that God was in

Zimbabwe before the missionaries came, and their coming was to affirm what, through the worship of *Mwari* in the Shona rain-making rituals, was the context of the local cultural and traditional understanding of God expressed by these Africans (Kalilombe 1999:149). TT is a theology that takes Christ into the world rather than the world to Christ that takes Christ to the people of the plateau and not the people of the plateau to Christ. To take Christ to the people, the Church needs to be capacitated – theologically, religiously, culturally, socially, economically and politically – by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, making TT a powerful resource for the African Church's teaching and practice, which in turn should be mediatory rather than substitutive of Christ's life. Like Paul in the Aeropagus pedagogy (Ac 17:22-31), TT should say to the African people 'that which you worshipped as Mwari at Matonjeni, and the ritual spectacles you used to get your existential needs, that we are bringing to you in the form of the true God, incarnate Jesus Christ, who is alive and glorified to answer all people's problems' (Chimhanda 2013:2). TT only works for a person who takes orientation towards Christ as one participates in his transforming power in the world, not outside it, as God reaches fully to the world through his Trinitarian nature. In this way, TT is seen as neither belonging to systematic, nor practical, nor philosophical theology, but brings a renewed methodology that reflectively converges the three theologies. This theology seeks to address the whole person spiritually and existentially, by localising, indigenising, acculturating and Africanising the RM (cf. below) for a Zimbabwean Christian. This highly exalts the glorified Christ in the lives of people and teaches them how Christ can be presented wholly into the lives of others. This is, however, done with the view that the quest for TT is rooted in the quest for an African Christian identity, and thus, the use of ACHA in the study.

## 1.11 Outline of the Chapters

This study is carried out in six Chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study and gives a road map for the thesis. The study is about the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity in a diverse context. It provides background information, the problem statement, purpose of the study, rationale, delimitations, limitations, a definition of key terms and an outline of the Chapters. The research methodology and literature review are discussed in this Chapter.

Chapter 2 examines an existing body of knowledge to acknowledge previous studies, to learn from them and to identify the gaps that exist. The COCZ has never been reflected on in literature as it is a newly indigenised Church (COCZ 2015). Past references to its existence were missionary controlled and did not critically reflect on an African view of the Church. The purpose is to deepen our understanding of the COCZ, studied by African researchers who reflected on the context of the African experiences.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology. The study follows a qualitative approach: Data is collected, collated and analysed, using a purely descriptive approach. *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* is used to analyse the data, using a verbatim tool to make sense of how the COCZ members experience mission and identity in the early Church, the Reformation period, new foundations in the USA, missionary thrust in New Zealand and Zimbabwe and prospects for its future in a diverse society (Bryman 2012:714).

Chapter 4 provides an existential-experiential understanding and narration of the COCZ concerning its founding charism, identity- and mission-continuity in diversity. This is purely descriptive of the phenomena on the ground. Through the verbatim tool, interviewees – believers belonging to the COCZ – are allowed to speak for themselves. The *Atlas ti.*8 data analysis and thematic coding report are given.

Chapter 5 is a heuristic creative analysis – evaluation and synthesis of the COCZ identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity). It deals with an existential (phenomeno-logical) understanding and experience of the COCZ. It also forecasts what it ought to be (identity) and to do (mission).

Chapter 6 creates a model for doing theology in an African context that deals with mission, identity- and mission-continuity in diversity in the COCZ. It generally concludes the research, stipulating contributions to new knowledge, areas for further study and finally provides the recommendations.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

## 2. Introduction

A comprehensive literature study for the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) of the COCZ is a phenomenal task, since very little has been done to reflect academically and theologically on this Church. Most writings bemoan the challenges that the Church is facing, as well as its needs. Writings by students are also emerging, which have very little critical views of the mission and identity of the COCZ. Identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) are suggesting that the COCZ's internal structure and operation has to be done in the context of cultural and biblical hermeneutics. Literature used for the study has generated research domains (concepts) that cover evangelisation, inculturation (cultural and biblical hermeneutics, Church tradition and Africanisation), incarnation (contextualisation), and managing diversity. The objective of this Chapter is to review literature and to discuss how it is understood within the confines of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity).

## 2.1 The Church Founded on Christ

The identity of the COCZ is studied as linking and delinking with what Christ established on the day of Pentecost. Linking and delinking brings out elements that create cohesion and tension in the contemporary standing of the COCZ and what it should be. Unfortunately, most definitions of the Church do not reveal the substance of the institution but are only revealing its historical connections (Sengers 2012:55). Our interest is in the substance of the Church, and this study questions the relationship of the COCZ with its foundations in Christ, the RE, New Foundations in the RM in the USA and its missionary thrust in Africa, especially the New Zealand and Australian missions to Zimbabwe. The study also examines the spirituality of NRMs, as they are influencing the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) of COCZ. However, no closer description of the similarities and differences of the contemporary COCZ with its founding charism can be expressed any better than what Loisy meant when he argued: 'Jesus [Christ] announced the Kingdom of God – what came then was the Church [which is found nowhere]' (Loisy 1929:153). The following question can be asked in view of Loisy's statement: Does the

COCZ bear the marks of Christ as the founder, in view of the conceptions of the Kingdom of God versus the Church (and Churches)? The Kingdom of God and the Church are concepts that are seen to be in contradistinction, where the Kingdom is outward-looking, bigger, broader, accommodating and better, compared to the Church which is more inward looking, local, reserved and limiting. The foundations of the COCZ, as Christ founded the Kingdom of God, viewed in relation to Jesus Christ's followers founding the Church, speak volumes about the identity and mission of the contemporary Church. This has implications towards sharing Christ's business of proclaiming the creative salvific mission of God; living in the image and likeness of God (the call to holiness); being reconciled to Christ, creation and the other; giving glory to God; seeing God in all things and the stewardship of creation (preservation of the sacramentality [integrity] of all creation as outlined in Gn 1, and the Sermon on the Mount found in Mt 5) and by keeping the divine commandment of love (gospel of life – Jn 17). The following pages discuss the conceptions of the Church (and Churches) to help us understand how the COCZ hermeneutics operate, and to appreciate the influence of social events as well as NRMs.

### 2.1.1 The History of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The COCZ is historically linked to the missionary thrust of New Zealanders who came to Zimbabwe by the end of the 19th century (Savage 1983:1-192). Missionary inflow into Zimbabwe came from the Reformed Churches, Brethren, Methodists, Adventists, Anglicans and Catholics (Daneel 1971:187, 191; Goto 1994:16; Zvobgo 1996:3-11, 67). Missionaries of the Churches of Christ (COC) from New Zealand arrived in 1898 (Savage 1983:3). John Sherriff (1864-1935) who arrived in Bulawayo 'for the purpose of raising up and training national evangelists' (Zvobgo 1996:79) was a self-supporting stone mason who deliberately came to Zimbabwe to establish the COC (Savage 1983:3). Lusby (1990:7) indicates that 'Sherriff was born in Christchurch on October 23, 1864, at North Fritzory, in Australia. He married…and his wife died within a few years after they were united. At this point Sherriff was determined to go to Africa'. His family circumstances influenced him to take up mission work in Zimbabwe: 'He left Melbourne, Australia, on February 1896, and arrived on the 28th of that same month. Later that year, he went north to Bulawayo, in present day Zimbabwe' (Lusby 1990:7). When he arrived in Bulawayo in 1896, it was soon after the outbreak of the uprising against the British South Africa Company in March and June of the same year by the joint Shona-Ndebele armies. 'In Bulawayo, Sherriff

quickly located four other Christian brothers and sisters to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Table on 2 January 1898' (Lusby 1990:7).

Early missionary efforts yielded many positive and negative results on the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) of the COCZ, as circumstances were markedly different from those in the countries where the missionaries originated from. Missionaries from New Zealand were determined that '[e]very Christian everywhere must rejoice in men and women achieving what in their birth-right, viz, to be free; but every Christian also surely believes that birth-right comes to us all, black and white (or any other colour) as being sons and daughters of the one father God' (Savage 1983:1-2). Several places are reported to have been visited for evangelism and doctrinal teaching (CBACC 1948-1965). The contemporary Church questions why, since 1898 (covering a time span of 120 years to 2018), there are less than 20,000 members in the COCZ given that their earlier drive for evangelism and Christian integrity were based on the Bible. This translates to approximately 167 conversions per year and one convert every three days in 120 years. One would have cheered at a situation where 20,000 converts became disciples, while the Church boasts with a couple of million members, given that the COCZ has the highest developed infrastructure for the COC in all of Africa in over 120 years of its existence on the continent.

Such challenges may have been caused by how identity and mission were conceived by some early missionaries, and hence affected Church administration from home and abroad, as most decisions were made by foreign mission committees. The Foreign Mission Committee in New Zealand was responsible for recruiting, training and funding missionaries to Africa. Missionaries would go on furlough to get back home, campaigning for further support and recruiting new missionaries to replace aging and retiring ones (Bhebhe 2013:138; Savage 1983). Early missionaries began working with the Bulawayo congregation at the CBACC, doing night school, agricultural training, Sunday school, Wednesday Bible studies, Sunday services, visitations and evangelism programmes. With this overwhelming responsibility, they successfully requested more missionaries, as there was more work compared to the available personnel (Savage 1983; Lusby 1990:8).

Missionaries had various professions, like construction, medicine, education, watch-making, stone masonry and theology. This made it easier for them to engage in the ambitious work in rural areas like the Lundi (Runde) Conservancy where a new station was founded (Savage 1983; CBACC 1948-1965). They also established a school there, in which 'at least one class of Bible was required during each teaching day and the various school buildings which were erected served as Church buildings on Sundays' (Lusby 1990:2). Mission stations continued to grow and to increase. The New Zealand appetite for evangelism and discipleship saw the opening of Mashoko Mission and later Chidamoyo and Devure (Savage 1983:1-162; Nutt 2018:1-24). Missionaries were challenged by indigenous religions and they responded in the best way possible. Key was the African way of life, religion and decorum.

Unfortunately, in 1965, the New Zealand missionaries officially closed their active involvement in Zimbabwe and retained individuals who acted on their own accord when Southern Rhodesia declared itself independent from the United Kingdom (UK) (CBACC 1949-1965). The Church was left to the Americans who did not have any problems with the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, since they had experienced it in the USA (Shumba 2018). This has affected the COCZ drastically when the last USA missionaries returned home.

The COCZ has struggled with members who lacked commitment, probably a sign that members suffered from incomplete conversion. The Church has continued with poor governance (Masengwe *et al*. 2012:185-194), fear (Bhebhe 2016:75-100) and superstition (Banda & Masengwe 2018:1-10). Changes have threatened the unity of the Church, because the 'subject of authority, freedom and autonomy has turned out to be a highly charged political issue in the Zimbabwean chapter of the Church' (Bhebhe 2013:109). This needs to be examined in light of the past as missionaries came with the view that they were coming to preach progress, under the guise of the British divine commission and Christian revivalism, necessitated by superior European lifestyles. This disregarded African religions as a significant contributor to missionary success. In fact, in the *Southern Baptist Christian Index* (1899), quoted by several authors, including a newspaper article in *The Patriot* (Magirosa 2014), Zimbabwe exclaims: 'Oh, let the stars and stripes, intertwined with the flag of Old England, wave o'er the continents and islands of the earth,

and through the instrumentality of the Anglo-Saxon race, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ'.

In Zimbabwe, Africans paid allegiances to the *Mwari* cult, the traditional family (philosophy of dividualism) and cooperative economics. The worship of the *Mwari* African personhood as summarised in the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy and communal property ownership values, was diametrically opposite to Western values of Christianity, individualism and capitalism. This is the environment in which the COCZ was brought to Zimbabwe in 1896, had first Holy Communion in 1898, and was officially born in 1905 when a group of Christians publicly celebrated Holy Communion in Bulawayo.

The RM originated with the belief that it was to 'complete the work of the Protestant Reformation by restoring the New Testament Church and the practices of Apostolic Christianity' (Kershner 1965:57), implying that the reformation of the Church 'is not complete unless and until it restores the New Testament Christianity' (Bhebhe 2013:106). In this way the RM aimed at restoring unity, love and peace of the pristine faith. They had a renewed interest in returning to a denominational- and creed-free Church of the New Testament. This was very important for 'the birth and early life of the Church of Christ, especially during the latter part of the 1700s and the beginning of the 1800s' (Bhebhe 2013:105). The RM was founded by at least three different tributaries in different parts of the world and denominations (Kershner 1965:1-12), namely the Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, and Presbyterian Churches. The founders of the RM did not imagine that they were founding another denomination, with further divisions along doctrinal beliefs, leadership styles and other differences along the line.

In the COCZ, these challenges have continued as the Church tried to 'organize itself on a national basis to accomplish that which perhaps a local Church could not do' (Philips 1960:15). This was meant to address what missionaries failed to do in the mission field, with a lack of accountability. It also attempted to run away from the imported divisions brought about by the West on the African soil. The strife brought by missionaries (Jirrie 1972) led the Church to the 'crossroads' (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2019). Missionaries came as auxiliaries to the colonising mission of their coloniser-brother, without redirecting Africa towards salvation in Christ (Ezeogu 1998:3). In advancing a

colonial gospel, missionaries condemned social and cultural practices such as polygamy, drunkenness, dancing or chewing traditional food like Cameroonians on kola and beetle nuts, missing a vital opportunity to make disciples and to evangelise natives with the gospel of salvation (Kwast 1971:48). In the COCZ, some missionaries lit a spark that has ignited the current spiritual wildfire.

Looking back, it is clear that lay ministries have hindered rather than enabled missionary work in the country (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2019:1-11). These lay ministries include the Central Africa Mission Evangelistic Literature Service, which was founded in the USA through the Central Africa Mission (CAM) Articles of Incorporation and bylaws on 24 July 1956 (Bhebhe 2013:122). Despite the fact that CAM built hospitals, clinics, schools and colleges, they became instigators of infighting, rather than missionary work (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2019:1-11).

The following pages discuss the conceptions of the Church (and churches) to help us understand how the COCZ hermeneutics operate, and to appreciate the influence of social events as well as NRMs.

## 2.2 The Kingdom of God

Ervin, in his sermon, *What is the Kingdom of God?* (Ervin 1985), gives a clear description of the Kingdom of God as opposed to the social, political and economic institution called Church. Theorists have described the Church historically, theologically, socially and politically (legally), rather than through the etymology of the concepts (cf. Sengers 2012:55). The Church as a replica of the Kingdom of God, which Jesus Christ instituted and established, has been reduced to the understanding of *ekklesia*, referring to a local gathering. Van Niekerk (2006:1-64) argues that there are two Churches: The Church and the church. One is established by Christ and transcends all time, age and distance, while the latter is a local human controlled institution. The differentiation between the Church and the church can be done by using the term that Jesus Christ used for the most part of his work on earth, namely the 'Kingdom of God'.

At the hand of Mark 1:14-15, Ervin (1985:1) argues that '[t]he only gospel Jesus ever preached and the only gospel he ever gave his Church to preach is the Gospel of the Kingdom'. Jesus'

'Kingdom' represented the whole counsel and will of God for all of creation (which is a unity), as Von Harnack (1908:1, 78) states, quoted by Lamin Sanneh (2015:40): 'The aims of his ecclesiastical labours were unity in brotherly love and the reign of God in the heart of man, not the rule of savants or priests over [the] laity'. However, humans focus on the needs of their hearers, as instruments of a rapid revival leads to the waning away of the Kingdom principles. The Kingdom on earth is not a (constitutional) monarchy or a (constitutional) democracy but, according to scripture, a symbol of definitive supremacy. The term 'Kingdom of God' has a bearing on the definition of 'Church' as e*kklesia* – denoting the covenanted 'people of God' – Israel. Some talk of the Church of Christ as the New Israel. Ervin (1985:3) states:

> When we look at it in the Old Testament, the Kingdom is absolutely authoritarian in structure, as it was under the Kingdom of Solomon…The same is true of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not a pluralistic society. When it comes to the constitution of the Kingdom, the laws of the Kingdom, it isn't even a democratic society, because you and I, and no one else, has had input into the laws of the Kingdom.

It can be argued that the Kingdom of God has focused on authority which was not negotiated by human reasoning. The Ten Commandments succinctly spelled out the Kingdom regulations (Ex 20:2). Since Jesus' teachings and the apostolic traditions were based on the Old Testament, 'the whole corpus of law that regulates the conduct of the children of Israel [was] within their covenant with God and notice that it is the covenant made by God and the constitution of the laws of it are ordained by God' (Ervin 1985:3). Similarly, the Kingdom that Jesus Christ established was based on the Old Testament texts. In Matthew 6, Jesus Christ interpreted the gospel of the Kingdom for the New Testament believers based on the interpretation, application and elaboration of the non-negotiable laws of the Old Testament. In Matthew 5:21, one needs not commit murder or adultery to be guilty of this specific offense, because scolding was equated with murder as was lust with adultery. The focus of the Kingdom of God was the other world (eschatology) which was detached from social ethics and practices. In fact, according to Blunt (1929:18), cited in Sanneh (2015:43), the view that 'the Jesus who was to come was the Jesus who had come [Ac 1:11]' had the hope of a physical kingdom which was to be imminently established. Defiant Christians were prepared to die for such a faith, because it was a faith worth living for – the Kingdom of God. Von Harnack (2005:229) refers to Tertullian's *Apology* 50 (Schaff 1885:109), stating: 'The oftener we are mowed down by you, the larger grow our numbers. The blood of Christians is a seed…That very

obstinacy which you reprobate is our instructress'. The moral and ethical code was not handed down by institutions, but by the King.

In his Kingdom, the King rules, and the King hands down the laws; they are neither negotiated nor interpreted privately. No one has the liberty to change the moral and ethical code of the Kingdom governance. The nature of the Kingdom of God is not institutional, as it is regarded as a present and a future phenomenon, a near and a far concept – at times it is said to be in people's hearts (Lk 17:20). The 'Kingdom within' (Tolstoy 1869, 1894) influenced 20th-century figures to uphold non-violence like Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) and Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968). The idea was that the Kingdom of God was where the King ruled – in people's hearts. Jesus did not politicise his messages, nor removed morality and ethics in his preaching as perceived by the Corinthian Church in the 1st century (I Cor 6:9). Ervin (1985:8) poses the question: 'Is the Kingdom of God a theological concept which means that its nature, its fulfilment, its constitution, is determined by the scriptures, by the word of God, or is the kingdom of God a sociological phenomenon that is to be achieved by politicizing the Church?'

Ervin (1985) presents an interesting phenomenon about the Kingdom of God as something which is bigger and better than the Christian Church, for it is not regulated by human laws. Rahner (1966; quoted in Golab 2007:43-53), a German Jesuit, claims that the Kingdom of God is not confined to a physical institution. The Christian faith is distinguished in two forms: 'explicit faith' (*expliziter Glaube*) and 'anonymous faith' (*anonymer Glaube*). Salvation did not require one to be associated with an institution to be saved, that is, explicit Christianity (Wong Cheong Sau 2001). As quoted earlier, Rahner (1988) argues that salvation can be attained outside 'explicitly constituted Christianity', because people who did not believe in Christ due to their location in geography and time could not be eternally condemned because they did not believe in Jesus Christ (Rm 1:19-23).

## 2.3 The Church

Concerning the Church, Van Niekerk (2006) gives a clear distinction between the Kingdom of God and what we know as Church today. The Church is an institutional replica of what the followers of Jesus believed was a true representation of the Kingdom of God. This was a humanly created institution to facilitate the work of the Kingdom of God. Christ may have intended it or

allowed it, due to human limitations, to help us comprehend the smaller parts of the bigger picture of God's intention for humanity. This section discusses the understanding by Van Niekerk (2006) of the Church (and churches) in the context of the Kingdom of God.

Van Niekerk (2006) uses three approaches to describe the Church, namely secularisation, the ghetto and Diaspora approaches. He outlines that there are two views of its universality (the Church) and its localisation (churches). These approaches have a sense and meaning for human salvation that relate to the Kingdom of God as discussed above. God has acted to embrace these perspectives through creation/providence, revelation, incarnation, salvation, the Trinity, pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology. According to Van Niekerk (2006:1),

> [t]he church-centred ideology of people's experience of human life and eternity is driven and directed by a divine construct of the Church – with a capital 'C' – spread like a divine metaphysical blanket all over the world, which is covered by a patchwork of the many churches of the world as the small letter 'c' derivatives of the gigantic Church. Church-centredness embodies in its extreme form a divine socialist caring and carrying ideology of salvation, sense and meaning in this life, the afterlife and for all eternity through the Church and the churches. In this extreme form the Church and the churches are being idolised and revered as the only centres, instruments and signs of the Commonwealth (= Kingdom, Priesthood, Prophetdom, etc.) of God.

His understanding is that Christ founded the Kingdom of God, and his disciples founded perspectives of the Kingdom. Van Niekerk (2006) uses three approaches to broadly discuss what he calls 'broad outlines of the First, Second and Third Testaments of the Bible' (p. 2). He further argues that the Kingdom is all-embracing, 'which oscillates in narrowing and widening histories, percolates in deepening and heightening dimensions, fusing, moving and meandering in, through and with God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation' (p. 2).

This embraces the acts of God by revealing God-self to the created-ness reality through the incarnate Saviour and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The institutionalisation of the acts in the form of the Church (and churches) embraces the view of the present in continuity with eternity. Thus, Van Niekerk feels that the Church and churches are being organised around these approaches, 'perspectives and their connection to the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation as milestones of the meandering processes of the Commonwealth of

God' (Van Niekerk 2006:2). He divides the discussion into three sections, using an example of the Israelite practice of idolatry through worshipping the golden calf (Ex 32:4). Gold is precious, economically worthy and aesthetically beautiful when carved into a calf. The problem is that when gold is mistaken for a saviour, it loses its significance and value. Similarly, Van Niekerk (2006:2) resembled the church with the golden calf that loses its natural beauty when idolised and revered in the place of the Creator, or 'presented as the giver of salvific sense and meaning for this life and, in many instances, for the afterlife'.

Firstly, by church-centredness, Van Niekerk views the church as both divine and semi-divine. It carries with it the life and salvation of people from this life to eternity. He argues that the problem arises when the church views itself as 'the sole instrument, sign and vehicle of God's Commonwealth (Kingdom, Priesthood and Prophetdom, etc.) meandering through history and the many universes' (Van Niekerk 2006:3). The church gets its 'operational missionary task' from God, who guides, cares and carries the temporal world into the eternal world. People use evangelism, proselytism and conversion to make church members real people of God. Self-imposed obligations, exposition and criticism of secular influences such as capitalism, racism, tribalism, sexism, liberalism, fascism and materialism are reviewed through magisterial structures of the institution. Unfortunately, the institution is informed by the life-world of limited human beings who erroneously demand that their institution be respected, revered and worshipped as if it is a divine construct. It is juxtaposed with human institutions and regarded as worldly, while the church is an institution with the cleansing effect to these institutions. Despite the divine aspect in it and its elevation to be the vanguard of the Kingdom, it is perniciously affected by the same influences of secularity it exposes and criticises. Unwittingly, secular ideologies and institutions have at some point been given divine authorisation and endorsement. Hence, Loisy (quoted above) argued that the Kingdom of God differs from the Church in that it embraces broader perspectives to the narrower ideas of the Church (Loisy 1929:153). He subverts the thinking that the Church, which is represented in the form of the Kingdom of God, differs from Churches (denominations) which are human creations. Churches are rather seen as the interim caretakers of the Kingdom of God after Israel until the time of eternity, when the true Kingdom of God comes into place.

Van Niekerk (2006:4) discusses the dialectic and paradox of incarnation and the crucifixion or embodiment of divinity in humanity (cf. Noordmans 1934:116), the use of human functionaries to prepare the ground for the institution (cf. Van Ruler 1952:28, 34) and the excessive deification and humanisation of Christ after the 16th-century Reformation. The church-centred approach is thus viewed as a hijacking of the Kingdom of God. This has led to vilification within the body of Christ, where either Catholic or Protestant Christians viewed themselves as divine and the other as semi-divine. These institutions exist in the form of denominations. Exclusivist appellations are highly regarded as coming from God, whereas they are traditions used as mirrors into the world. This makes the church the golden calf, in the words of Van Niekerk (above). The church is given a human face, which must fit into the history of Christianity. The relationship of the reality and mystery of the church is problematised. The church as an experience of the mystery of Christ within a community as transcending humanity but immanently experienced in a society of saints, becomes problematic. The experience of Christ's grace, which is not independent of the faith narratives of the community, requires a further review of the relations of the church and the world, especially the view that the Creator can be compelled by creatures to act according to the rules and dictates of the created. The view of the church being 'divine' and the world 'secular' makes the church a place of escape to people who fail to find their salvation in the world. In this way, the church can in turn become political in influencing worldly 'transformation and social change, because it is better than all other institutions' (Van Niekerk 2006:29).

Van Niekerk also discusses the ghetto approach. The church that has divinity is contrasted to a world of non-Christians (Van Niekerk 2006:30). The approach regards non-Christian organisations as falling under the grace and providence of God. Non-Christians are thus obliged to organise themselves as an opposition to Christians who regard non-Christians as an antithesis of Christian organisations. In fact, Christians who embrace non-Christian values are regarded as renegades and an antithesis of what is set up by God. Christians therefore could work in secular jobs while they regard the church as an exclusive divine body of Christ (Van Niekerk 2006:31). Van Niekerk (2006:30) further argues: 'Thus the antithesis or dividing line between how things make sense to Christians and to non-Christians is extended throughout the varied constituent elements of society, embedded together in an interlocking pattern like tesserae in a mosaic, with the same antithetic split evident in each element'.

Van Niekerk's ghetto approach can be traced back to Augustine (354-430) who influenced reformers and restorers of the Church (such as John Calvin, Martin Luther, Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell respectively). St. Augustine who lived between the birth and death of Donatism, responded to the controversy, in his *De Civitate Dei* (City of God; Augustine 1972), where he developed the idea of the Church as outward and visible in its mission. This was a response to the Donatist controversy (4th-6th century). The Church represents the hierarchy of salvation. This means that the state becomes important when it is in the service of church outcomes (Van Niekerk 2006:31). John Calvin (1509-1564), however, emphasised the instrumentality of human experience compared to the Church on human salvation (Calvin 2002). For him, the Church, like the state, has a particular jurisdiction that must be lived in harmony and cooperation to fulfil the will of God. The Church has power over spiritual matters while the state has power over civic matters. The Church and state are bodies composed of Christians, which therefore means the clergy do not require special privileges. Rather, the state was instituted by God to be his instrument against sinners (Rothuizen 1962:234). The function is to maintain external life rather than regenerate humans from within, like the Church. The two types of duties and services are different. Ecclesiastical duties deal with human consciences in service of God, while civic duties instruct people on works of charity (Calvin 1960:19.14-16). The *ekklesia*, as the conscience of society, acts as the soul and heartbeat of the nation, which should influence civic laws and state governance.

Secularisation has helped to present the case of non-Christians as an important part of society. Secular universities have helped to recognise that everything belongs to Christ, as Kuyper refers to the Netherlands (Kuyper [1880] 1998:488). This is also called 'common grace'. Kuyper (1998:16) states:

> By God's bountiful good pleasure non-Christians excelled in certain fields, and all their efforts had excellent points. None of this might be squelched, out of respect for God's providence in the world. All of it had to be appreciated, so that the pious might come to respect real learning. Common grace gave the saints incentive and the sinner safe passage.

In the dialectic of the spiritual and the temporal, Martin Luther pointed out that Christian institutions lived in the spiritual realm and did not need the state. Christians alone can demonstrate

love for their fellow humans in taking the love of God to all of creation. The state unfortunately cannot receive God's presence, grace and salvation. He argues that the secular world is embraced in a divine reality, but not God's grace and salvation. Thus, everyday vocations were regarded as conservative. Vocations are mandated and ordered by God, but they lack the grace of God as the fulcrum (pith) of renewal and real change.

Van Niekerk (2006:56) adds: 'The Diaspora approach sees the Church, or any organisation of faith, as a fairly important social structure where people share in the fellowship of human faith'. It sees the transcendent God at the centre, in strength and in goodness of life. This sees Jesus' incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection as part of the Diaspora package. This was meant to amplify the dissemination of the message of the Kingdom of God in the world. The term 'diaspora' was used to refer to the exiled Jews during the 6$^{th}$ century BCE (Safrai and Stern 1974), and it is used here to designate the principles of the oneness and the otherness between God, humans and the created world. There is a pointed relationship of nearness and distance between God, humans and nature. This is also called the *theanthropocosmic* relationship of the three – Theos, anthrōpos and cosmos.

Van Niekerk makes an interesting remark stating that a bridge can be constructed between Godism, Anthropocentricism and Cosmologism. This threesome represents three types of faith experiences, and scripture bears a lot of responsibility in the experience. In many traditional theological schemes, there is interrelatedness in every part of human experience as well as in the experience of otherness in that reciprocal interaction between the divine, humanity and the natural world. The diaspora approach here helps us in our interpretation of scripture, knowing that it bears the marks of its time. In 1926, Ridderbos (in Berkouwer 1975:182) asserted:

> Moreover, Scripture bears the marks of the period and of the milieu in which it was written and it shares in part these marks with the culture of the entire Orient, a culture which in many ways was interrelated to that of Israel. This is true for writing, language, style, literary genre, ideas, conceptions, world view (cf. the three-decker universe in Ex 20:4).

Van Niekerk indicates that the interpretation of scripture mirrors, imitates and mimics theories, texts, processes and experiences of the people of God. Scriptural interpretation has taken strides from the periods of the Renaissance (1400-1600), the Reformation (1517) and the modern era

(1600-2000). The contemporary era is over-clouded by new twists in methods. Interpretation signifies, portrays and expresses an understanding, explanation and application of a theory, text and process. In contemporary circles, being in the postmodern era, new twists have come up with innovations such as inter-subjectivity, multiplicity, relativity and fragmentation. This allows readers to criticise original readers, authors and compilers, and to suggest more recent explanations of the ancient phenomena. Some have suggested the rewriting of the Bible (Mukonyora 1993). These negotiations of composited interchange are leading to a co-promise, hence compromise of the text. New composers and authors infuse the text with their own experiential narratives, folding and mixing people's life worlds. In the *theanthropocosmic* relationship, the Spirit of God is fully active in the lives of people today as he was during the times when the Bible was written. This poses a big challenge to the fundamental reading of the Bible as inerrant and infallible (every word in scripture becomes a word that was brought forth from God through the Holy Spirit). This biblical interpretation misses the idea of co-promise, as it is a negotiation of views of human experiences on God's promises. The interpretation assumes that the text is a fusion of interchange and exchange of the author's views, making sense of how God intends to relate with human beings and other created realities. This has been spiritualised by Van Niekerk (2006:55), who argues that the interpreter makes a hard negotiation with the author on the hues, cues and clues to make sense of the text in the Third Testament (of the Spirit of God). The ethic of the Third Testament is the good news of love (charity – The Great Commandment in the Gospels) as read from the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus for his disciples (Jn 17), and Paul's admonition to the Corinthians (1 Cor 13).

Van Niekerk indicates that the diaspora approach for the present Testament emphasises pilgrimage, movement and living a nomadic life. The wrestle with the Spirit of God is on living a good life in relationship to the God-human-world coordinates. However, wellness and wellbeing are not to be embraced as the ideal in life because experiencing pain and suffering are equally part of the process of life. While in prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1953:93) related:

> I should like to speak of God not on the boundaries but at the centre, not in weakness but in strength; and therefore not in death and guilt but in a human being's life and goodness…God's 'beyond' is not the end of our cognitive faculties. Transcendence of the knowledge of theory has nothing to do with the transcendence of God. God is the 'beyond' in the midst of our life.

The RM has also borrowed from the Reformed theology of Calvin. Calvin tended towards wholeness, as Niebuhr (1951:217ss) correctly states:

> Calvin's more dynamic conception of the vocation of men as activities in which they may express their faith and love and may glorify God in their calling, his closer association of Church and state, and his insistence that the state is God's minister, not only in a negative fashion as a restrainer of evil, but positively in the promotion of welfare…above all his emphasis on the actuality of God's sovereignty – all these lead to the thought that what the Gospel promises and makes possible as divine possibility is the transformation of mankind in all its nature and culture into a kingdom of God in which the laws of the kingdom have been written upon the inward parts.

The Puritans are part of the ghetto hypothesis. The historian, William Lecky (1910:177), writes:

> It is difficult indeed to overrate the debt of gratitude that England owes both to her own Non-Episcopal Churches and to those of Scotland. In good report and evil, amid persecution and ingratitude and horrible wrongs, in ages when all virtue seemed corroded and when apostasy had ceased to be a stain, they clung fearlessly and faithfully to the banner of her freedom. The success of the Great Rebellion was in great measure due to the assistance of the Scotch, who were actuated mainly by religion, and to the heroic courage infused into the troops by the English ministers and to the spirit of enthusiasm created by the noble writings that were inspired by Puritanism.

The Puritans have been viewed as uncharitable, opinionated and rigid in lifestyle. According to Tawney and Winter (1979), Puritanism is viewed as an inward and spiritual grace that escapes historical realities, but their practices embraced the realities of life. Puritanism had a balanced view of an offense and its criticism. For instance, criticising sacrametalism was itself seen as a sacrament. The Puritans rather effectively established human habits and character, social life, political life and economic activities. They reorganised the social order, in view of being a pilgrim, stranger and transitory, 'to pore with anguish of spirit on the grand facts, God, the soul, salvation, and damnation' (Tawney and Winter 1972:199-200). Puritanism, therefore, is viewed in terms of its all-embracing approach to life. The Puritan way of life has been viewed as embracing all facets of life – spiritual and temporal. This led the Puritans to clash with the British Crown. This, though, did not destroy the social and religious life of the movement. Both supporters and opponents ended up accepting their schemes of life (Tawney and Winter 1972:234, 32). Tawney and Winter argue that Puritanism contributed a lot to political freedom and social progress, despite its limitations. Thus, democracy gave Christians the confidence to face the powers of the world (like the English

Crown), while their stubbornness of spiritual independence led to nonconformity and was therefore above all movements, to lead to democracy (Tawney and Winter 1972:269).

However, the diaspora approach has its own problems. Van Niekerk (2006:55) states that the diaspora approach lays emphasis on 'Christianity as an entity in the world but not of the world in that it runs into the powerful in draught of the Church-centred realm, the so-called Christian ekklesia'. The current reading of the term 'ekklesia' is compromised because the biblical context of its origins is not as multifocal as is the world of the contemporary theologian. J.W. de Gruchy (1995:399-400) states that a contemporary view of the term 'ekklesia' is surely different to the 1st-century Hellenic-Greek society:

> Ordinary Greeks may well have been puzzled by the theological way in which Christians used the word (ekklesia tou Theou). For Hellenistic Christians it would have suggested an analogy to the secular assembly of citizens, with the implication that Christians had a responsibility to ensure, not only that their own community, but also wider society, was well-governed.

*Ekklesia* was not easy to translate for the 1st-century Latin Christian. St. Augustine translated the term as *civitas Dei* (the state/city of God), which was also used as a name of a publication (Augustine 2008). The Bible uses it in the context of a body of believers (Col 1:18; Eph 1:22) who are collectively and individually called to treat the world and others as themselves. The *ekklesia* is the fullness of the body of Christ, called forth by God for a divine purpose, but still belonging to the world (Bonhoeffer 1953:92).

In conclusion, Van Niekerk challenges the experience of revering the church as an absolute entity for the salvation of people, saying that this is idolising the institution. The church has rather survived, because God has sustained it for his own purposes. The church's fragmentation into various denominations and groupings are an indication of the defenselessness of the Kingdom of God, which:

> sweeps and meanders, narrows and widens, through creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation without providing us with an unshakable solution to the mystery of the vital tension occasioned by events and experiences of holy at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God, human beings and the physical organic universes in every field of human experience and in every walk of life (Van Niekerk 2006:57).

God's consciousness is here juxtaposed to human consciousness, as part of nature and of the 'created-ness' of nature by God, the Creator. Nature consciousness is part of human consciousness, which in consequence is part of God's consciousness. Van Niekerk (2006:57) refers to this as 'traces, fragments and moments of the Godness of God, the humanness of human beings and the naturalness of nature'. The three are in interpenetration. Separation of the three are notional, but not in real life. The relationship is disturbed by sin and evil. However, the grand acts of creation, providence, revelation, incarnation, renewal and eternity by God through Christ and by the work of the Holy Spirit, establish the 'Kingdom of God' against all odds. Van Niekerk uses the Third Testament to indicate the oneness and otherness of God, humanity and creation through the Spirit-dispensation of God preceding the Day of Pentecost. The church embodies this divinity and semi-divinity in its sacraments of life in the Kingdom of God. The church can therefore not claim to be divinely privileged, for the earth and everything in it belongs to God (Ps 24:1). The *theanthropocosmic* principle carries the sense of salvation and meaning rather than the inner yearnings of a human being or what Van Niekerk calls, the parochial localities of the Church and churches, because God, in his manifold wisdom, created the galaxies and the universes for divine purposes (Hawkins 2001:93-116). They play a part in God's providence, revelation, incarnation, renewal and eternity. God cannot be contained in the life of a creature that he has created.

## 2.4 Normativity of Scriptures in the Church of Christ

The literature on the identity of the COC by Olbricht (1995:1-26), is examined by exploring the hermeneutics in the COC. Carslake (2014) helps us to discuss the identity of the COC and to answer the question of the being of the COC as a form and shape that is distinctive from other exclusivist and parochial religious institutions. The COC claims to be firmly rooted in scripture (especially the New Testament), but it is also flexible on the local culture and the changing demands of the local mission. It uses the Protestant principle of *Sola Scriptura* and the baptismal identity and vocation of being Christ-like, anchored in the Trinitarian *koinonia* (unity and fellowship) of God, with unity as an ecumenical thrust (cf. Jn 17:21). All this has implications for biblical hermeneutics. The early Church was flexible but faithful in Jerusalem, Antioch, and in Rome. Our big question emanates from the view of our pioneers in the RM faith in the USA frontier, who rethought how to be the Church (and churches) in the context of restoring the life of the New Testament Church. This challenges contemporary Christians to wrestle with their own

missional work in a pluralistic society and how to form new communities of faith in a post-modernistic society.

The COCZ cannot be discussed without referring to the people who built up its DNA, the restorers and the founding fathers of the RM, including, but not limited to Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), Barton Stone (1772-1844) and Walter Scott (1796-1861). Their reference for restoration was on the normativity of the scriptures they referred to as 'the ancient order' and 'the ancient gospel' (West 1963). In it, two doctrines are emphasised, namely ecclesiology and soteriology. Scott (1836:v-vi) elaborates:

> The present century, then, is characterized by these three successive steps, which the lovers of our Lord Jesus have been enabled to make, in their return to the original institution. First the Bible was adopted as sole authority in our assemblies, to the exclusion of all other books. Next, the Apostolic order was proposed. Finally, the True Gospel was restored.

This positioning needs to be discussed in relationship to the foregoing discussion on the Kingdom of God, especially the assertion:

> Moreover, Scripture bears the marks of the period and of the milieu in which it was written and it shares in part these marks with the culture of the entire Orient, a culture which in many ways was interrelated to that of Israel. This is true for writing, language, style, literary genre, ideas, conceptions, world view [the three-decker universe in Ex 20:4] (in Berkouwer 1975:182).

Alexander Campbell (1850:169), with his remarks in the preface of the 1850 *Millennial Harbinger,* refers to the successes of the RM: 'The earth has been almost girdled with advocates, calling upon their contemporaries to enquire for the old paths, and beseeching them to walk in them'. The RM emphasised the centrality of five topics: 1) Scripture; 2) the Lordship of Christ; 3) the New Testament Church; 4) the sacraments; and (5) organised Church projects – cooperative efforts (Campbell 1850:169-174). Earlier in the 1820s, Campbell published articles in *The Christian Baptist* on communion, Christian charity, Church leadership, Church discipline, Christian fellowship, Church music, names and titles. Baptism by immersion is also discussed here (Oliphant 1938:125-137). This has led succeeding authors to collapse the doctrines of the scriptures, interpretation, Christology and soteriology into ecclesiology (Campbell 1850:169-174).

The RM theology was a reaction to RE, especially the identity and mission of the Church in its overt characteristics. Restorationism focused on scripture and how it was interpreted in order to uphold the continuity of Christian mission and identity. Thus, the nature, structure and characteristics of the Church were believed to be founded upon the early Christian experiences (Ikwuagwu 2006). The 1$^{st}$-century society was inundated by a variety of Platonic philosophies. That is the reason why allegorical (metaphorical) interpretation suited the times to make scripture speak to new situations of diversity. Early apologists like Origen (185-254) spiritualised explanations without destroying the historical significance of the text. It needs to be mentioned that the historical battles between Alexandrians and Antiochenes in the early Church led to the early divisions in the body of Christ (Froehlich 1984:15-23). These battles waned in the Medieval Era, partly due to St. Augustine's influence. The city of Jerusalem was understood in four standard forms: '(1) literally it was the Palestinian Jewish city, (2) allegorically it was the Church, (3) typologically it was the human soul, and (4) analogically it was the Christian's heavenly home' (Olbricht 1995:3-4).

While the Reformation elevated the literal sense and ignored all other forms of interpretation, the RM developed a newer set of interpretation that was influenced by English and Scottish empiricism. They used the writings of St. Augustine, called *De Doctrina Christiana* (The Christian doctrines). Here St. Augustine speaks of discovering the message (where hearing is used as a vehicle for receiving the word of God through the senses, via the inner ear) and then teaching it (See Augustine, Confessiones 12.11.11, 12.15.18; Williams 2006:63). The exegetical theory and practice, particularly the epistemology that undergirds biblical interpretation and the moral constraints of biblical exegesis are accentuated in *De Doctrina Christiana* (9.1). This owes to his insights on philosophy of language and rhetoric as advanced by Pontet (1945). Scripture was concerned about charity. The influence of St. Augustine to the restorers came through earlier reformers, to whom the RM theology owes its existence. The German, Martin Luther, and the Swede, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), influenced the writing of dozens of books on the interpretation of scripture, like Davidson (1843). Books set a style of teaching and interpreting the scriptures, like Mickelsen (1979) and Grant and Tracey (1894). It is clear that the RM borrowed from the literature of, *inter alia*, St. Augustine, the two mentioned reformers and earlier authors

on interpretation. This is why they adopted the use of scripture to interpret scripture (Steinmetz 1980:27-38). Interpretation began with the simplest form of meaning.

The emphasis of the RM theology on ecclesiology and soteriology bends towards the Swiss reformed theologies of Zwingli and Calvin discussed above. The question remains as to whether the COCZ remains part of the Commonwealth expression of the Kingdom of God or a parochial, self-centred and selfish inclination towards individualised definitions of God's grand plan of salvation. Differences in interpretation indicate a diversity of thinking and experience. Luther wanted all interpretation to be centred in Christ, while Zwingli argued that scripture was itself authoritative in a Christian's life. Zwingli argued that Christ had power to order a human understanding of God's purposes, while Calvin argued that scriptures had power to order life in the Church and individuals (Calvin and Uyl 2016; Grant & Tracey 1894:96; Bromiley 1963:29). For the purposes of our study, Calvin and Zwingli influenced great thinkers like John Knox and Scottish Presbyterianism, which form the background of A. Campbell and his family.

English Puritanism, without any genetic connection with the Swiss reformed theology, believed in returning the Church to the ancient-pure paths, which existed at the same place and at the same time. Cross pollination possibly happened as scholars like Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and Johann Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) moved from Switzerland to Cambridge, which ended up for them holding leadership positions in the English Church and divinity professorships at Cambridge respectively (Olbricht 1995:6). The RM has borrowed much from them, e.g. 'Zwingli assigned top priority to the scriptures in his endeavour to reform the Church' (Olbricht 1995:6). This showed his affiliation with the ancient paths (Stephens 1986:51-54), while it established scripture as a normative document for understanding all situations. Interpretation was, however, to be sensitive to symbolism, poetry and imagery (Potter 1984:295). In this way, interpreters may be led to different conclusions by the Holy Spirit using the same scripture (Stephens 1986:61). In this way, interpretation used scriptures from any part of the Bible in comparison to clear biblical principles. This gave rise to the tripartite formula in hermeneutics currently being used in the COC – that is, translation of popular and poetic language to its exact scientific form, a philosophical analysis of all subjects and relating all doctrines to each other in search of their harmony (Hovey n.d.:72, 73). This formula is found in the Baptist and Puritan Churches (Bozeman 1988a:70). For this reason,

Thomas Campbell (1753-1854), father to Alexander, prized the phrase, 'We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where it is silent'. However, Bromiley (1963:29), like Verkamp (1973:486-504) argues that retaining 'traditional forms or ceremonies simply on the ground that they were not actually forbidden by Scripture', was unacceptable.

Further, events in England favoured Puritanism as King Henry VIII (1509-1547) tinkered with Church politics. The English wanted to further purify Church liturgy and life by purging 'popish remnants and the establishment of "apostolic" principles of worship and Church order, through the implantation and teaching of Reformed doctrine, and through a revival of discipline and evangelical piety in clergy and laity alike' (Ahlstrom 1972:125). However, the Church of England remained Catholic which was unacceptable to Puritanism (Olbricht 1995:8). Puritanism advanced the idea that there was a pure Church which was not controlled by the state. This supposedly indicated that a state-controlled Church was impure. The RM fathers, though not directly heirs of this, borrowed many of its principles. In fact, the USA was itself founded on Puritan principles, using New Testament scriptures (Bozeman 1988b:3-18). Emphasis was first put on clear mandates and then interpreted more unclear texts using earlier positions taken from clearer texts. The RM laid emphasis on restoration, because its proponents, namely A. Campbell, Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874), David Lipscomb (1831-1917) and Scott, were greatly influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment. Empiricism as reasoning was greatly valued and reflected in A. Campbell and came from John Locke (1688-1704) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Scottish realists like Thomas Reid (1710-1796), Thomas Browne (1605-1682), Dugaldt Stewart (1753-1828) and Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803) are also reflected in A. Campbell's writings. This subjected scriptures to human reasoning, and therefore interpretation was going back to literalism and inductivism (May 1976; Loetscher 1983). Scottish realism and commonsense philosophy are clearly documented in the RM heritage (West 1948; Bowen 1978; Kingsbury 1954; Allen 1986:65-80; Olbricht 1968:77-88). This poses a challenge for a contemporary fundamentalist reading of the RM theology as it is itself subject to human errors like the theology it criticises.

Olbricht (1995) indicates that rules of interpretation have been seen as applying to all scripture – natural or revelatory – as A. Campbell (1995:22) argues:

The language of the Bible is, then, human language. It is, therefore, to be examined by all the same rules which are applicable to the language of any other book, and to be understood according to the true and proper meaning of the words, in their current acceptation, at the times and in the places in which they were originally written or translated.

A. Campbell believed that these rules can help interpreters to reach unanimity (unity) as its use by different people was likely to lead them to the same conclusions. In essence, the RM fathers took much from John Locke's interest in history, facticity and plainness (Olbricht 1995:10). John Locke borrowed the same approach from Nichola Toinard (1628-1706), who studied the four Gospels to find their harmony by establishing their chronology in history (cf. Drury 1989:15). Added to this, the RM fathers borrowed from progenitors of standard American hermeneutics, such as Johann August Ernesti (1707-1781) and Moses Stuart (1780-1852; cf. also Giltner 1988). The standard approach in their hermeneutics was to reject mystic explanations. They believed that literalism drew heavily upon classical rhetoric (Kilmmel 1972:60-61). The COCZ has inherited its identity and mission from this long and winding history.

## 2.5 Reflections on Protestant Evangelicalism

This section offers some reflections on Evangelicalism between 1730 and 2000, because of its relevance to the transformation in the current COCZ. The phenomenon being termed 'Evangelicalism' here has been variously referred to as 'evangelical spirituality', 'evangelical Protestantism' or 'confessional Christianity', among others. The rise and dominance of Evangelicalism during the 19th and 20th centuries is properly documented. It is associated with the coming of modernity and the secular society due to its influences on society (Habermas 2008). It has also been useful in providing a bed-rock upon which Pentecostal and Charismatic movements succeeded, especially in Third World countries. When interpreted, 'evangelical' refers to the 'good news', a term that was first applied towards the actions of St. Francis of Assisi and his associates in the 13th-century western Church. St. Francis started the Order of Franciscans where the believer takes three evangelical vows in imitation of Christ, which are the gospel values of poverty, chastity and obedience. Franciscans are known for their disregard for material wealth and their readiness to part away with everything they possess, which gave them the name, 'philanthropic evangelicals' (Noll 2007:iv). Therefore, wherever evangelicals went, social action followed their activities. Evangelicalism is historically associated with the 18th-century Great Britain, and it grew out of the

spiritual revivals of John Wesley and the Christian spirituality of the Moravians (Randall 2010:33). Noll (2007:5; 2009) specifically refers to 'Evangelicalism' as a movement birthed after George Whitefield (1714-1770), John Wesley (1703-1791), Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). Building on Evangelicalism, the RM took shape and developed in the USA, resulting in Churches of the RM of which the COCZ forms one category. In Africa, Evangelicalism led to the support of liberation movements and to the humanisation of the African person through humanitarian services. In this way, emphasis was given to the identity and dignity of the human person as the starting place to allow them to choose to worship God in freedom and happiness. Thus, it influenced Churches like the COCZ to engage in education, health and community development as the vehicle for evangelism.

The following publications show us why and how Evangelicalism did what it did, and how these tenets relate to the ongoing process of transformation in the COCZ today. This section begins with the work of Mark Noll who has captured the rise of Evangelicalism in the Victorian culture, stating that

> [m]odern evangelical Christianity was born in the trans-Atlantic revivals of the 1730s and 1740s, and no figure was more central in that quickening than the young Anglican priest who was named with pinpoint accuracy in the title of Harry Stout's biography – The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism (Noll 2007:1).

Historically, Evangelicalism rose in the UK and acquired a renewed vitality and propensity for a worldwide spread in the USA. Here, the passionate preaching of Whitefield encouraged hearers to sacrificially support his philanthropic projects, wherein the American religion was found to be closely intertwined with its commerce. In fact, emigrants to the USA found a strong tie between 'the industrious economic habits' of the USA, and the 'philanthropic virtuosity of the United States' Churches and religious societies' (Noll 2007:3). Evangelicalism, as it later became known, leapt from the American history, carrying with it the traits and characteristics of philanthropic Evangelicalism, in which evangelicals became generally associated with generosity and capitalism (USA culture of free market, democracy and entrepreneurship). Evangelicals were concerned about spreading the gospel as well as spreading their economic markets (Noll 2007:6). This enabled the Church to acquire a new shape – Evangelicalism – across the world. Noll is revisited at the end of this section with his argument on the changing shape of world Christianity.

Randall elaborates on it: 'The world-wide evangelical movement was shaped in the eighteenth century by European Continental Pietism, by the Evangelical Revival in [Great] Britain and by the Great Awakening in [the United States of] America' (Randall 2010:34). Its history is located in the 18th-century UK and later the USA. Noll (2005) gives a history of evangelical Protestantism in a series covering over 50 years from 1739 to 1790. Evangelicalism is associated with the coming of modernity and its associated dis/contents.

David Bebbington gives an extensive description of the dominance of Evangelicalism. He sets the tone for the discussion here, followed by those who emphasise a Christianity that advances a social context and thus social action. Bebbington, through his series, The *Dominance of Evangelicalism* (Bebbington 2005), covers the late-Victorian culture from the 1850s to the 1900s. He (Bebbington 1995:2-17) characterises Evangelicalism with conversion, the Bible, activism and the cross (cf. Randall 2010:33-44); '[h]e calls for breathing life into the tradition so that it does, as it can, answer the deepest inner searches of the contemporary seeker' (Gillett 1993:1-2). Bebbington (1995:20) describes how the decade from 1734 onwards 'witnessed in the English-speaking world, a more important development than any other, before or after, in the history of Protestant Christianity: the emergence of the movement that became Evangelicalism'. This movement had strong links with earlier English Puritanism. However, Bebbington (1995:43) argues that most Puritans tended to take the view that assurance of personal salvation was the fruit of spiritual struggle, whereas the evangelicals, by contrast, 'believed it to be general, normally given at conversion and the result of simple acceptance of the gift of God'.

Noll dealt with the rise of Evangelicalism, while Bebbington dealt with its dominance. Bebbington's series provides helpful reflections on the history and theology of Evangelicalism in the late-Victorian culture, maintaining a sustained expansion into the whole world. Evangelicalism made dynamic responses to growing rationalism and romanticism. It settled 'wherever Anglo-Saxon settlers had penetrated' (Bebbington 2005:249). Its vitality rose up many active adherents that further influenced changes in many parts of the world, nationally shaping communities and lives wherever evangelical Christians went. It needs to be understood that the movement had limitations of its own as it was spread by different denominations which impressed on their

different social settings of origin. Polarisation during this period divided societies into modern and traditional, sacred and profane, spiritual and secular, etc. In this heterogeneity, however, evangelical denominations acted like 'regiments in a single army' (Bebbington 2005:244), displaying a remarkable unity where 'the commonalities far outweighed the differences' (Bebbington 2005:249). This unity was stimulated by the communications revolution of the Victorian age, which was used in carrying the ideas of Evangelicalism across the world with steam-powered engines in train-coaches, steamships, telegraphs and newspapers. The ideas of Hume and others that elevated the human mind above everything else, made rationalism a new 'idol' against which the Church had to fight (Bebbington 2005:249ff).

Towards the 1800s, the USA experienced a SGA, which marks the time when the RM was launched through the 1794 *Springfield Presbyterian Last Will and Testament* and the 1809 *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington* (McLoughlin 2013). As the history of the COCZ is well recorded, this study reviews some texts on the SGA, the RM and other cultural, religious, biblical, theological and historical aspects of both the colonial and postcolonial Church. The Church's American roots are emphasised, for instance by Randall (1983) and Murray (1994). Randall recaptures the 18th-century experiences of the GA, which led to the formation of the RM. He argues that the RM was a cooperative product built by the willingness of reformation leaders to learn from other Christians whose backgrounds differed from theirs. Reflections on the RM indicate that retrospect enjoys objectivity and wisdom, for it clearly shows that the RM progenitors identified and grasped a prevailing mood of revival and managed to infiltrate it with sound biblical insights that they have received in their own training (Randall 1983:xiii). The book prepares Churches who are seeking to recapture the power and revival of the 1st-century Church of the apostles in order to multiply the harvest of the ripened fields that stretch across the nation of Zimbabwe. In this book of Randall lies secrets of Christian living that are effective and stimulating in Church evangelism, discipleship and Church growth.

Murray (1994) narrates that revivals were an acceptance of the work of the Holy Spirit who is involved in every instance of human conversion and in every instance, influencing the granting of copious measures of grace and power to revive God's Church. This began with the Pentecost experience in Jerusalem and it spread to every corner of the world. In the current COCZ, it is the

witnessing that God's Spirit is descending with power to revive the body of Christ. The consequence of this revival is that men and women of influence are brought in to suffer for the sake of the gospel, sacrificing their wealth for the building of the national religious shrine, that new fellowships in the Church are being started every year and, for the first time, that members understand the cunning of human beings and the greed of ministers of religion in the history of the Kingdom of Christ. Just like the serious opposition to the revivals of the 18th century, the COCZ is reminded that the devil will not allow the gospel of Christ to have a free course but that the Church will rather suffer violence, while the devil pursues to be the revival's charioteer. However, the devil is so fearful of the Holy Spirit that he would rather dilute (poison) the streams of the showers of blessing. The devil is an artful foe who enjoys using malign triumphs to prejudice the minds of people against all true revivals of religion (counterfeiting them as human machinery), rather than the genuine outpouring of the Spirit of God to revive God's Church. Revival and revivalism are useful for the study on the COCZ, because it is a Church in a special season, experiencing birth-pangs as God revives his Church. For this reason, '[r]evivals of religion have always been held in high estimation by the Church' (Murray 1994:xviii). Success was thus afforded by the power from on high – the divine unction from the Holy Spirit.

During the same time, the idea of Evangelicalism implied the conquering of evil with the gospel of Christ. This was the reason why the Church took the same idea of colonisation and humanisation as a mandate for Christianising the pagan world. Evangelicalism followed into the countries of the south where it found a fertile ground for its growth. Samuel and Sugden (1999) are presenting the theological and practical growth-phenomenon of Evangelicalism in countries of the south. The Church went through a transforming experience and growth through the work of evangelists. One of the greatest debates of the period had to do with the relationship between evangelism and social action (Samuel 1999:227-235). Churches embraced in their activities the component of human and social development as a response to the call of God. In this anthological text, the history of global Evangelicalism between the 1970s and the 1990s is documented, in which the debate was won with a biblical and theological validation of social action as heeding the teaching of Jesus Christ to the needy. Many Churches and organisations embraced Matthew 25:35-42 in their mission and vision. This presents sacramental Christology – the encounter with Christ in the distressing disguise of the poor and needy of any type (Chimhanda 2011:42). The COCZ used two approaches

in its mission and evangelism – health and education (Grubbs 2009:211). The idea of social action was fully captured and practised by the COCZ missionaries who embraced humanitarian development and evangelism. Of significant mention is Garfield Todd (1908-2002) who helped ecumenical and Protestant Churches to form the Rhodesia Council of Churches, now Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and its consequent brain child, Christian Care, to assist families of detainees, as well as refugees and those in disasters, in obedience to Christ as a witness for Kingdom building. Grubbs shows that the redemption of humanity in Jesus Christ is revealed through human development. Jesus, the image of the invisible God, represents a new Adam, and therefore human development was a spiritual matter that fulfilled the promises of God, as Jesus taught that whatever someone did for the 'little ones', is regarded as an act for the Lord. It presented the encounter with Christ (sacramental Christology) in the lives of the poor and needy in their distressing moments. This elevated social action and development to spirituality for both scholars and practitioners in support of the witness of the gospel.

Samuel and Sugden (1999) indicate that social action in evangelism, where preaching was accompanied by material assistance in the form of education, health, clothing and food, was a process in which every believer was invited to the fellowship table with God who owns a thousand cattle on the hills and supplies their need according to his riches and glory on an everyday basis. Scholars of the period developed the 'theology of the pie on the table', which revolutionised how Churches interacted with colonial governments and supported liberation movements (Todd 2007). This meant that believers from all races, nationalities and colours were called to participate in the Kingdom promises of God's evangel and had to be politically free to exercise their God-given mandate. The period of Evangelicalism marked the spread of human dignity and development, without necessarily spreading the Christian religion. Social action was embraced as another arm of Christian mission, thereby helping people in crisis moments, humanising actions to people in detention and refugee camps and strengthening poor people's coping mechanisms and increasing livelihoods to disaster prone communities. Humanising actions were believed to give people a chance to make choices in their God-given image and being.

This historical development of Evangelicalism's emphasis on social action as discussed by Samuel and Sugden (1999) initiates positive things in African countries, where the term 'transformation'

was adopted by African scholars and theologians. In the Harare meeting of 1985, the theme 'Christian Mission and Human Transformation' was adopted (Samuel & Sugden 1999:265). Transformation became a codeword for action as Pobee gave printed full Bible studies on transformation in that conference. Added to that, Rev Prof Canaan Sodindo Banana, the then President of Zimbabwe, addressed the conference on *The gospel of Jesus Christ and Revolutionary Transformation*, a title that fitted very well with the Marxist and anti-colonial rhetoric in Zimbabwe at that time. The President passionately demanded 'the total re-orientation of the Church to the new social, economic, and political movement of the masses the Churches profess to serve' (Samuel & Sugden 1999:16). It took 'transformation' out of Church confines, which removed the Church's control over the term (cf. Willmer 2016). In this way, the Bible and theology were used as instruments of political agendas, while the Bible and theology should rather remain a source for evaluating politics rather than witnessing to what transcends politics. The term 'transformation' has been popularised over the years, and the emerging trends in the current COCZ are a witness to the contribution of the 'transforming' period of Evangelicalism.

The biggest challenge for the book, *Mission as transformation*, written by Samuel and Sugden (1999) is the activist nature of this book. It was published by preachers with interests in inspiring people and not to engage in academic research. In this way, activism was part and parcel of their study and the publication of the book. This is not to suggest that human organisations do not encounter tension and divisions, but that their problems need to be honestly sorted out. Evangelicalism therefore needed to attend to its conceptual and contextual problems. Conceptually, there is a need to clarify their idea of 'transformation', for it was used as a key criterion for missionary work done in Africa. A lack of clarity on the term erodes the authority and meaning it symbolises. This also applies to missionary work, where the Church seemed to emphasise the 'already' more than the 'not yet', as the Gospels indicate that the Kingdom of God is now but not yet. What God did in Christ was 'already', and it included pain and suffering based on a wisdom that is contrary to the wisdom of the world. If missionary work includes pain and suffering, then transformation is 'not yet'. The idea of Samuel and Sugden (1999) thus remains problematic for the researcher.

However, 'transformation' seems to be a metaphoric term referring to the promise of the gospel on the coming of the Kingdom - 'where a new earth and a new heaven', has abounding righteousness (Re 21:1; Is 65); and cannot possibly be achieved by historical or current technological changes, for theories of revolution and progress are failing to eradicate human limitations, suffering and evil. The book, *Mission as transformation* (Samuel & Sugden 1999) falls short to totally eliminate pain and suffering, for we know from our history that pain and suffering cannot be totally eradicated in this life. Transformation rather represents a criterion to facilitate the process of witnessing Christ through social action.

Finally, the experiences of Evangelicalism are inadequate if they fail to relate to Catholicism and ecumenical thought. Evangelicalism was for some time a wonderful entrepreneurial and pragmatic method of spreading the gospel, but preachers became wild in borrowing it to imitate capitalism, thereby, accruing debts in the work of the Kingdom. *Mission as transformation* (Samuel & Sugden 1999) was written when the USA and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were involved in the Cold War, threatening the world of a third world war. The Church's responsibility was to transform people in ways where they could think alike. This is why, after 1989, the rhetoric and condemnation of Marxism changed. These were the signs of the coming changes on cultural and human dignity. This thesis will hopefully help people in their inquiry process, initiating questions on what the gospel means to the COCZ members today, and how this will be demonstrated in the lives of these people. After this has been established, this study also assesses how this process can be extended into the lives of people in the world.

The social context of missions is contrasted by Schüssler Fiorenza (1982), who argues that Church mission and identity are intricately related. She states that the reason for declining Church membership in America is due to the failure of Churches to focus on acting according to their religious messages by standing close to the Church's mission and ministry. Loss of membership was located in the Churches' loss of focus on their religious ministry while addressing social issues. Schüssler Fiorenza (1982:197) has the view that 'the Church's political and social mission relates to its religious identity', which is also captured by Burghardt (2016). Here, Schüssler Fiorenza contrasts the mission of the Church with its religious ministry, like evangelism and social action, because by engaging in politics, Churches fail in their proper mission. She quotes the letter

of Pope Pius XI to Roland-Gösselin, objecting that engagement in civilisation should only be done to facilitate evangelisation, because Christ's mission to the Church is one and spiritual. So, to engage in holy marches for social advocacy and to show the Church's discontent to social problems were to abandon the Church's primary responsibility – the gospel of love and forgiveness – for the agenda of the world, which is the gospel of social reform, political and legislative change. This turned the clergy into 'pagans in the pulpit' for neglecting the mission of God for social and political goals. The text could be very critical of white missionaries who presented an attitude of superiority and complicity to colonial powers, and thus advanced colonial civilisation projects instead of evangelisation. On the other hand, some missionaries like Sir Garfield Todd, facilitated African freedom by building schools and clinics for their converts. Some missionaries from the USA had tendencies of colonialism, as they misused the Bible for their own causes and left the African Church with neither formal structures nor a sound leadership theology. This has been viewed by some COCZ leaders as a betrayal of the people's trust, when missionaries left Church properties in the hands of individuals.

The COC is a member of the family of Churches that emanated from the RM, which was itself a transforming landmark of religious and ecclesiastical response to the modernist challenges. The Churches of the RM became so successful and influential in the USA, that after the Second World War, they were instrumental in spreading the American dream and ethos to the colonised countries. Social action seems to have taken a more substantial space in the American dream, in which Evangelicalism advanced the secular ideas of Western democratic principles and politics. This is evident in the works of the next authors – Paul Freston and Terrence Ranger.

Paul Freston (2001) advances the idea that Evangelicalism was developed as a middle-class religious expression in the USA, but they spread their tenets of democracy, nationalism and globalisation abroad. In Africa, Evangelicalism prepared the ground for Pentecostal and charismatic movements to flourish. Freston gives dynamic attention to cultural symbols of political practice, like the 'numerical heartland' of Christianity in the developing nations (Freston 2001:3), without ignoring the trans-border flows of evangelical ideas, actors and texts. He systematically accounts for Evangelicalism's involvement with politics in 27 countries on three continents (Latin America, Asia and Africa) and defines Evangelicalism in line with the quadrilateral definition –

of conversionism, activism, Biblicism and crucicentrism – of Bebbington (referred to above). The inclusion of politics in the life and work of the Church was such a transforming experience for Christianity, as they thought it made them relevant for the world to come as well as for the current life. This exercise has been successful in some Pentecostal Churches that have penetrated culture (media) and politics (power) by the use of the health and wealth gospel, seeking political hegemony in developing nations.

Freston has explored evangelical Protestantism as the second largest Christian global constituency with its major variant, Pentecostalism, which entered local politics with impact and is growing to take over on ethics and leadership in the next generation. He exemplifies the descriptor, 'bold humility' – referring to a situation where various religious strains are involved, as found in David Bosch's *Transforming Mission* (1991). Evangelicalism has influenced the liberation struggles in Africa but lost its clues when the post-colonial governments (including Zimbabwe) turned to looting and corruption. The Church has always influenced the African political life, so much that in 1991, President Chiluba proclaimed Zambia a 'Christian nation'. This view was attacked by the COCZ missionaries, who seemed to display the desire of having a subservient church to the people in the world.  This contrasts the new awakening that realised that there was a dichotomy between theology and life realities. Freston indicates that Evangelicalism became energised by the new Protestant grouping of Pentecostals. Pentecostals gained roots in developing nations, becoming a major expression of Christianity in the world. It has also started to influence politics and economic development across the world. Furthermore, Evangelicalism has found its adherents taking political power, motivated by corporatist electoral politics with the goal of personal benefits, local subversion and triumphalism.

Many people have the view that where Evangelicalism thrives, it is easier to talk about civil society, democracy, rule of law and elections. The adherents challenge authoritarianism. Evangelicalism advances ecumenism and unity among Churches, but its relevance has waned as Pentecostalism, the major variant of Evangelicalism, is taking their democratic consolidation and political reform, making Christianity relevant again (Freston 2001:112). It is this transforming nature of evangelical Christianity that ascertains the potential for the Church to translate itself into

new notions of the self, as the Church acquires new values, spaces, associations and abilities in the countries where it operates (Freston 2001:113).

Finally, Freston utilises a very good methodology in his book (Freston 2001) as its organisation, powerful conclusion and fresh insights on political theory by evangelicals and democracy in developing nations can help readers to reflect on their own involvement in political activity in their local environments. Freston's work benefits this thesis when arguing how the Western evangelical Christianity has affected the identity and mission in the national politics of the COCZ and consequently how this affects its own transforming process.

Terrence Ranger (2002) illustrates how evangelical Christianity emphasised orthopraxis (theory and practice) with his research on Evangelicalism, focused on faith and politics. According to him, the situation in Africa when a study was done in 2002 seemed to be an inheritance of the American religious interaction between Christianity and politics. Evangelicalism, in this case, has been practised as a 'global Christianity', as pointed out by Jenkins (2002:53-68). Jenkins refers to the triumphant spreading of Western religious idioms in developing countries as a form of spiritual neo-colonialism (cf. also Ranger 2003:112-117). In other words, this is a contemporary extension of Euro-American forms of Christendom. This is not the same as 'world Christianity', which is an appropriation of the sum-total of all Christian forms and ideas that were created in every part of the world. In this study, evangelical Christianity is regarded as an aspect of 'globalisation', although African Christianity has remained distinct from other developing nations as it rather identifies with 'world Christianity' than with 'global Christianity'.

When Evangelicalism came to Africa, especially during colonialism, new varieties emerged. This created a competition rather than cooperation, thereby undermining the growth of Christianity in specific countries. In some countries in North Africa, there are more Muslims than Christians, while in sub-Saharan Africa, most countries are Christian – some have a Catholic majority, while others are Protestant. However, most African countries have more Protestants compared to Catholics, and this is the reason why President Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian state – an ideal that has persisted after his fall (Phiri 2003:401-428; 2008:95-130). Christians in Africa have, however, acted ruthlessly against other Christians. Especially the evangelicals aimed to have the

majority religion in order to democratise the African political system and defend people's rights (Ranger 2016). The intrusion and growth of Pentecostalism, instead, did not resist the political powers, but sought to moralise the society and the political system through love and empathy. To do this, Pentecostals have sought to reach the widest possible number of people to participate in restoring political morality. This is what Mukonyora (2008) refers to as 'personal transformation'. However, she quotes Ngwiza Mkandla, a respected Zimbabwean evangelist saying:

> The life of the city is the responsibility of the community. Jesus reorganized society by showing a respect for women and putting no boundaries between Jews and Greeks, showing a social concern by taking action against the evil enshrined in his society. The rule of God must prevail; one must be grounded in the community and be politically active, even if it means becoming a victim of injustice as Jesus did (Mukonyora 2008:145).

In fact, those who have experienced the ruthlessness of the Muslim Sharia Law in countries like Nigeria (Imo 2008) appreciate Christian engagement in politics and political leadership, for a good believer identifies with the powers that be, and at the same time remains faithful to God. Furthermore, evangelicals have begun to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate power. In this way, they encourage people to resist an illegitimate authority, even to the extent of taking up arms in self-defence. In Kano, for instance, Christians used guns to repel and kill Muslim attackers (Imo 2008:37-66).

In Africa, powerful influential people embraced Christianity, compared to Latin America and Asia where the economically marginalised groups used Christianity to build up new ethnic identities. In Africa, people retained the names of their gods and their culture, whereas in other parts of the world, they lost their gods and cultures (cf. Harper 1995:13-20; Sanneh 2015:40-45). In Asia and Latin America, evangelical Christianity modernised the tribal societies, rather than to in/acculturate them. In Asia, evangelical Christianity purified and modernised tribal societies and freed them from fear of their traditional religion. Christians in Asia and Latin America did not have to undergo a religious or cultural decolonisation, as liberation theology extended indigenised radical Christianity that was already embraced by ordinary people. In Africa, Christianity influenced the culture, politics and people with power. An example is their revolutionary ideas of family and kin, depicting in the Zionist and apostolic Churches (Mukonyora 2008:131-160). These Churches are still traditional, but they became a new family. Therefore, to demonise the ATR and

its practitioners has no effect on the majority of people, as they remained adherents of their culture even after becoming Christians, despite the centuries that colonists tried to alienate them from the ATR. Their influence can also be seen in politics.

African evangelicals, however, have their own problems as some of them have a too close relationship with brutal and corrupt politicians. Also, some of them are not democratic, and use arbitrary power to amass wealth for themselves. This means that Evangelicalism is leading its adherents to a new African democratic politics. This development is helpful because it brings the discussion to the roots of Protestant ethics, which brought about capitalism and extraordinary individuation, undermining collective solidarities and encouraging people to be thrifty. It created new family structures and a bourgeoisie culture, and it increased choices. These developments cannot be examined without taking a leaf from the development of Protestantism in Europe and America, where historically, evangelicals stopped living loosely and became thrifty, leading to the construction of the Protestant civilisation and modernisation we have today (Jenkins 2002:53-68).

Further, the modern world is now so differently constructed that, to go back in history, it does not help to use Weber's ethics or Jenkins' evangelicals to discuss the modern world, which has become globally hegemonic and has shut off all the old routes to economic development (Ranger 2016). In this way, thriftiness is for survival rather than entrepreneurship. This can also be seen in the 'prosperity gospel' which is different from the Victorian ideals of self-help, where thriftiness is not experienced by miraculous rewards for non-economic reasons. Rather, African evangelicals encourage 'penny capitalism' or informal economic activities by ordinary women and youths (Maxwell 2006; 1998). This is for survival – it prevents people from starving – and is also democratic as it encourages self-reliance and the regaining of self-respect. This may be linked to 'global Christianity', although many authors deny that this is the case in Africa (Ranger 2008:3-35).

With reference to global Christianity, Noll (2009) argues that America played a significant role to cause the changes that are happening in the world today. Thus, to express the American role in world Christianity, terms like 'American Christianity', 'American experience', 'American power' and 'American mission' are interchangeably used. Noll, however, observes that the Americans

failed to de-contextualise their views and theology of missions. The American religious belief and practice, therefore, were communicated and reinforced as the trademark for world Christianity. American orthodoxy and orthopraxis were literally transplanted into different parts of the world with hymns, musical instruments, Church buildings, ministers' attire, and choir robes, names of converts, schools and curricula. American Christianity was a golden standard and there was no transition of the Christian religion from the American culture into the African culture. Thus, Churches could not develop their unique cultural identity, theological distinctiveness or governance processes that would address Africa's unique challenges. Christianity remained a Western burden, wherein the central thoughts and activities of world Christianity were American, for it was not anchored in local theology, until recently when the contemporary society started to turn their back on the foundations and assumptions of the American religious hegemony. This shaking started with post- and neo-colonial evolutions as political freedom emancipated people from their Western cultural captivity, as a missionary domination was dislodged by nationals, taking over the roles of ministers of religion, school teachers, Church leaders, evangelists, Church elders and deacons. These changes brought the power of the gospel into the Church as Christians transformed local cultures with the yeast of the gospel. Noll (2009:23) elaborates:

> The magnitude of recent change means that all believers, including those in the former Christian heartlands of Europe and North America, are faced with the prospect of reorientation. But the scale and pace of recent developments means that more than just history needs to be reoriented; the awareness of where North American and European believers now fit with that history requires reassessment as well.

Noll provides a reorientation of the past, present and future of the Church as American Evangelicalism (interwoven in the American beliefs and practices of capitalism, individualism and cultural dominance) gives way to indigenous believers' cultural appropriations of Christianity, marked by theological relevance to situations of poverty, pain, rejection, suffering, forgiveness, reconciliation and love in developing nations. Local appropriations broaden the rationalised theology with volitional, effective and evaluative aspects of the people's own cultural contexts. Believers will freely read the Bible, interpret it and apply it with accountability, intellectual rigour and cultural integrity. This changes the identity of Christ from the American chains to the local homes. This is a change of direction where Christianity is being propagated by the former mission

to the former missionary nations, as Christianity adopts new homes in other places taking Christianity away from the American custody. Noll (2009:191) states:

> The impression that Christianity in its essence is either European or American is, however, simply false. Christianity began as Jewish; before it was European, it was North African, Syrian, Egyptian and Indian. While in recent history it has indeed been American, it has also been Chilean, Albanian, Fijian and Chinese. The gospel belongs to every one in every culture; it belongs to no one in any one culture in particular.

This means that an ethnocentric expression of faith becomes a nemesis rather than the mercy of God's revelation in human history and human life across cultures, nationalities and languages. It implies that becoming a Christian is by the grace of God and not by cognitive superiority. Noll emphasises that all have sinned and therefore everybody is urged to become a global partner in faith. Noll (2009:197) quotes Sanneh, stating:

> The fact that disadvantaged peoples and their cultures are buoyed by new waves of conversion, has created alignments of global scope at the margins of power and privilege. The paradigm nature of realignment compels a fundamental stocktaking of Christianity's frontier awakening, and an imperative of partnership with it. When opportunity knocks the wise will build bridges while the timorous build dams. It is a new day.

Noll (2009:199) shows that there are mission agencies, theological institutions, denominations and Churches that will either build bridges or build dams. This is a litmus test for our theological convictions and citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Noll provides missiological, theological and historical insights for the Church in a new era, where Christianity will remain both a permanent stranger and a permanent dweller in every culture it enters. The diversity of language-culture of Christianity's birth, growth and development tells us that it is a religion that cannot be chained down by linguistic, cultural, political or geographical boundaries. Christianity is a universal faith that transcends human barriers towards the fulfilment of God's promise of a 'new day' – the prophetic and apostolic culmination of redemptive history. Noll provides very informative and practical insights of the true experiences of working with American believers in Zimbabwe.

The final source for this section is a booklet that was written by a minister of religion, Enock Jirrie (1972). The booklet has been used informally to discuss the issue of evangelism and social concern in the COCZ. Jirrie is one of the brave ministers who forsook all benefits by confronting

missionary hypocrisy, especially the American missionaries who stood in utter contrast to the biblical message. While they practised social action through health and education, they resented equality with fellow Christian workers. Jirrie's booklet captures this in satirical ways and has become a classic document in the COCZ, referring to issues of worship, the Church's identity and the indigenous ownership and control of the Church. The contents of the booklet have been discussed within the ranks and file of the COCZ for many years since its publication. It was written as a memorandum to white missionaries and has graphic pictures of the issues being discussed. It bemoans a lack of professionalism among American missionaries who mostly were drawn from lay professions with education or health qualifications, but an enthusiasm in spiritual matters. This seems to be the initial approach of the RM as the New Zealanders at first also sent a stone-mason.

Lay missionaries for the most part did not know how to correctly handle spiritual matters in an African context as most of them were untrained in such issues. Jirrie really struggles with their distractive and divisive approaches, which made local Church leaders mere figureheads, and this did not serve the Church profitably. With this, the Church leaders failed to take up responsible leadership in the Church, especially where leaders were supposed to work in unity. Furthermore, the booklet soliloquises the lack of biblical principles and leadership qualities in the then crop of leaders, especially the lack of vision and a plan to give the Church to the nationals prior to the attainment of independence in 1990.

Missionaries rather trusted the leadership of secular professionals such as teachers and nurses to run Churches, than ministers of religion whom they themselves trained, and wanted them to be regarded as employees of the lay leaders. In the 1970s, Jirrie called for a religious and theological reform in the COCZ in preparing the organisation for the post-independence era. However, some people did not have the same vision, as the country was involved in war, and new theological developments in formal denominations were seen as a threat by missionaries who psyched their employees and subordinates to sabotage the call, because it was seen as worldly.

African ministers, in turn, worked in small and unfriendly groups that were motivated by desire for recognition by missionaries, to frustrate this reform and rob the Church of its future progress. Jirrie condemns the inconsistency in the Church leadership, which led to competition and

disillusionment on the mission field due to a lack of coordination in the Church. He bemoans the need for co-workers to share their success stories and their progressive ideas. All these mistakes were caused by missionary paternalism, where the local clergy's major responsibility was to interpret for missionary preachers, who were not properly equipped with the word. The missionaries were towers and symbols of dignity and importance in the Church. This booklet is useful because it encapsulates the genesis of the problems in the COCZ and its struggle to transform itself to meet the needs of its people in the nation. Consequently, Jirrie challenges missionaries to look beyond the Western leadership of the African Church by recruiting competent African leaders to coordinate the work, especially in the COCZ:

> It is hard to believe how the Church could hope to succeed without some kind of coordination. It is realistic to say the Church should eventually become 'autonomous' self-supporting and self-propagating with first creating the necessary conditions under which these things could become a reality? The present system of each area – going it alone – like the Greek City States of Old, is far from convincing. There is always the danger that without coordination of the work, a spirit of competition might take its place. Indeed, coordination must still be regarded as an eventual corner of the Lord's work (Jirrie 1972:14).

Jirrie's argument for the Church to prepare for immediate and long-term change is illustrated twenty years later by Pobee (1992). He argued that, since the leadership in the Church was controlled by Western thinking, the black congregants in the Church were challenged to raise competent African leaders to take over from these missionaries. Thirty years later, Robert Reese concurs with Jirrie that Africans needed to take up leadership in order to wean the African Church from its Western tutelage into a fully-fledged African Church, stating that

> God does not want the Church in Africa to be a mission Church under the perpetual care and tutelage of missionaries. Rather, he wants the African Church to be a missionary Church, facilitated by his servants through whom he can reach out and finish his work of reconciling the world to himself (Reese 2001:86).

Sensible missionaries like David Grubbs (2009:211) called it 'passing on the baton into the hands of the African leaders' when missionaries retired. In fact, some missionaries prepared for the future of the Church at the time of entering into the mission field in Zimbabwe, as Grubbs (2009:211) relates: 'Even then, with war looming on the horizon, we dreamed about the day when Mashoko mission would be completely under the leadership of African doctors, teachers, preachers, and

technicians'. This forced them to look for the right people to pass on the baton to lead in various parts of the Church's work.

Jirrie's booklet raises a number of issues as it came about at the time when Evangelicalism was making a lot of progress on the continent, for instance, evangelical Protestantism that focused on social action as a means of preaching the gospel. For this reason, COCZ missionaries came to set up mission centres to educate people in numeracy and literacy, do training in agriculture, nursing and other handcrafts. At the same time, the African clergy, across the denominational divide, were introducing African theology, especially people like John Mbiti of the Anglican Church, where inculturation topped the agenda. The Church was cooperating with nationals to remove colonialism and to restore human identity and dignity to the black African person. They used their knowledge of what was happening in Kenya and Uganda and other places where Anglican priests and Catholics were advocating for theological and social reform in the interest of evangelism and Church growth. This period, for the COCZ, marked the beginning of the desire to continuously transform the Church in line with the social contexts of the moment, although the COCZ did not have a good theological arsenal and resources to stir the ship of change. Jirrie argues that the COCZ missionaries saw restoration of human identity and dignity as a threat to their stay in the country, and power and authority to tell Churches what to do. This was in response to the continuous influence of evangelical Protestantism.

## 2.6 Reflections on the Emerging Church Movement

The concept of a missional Church in a secular society creates images of sombreness and holiness rather than a daring and out-going church. However, the emergence of modernity was brought forth by the questioning of the authority of revelation to empirical evidence. Postmodernism, which followed modernism, has had an impact on religion, as social change, though implied in the transformation paradigm at Christian conversion – acquiring a new life in Christ and Christian revivalism – it has never lived to see its day (Lemert 2015.). This has led African Christians to live double lives. It is within these circumstances that the Emerging Church Movement (ECM) emerged to provide Christians and Churches with practical strategies for social change. This does not imply that change happens without conflict, resistance, resentment and/or acceptance. Rather, the Church has entered into a new political game in its relationship with other religions and the

secular society. The following pages outline how transformation has been taking place in the world since the beginning of the 3rd millennium. This trend began in the 1970s with ideas of atheistic argumentation against God, and the philosophical movements that were generated to lead us to the postmodernist society. The contemporary society is simply a replacement of the modernist secular world, and thus leads us into a new form of worldliness, for which the ECM is a resurrection of the sinking missional nature of the Church, giving the Church a new opportunity and challenge to carry on with the saviour's founding charism and the historical marks of the life of the Church and its significance – for now and the future. In this way, the study is not going back into the history of the ECM, but looks at its literature and, where relevant, references are made.

*Encountering Theology of Mission* (2010), written by Otto et al, is a fifth volume in Baker's publications edited by Scott Moreau. It is useful for academics, practitioners and candidates doing missionary work of a cross-cultural nature. It comes to us from an avowedly evangelical perspective (Otto, Strauss & Tennent 2010: viii). Otto *et al*. (2010: xiii) assess the need for an impactful Christian mission in the 21st century, especially its nature, motivations and strategies with 'a biblically grounded theological perspective on God's work in the world'. They provide a comprehensive and well-researched analysis of the theological and practical issues of Christian mission in the contemporary global context (Gallagher 2011). The authors of this book use a theology of mission as 'an interpretive frame' (Otto *et al*. 2010: xviii), and thus present the Bible message in contemporary cross-cultural contexts. The text is divided into three sections: 1) the biblical foundations of mission; 2) the motives and means for mission; and 3) mission in global and local contexts. These distinct sections have sidebars of case study material useful for life questions that address everyday life contexts from an evangelical confessional slant.

On the biblical foundations of mission, Old and New Testament materials are used to explore the *Missio Dei* (plan of God for the nations) as well as the post-Bosch landscape on the nature, purpose and task of mission. The text distinguishes between development and mission to help practitioners to distinguish between their tasks and priorities. A fascinating reflection on social and evangelistic dimensions of mission is identified as creation and gospel mandates (King 2012).

They further explore different views on mission motives and means. They also highlight the merits and demerits of historical motivations, the role of the Church and the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian mission (Escobar 2011). Their descriptions use the Protestant-Conciliar and Evangelical movements in the modern missionary era. The text explores ecclesiological views of mission, while clarifying the distinctive term and role of a missionary in specifically cross-cultural settings. It challenges the often-perceived notion that everyone is a missionary. Their argument does not disregard gifts and charisms among the laity but specifies tasks and responsibilities of missionaries.

The last section deals with specific issues of mission in a dynamic plural society. These are practicalities of mission theory in reflection to biblical and historical experiences. Global and local contexts strongly demand gospel incarnation and inculturation, hence their focus on contextualisation. The material is of value to missions in cross-cultural situations. Infusing one into the cultures and contexts of the people and their language does not only expose one to different ways of living their faith, but also provides great opportunities for Church growth and to challenge assumptions. Considering pluralism and contextualisation, the text proposes a theory of interfaith relations. The theory is Christological, although it fails to discuss its soteriological implications. This gives a practitioner the opportunity to engage and experience different possibilities of relating and engaging.

Towards the end of the book, Chapter 12 explores interfaith relations. The clear exposition of the different models adopted and the assessment given of each are really highly recommendable. Yet this is not simply a review of what was done, but also proposes a theory of interfaith relations which is both generous and Christological, not least because of the authors' refusal to limit the discussion to its soteriological implications.

Overall, the text assumes that a 'theology of mission must be the starting point for defining the nature of mission and discerning the practice of mission' (Otto *et al*. 2010: xiii). The text method explores contemporary issues of mission in light of scripture, where God is identified as the source, initiator and inspirer in the Church's mission. This provides a biblical framework for evaluating

thematic issues in mission arising from the biblical text and the society. This book appraises social justice, globalisation and the uniqueness of Christ in a pluralistic world (Gallagher 2011).

The next publication in this section, written by Carson (2005), is filled with content and critique on the postmodern phenomenon of the Church. The book analysed the history of the birth of the ECM and critiques the culture of postmodernism in which the ECM emerged. It also engages heavy-weight personalities like Brian McLaren (2004) and Steve Chalke and Alan Mann (2004). Carson (2005:86-187) finds these personalities wanting, and he concludes that they 'have largely abandoned the Gospel' and thus had drifted away from the truth (Word of God). The fear is that their views are submerging the ECM under the same dangers as their critique towards confessional Christianity. Carson also does a biblical analysis of the ECM. His book is filled with conversations, engagements and readings of many books such as those of Leonard Sweet (2009), Dan Kimball (2003), Stanley Grenz (2000), Dave Tomlinson (2008), Mike Yaconelli (2003), Spencer Burke (2006), S. McKnight (2007), Tom Wright (2005) and Don Miller (1997), among others, that were written at the emergence of the ECM in the 1990s. This book has been reviewed by many theologians due to its importance for the contemporary Church and its contributions to the wider Protestant tradition. It has initiated a whole corpus of writings and publications which cannot be discussed individually here but need to be acknowledged as part of the review material used for this study.

The ECM, as discussed by Carson, analyses the pragmatic and pedagogical ramifications of the waning evangelical movement, and the emergence of a valid new Church, founded upon Evangelicalism, threatening to totally transform the Christian faith worldwide. Carson (2005:42) states, 'At the heart of the emerging reformation lies a perception of a major change in culture'. He appraises the reality of contemporary thinking and the need for biblical theology to shape the thinking. He also shows appreciation for the Bible and has a keen insight into culture. Carson merges the biblical truth and the responses of leaders of the ECM, as his book is a response to a need by Christians to understand, evaluate and interact with the postmodern culture in line with their faith. He therefore advises that the ECM should not be summarily dismissed, despite its worrying weaknesses, for it has important lessons for worldwide Christianity today (Carson 2005:10).

The ECM has been viewed as a protest movement to traditional Evangelicalism, showing frustration with fundamentalism, hypocrisy, fixed tradition, naivety, absolutism, showiness, institutionalised thinking, arrogance and an isolationist mentality in simplistic maxims of the Christian tradition. Carson (2005:41) states, 'In short, the whiff of protest in the emerging Church movement is everywhere. It can be usefully analysed along three axes: against what is perceived to be a personally stifling cultural conservatism, against modernism and its incarnation in modern Churchmanship, and against modernism's incarnation in seeker-sensitive Churches'.

The reason why the ECM protests against modernism is because of the latter's epistemological premises of the 'I' as the centre of knowledge and truth, and moreover that knowledge and truth is held as absolute. In contrast, postmodernism perceives knowledge and truth as relative to the individual. The ECM, thus, is generally in favour of a postmodern epistemology as its leaders are suspicious of an absolute truth or a clear understanding of God's revealed truth – the postmodernism of Mark Taylor (1987) buys into this. They also protest against the seeker-sensitive Church in mega-Churches with inauthentic worship services instead of building Churches around an authentic experience of a connectedness with God. For instance, in modern Church services, the sermon was the centre of worship, whereas in the ECM, all the parts of the worship service – sermon and community – form a holistic experience of the presence of God. In this regard, Carson argues that the ECM needs to be assessed with regard to its critical evaluation of the contemporary culture and the way it sees and uses the Bible and biblical fidelity in its proposals to adopt new changes. He states that the ECM 'must be evaluated as to its reading of contemporary culture' (Carson 2005:43), while its proposals for the way ahead must be assessed for their biblical fidelity' (Carson 2005:44).

Furthermore, Carson's reference to contemporary culture is a cause for concern as many Church leaders of the ECM do not 'ground their call to reformation in cultural changes taking place around us' (Carson 2005:57). Most of their leaders tend to be overly reductionist and thus '[t]he modern period is treated as if it were all of a piece, consistently devoted to the rational, the cerebral, the linear, the absolute, the objective' (Carson 2005:59). To misread modernism in this way, leads Church leaders in the ECM to universally condemn, sometimes unfairly, confessional Christianity

(Carson 2005:60). He argues that wholesale criticism is not fair as there were Christians of modernism who had firm beliefs and a fervent devotion to Christ. Rather, the ECM has been theologically shallow and intellectually incoherent in its criticism of confessional Christianity. Carson argues that it needs to be understood that theology and epistemology, created in a fallen world, cannot be totally good or bad. Further, the excessiveness of postmodern toleration leads to incoherence (Carson 2005:68-69). The ECM leaders unfortunately lump the Word of God on all the social changes they create. They lose credibility of their analysis of the Word of God, because it has a variety of meanings depending on contexts and periods in human history. Carson also criticises the view that postmodernism has brought authentic Christianity, as this interferes with a fair evaluation of the contribution of postmodernism to the ECM.

At this point we need to define the two key terms 'modernism' and 'postmodernism'. Modernism is simply a popularisation of one strand of thought *vis-à-vis* others. A reductionist view of this culture leads to a historical distortion which the ECM leaders call, 'confessional Christianity under modernism' (Carson 2005:60). According to Carson, postmodernism was passing away in Europe and beginning in America in his time, making some positive and negative contributions to the contemporary societies, which are incompatible to biblical theology.

Carson further outlines the contributions and challenges of postmodernism. He argues that there are pre-modern, modern and postmodern epistemologies. The pre-modern epistemology largely considers God's disclosure of knowledge, for, according to them, truth is a subset of divine revelation (Carson 2005:88). In the modern epistemology, knowledge begins with a person and not with God (Carson 2005:92). Philosophies of individual determination by René Descartes (31 March 1596 to 11 February 1650) and others reigned: 'I think therefore I am; I am because I think' (Watson 2007). The individual was regarded to be the fulcrum of objective reality. Finally, the point of departure of a postmodern epistemology still is the finite 'I' which is 'passionately anti-foundationalist', meaning that 'there is no ultimate fulcrum on which the levers of knowledge can rest' (Carson 2005:97). Everyone is dealt with as they see fit. This method leads to many authentic and distinguishable ways of knowing reality. Postmodernism questions objectivity affecting the Christian gospel, especially evangelism, 'giving the impression that Christians think they have something superior' (Carson 2005:10). Conversion becomes difficult as knowledge and truth is

relative and contextual, and therefore 'cannot partake of ahistorical universality' (Carson 2005:97). Postmodernism advances personal narratives to understand the world, and not meta-narratives as they are understood to meaningfully and cohesively describe all of reality without allowing exceptions. This leads postmodernists to have several correlatives in regard to ill-defined spirituality, biblical illiteracy, syncretism, secularism and globalism (Carson 2005:98-102). Postmodernism's regard for experience in relation to truth leads to the denial of objective knowledge on the one hand and admits to the understanding that human knowledge can provide a measure of perspectival objectivity on the other (Carson 2005:105-106).

The researcher understands that changes in culture have been justified as necessitating changes in the way people worship and thus the emergence of the ECM. This is because the old systems and structures cannot serve the needs and interests of the postmodern society. Postmodernism believes in borrowing ideas from several places and has its own language of communicating such ideas. For this reason, some ministers of religion and Church leaders have thought about publishing their ideas, like Brian McLaren (2004), Steve Chalke (2009), Mike Yaconelli (2003) and Spencer Burke (2006), moving from the 'absolute to authentic' (Carson 2005:15). In conversation with Alex Tsakiris, Spencer Burke says that faith communities will naturally come to an end due to progress, like various parts of mercury substance allow people to 'roll together', or 'roll apart' (Tsakiris n.d.). 'Rather than force people to fall into line, an oozy community tolerates, differentiates and treats people who hold opposing views with great dignity' (Carson 2005:19). This way of thinking is symptomatic of a postmodern culture, where no opinions are refused and orthodoxy is quickly labelled as narrow, intolerant and opinionated. Postmodernism thus suffers from an epistemological crisis compared to modernism with absolute, rational and analytical values. Postmodernism rather attempts to use the modernist premises and yet adopts a collectivity in individualism and thus cannot arrive at truth or objective reality (Carson 2005:75-76). This is the same struggle McLaren had, of trying to bring absolutism and relativism to the same table. The result was that the ECM leaders have criticised modernism without analysing the contemporary culture. For this reason, Carson defends an attack on the Evangelicalism's use of the Bible as in-sync with the Christian faith because the ECM was in danger of submerging itself into the same culture it was analysing.

The ECM's attempt to read postmodernism in relation to people's faith (Carson 2005:45) helps to push for authenticity in ritual worship (Carson 2005:49-51) and to recognise the believer's own social location that 'we ourselves [as Christians] are part of this rapidly changing culture, and we cannot help but be influenced by it' (Carson 2005:51). The ECM is also concerned with 'evangelizing people who are often overlooked by the Church' (Carson 2005:52). It has 'probing links with the [Christian] tradition' (Carson 2005:54), throwing away some less helpful theology, but remaining open to orthodox practices of the Church. They, however, managed to integrate scriptural teaching and human experience – a thing that could not be done by the Church of the modern world. Carson acknowledges that the ECM has strengths which do not only belong to it but to the whole Church of God (Carson 2005:56). On the one hand, we may all agree that Christianity has initiated the process of secularisation and modernity, although it has not been able to control culture; on the other hand, culture has become so influential on faith that it nearly destroyed faith. In this way, the ECM's strengths are in its ability to expose the pretension of modernism, to allow for intuitive imagination to be legitimate and to be sensitive to other cultures while being humbly compared to modernist arrogance.

Despite the ECM's weaknesses recounted here, it offers an opportunity for mission and ministry. The ECM has the ability in reading the times, authenticity, recognition of social location, evangelism to outsiders and linking tradition to Christian heritage. The ECM, in other words, is adept on the Church's customs of witnessing, teaching and identity. It realises that it is in a cultural context from which it cannot be removed. The Church has to be authentic and evangelistic, thereby probing tradition, seeking to build a faith that is rooted in the past, while at the same time, remaining faithful to present circumstances. The ECM leaders foster a contagious spirit that builds up the Christian community and is not content with superficiality (Carson 2005:50-51). Carson (2005:51) admits that 'there is some insight in the postmodern insistence that the readers themselves are socially located and that this social location plays a contributing role in their interpretations'. In this way, the ECM congregations focus on evangelism among people who were often overlooked, attempting to re-establish important links of the modernist Church with its Christian heritage, so as to learn much from the people of God who preceded them.

The ECM has some weaknesses, for it is neither able to give a balanced analysis of confessional Christianity in the modernist Church, nor of biblical theology in the postmodernist Church. This is because they ignore new methods of reading the Bible as well as the historical theology. They fail to come to terms with truth-claims created by human knowledge (Carson 2005:126-132), as they rather overplay the distinction between modernism and postmodernism and are therefore 'soft' on truth. Postmodernists depend on distorting the full view of things, for they are unable to face tough questions that are related to truth (Carson 2005:132-138) and therefore depend on a manipulative and false antithesis (Carson 2005:104). Carson (2005:234) states: 'Damn all false antitheses to hell, for they generate false gods, they perpetuate idols, they twist and distort our souls, they launch the Church into violent pendulum swings whose oscillations succeed only in dividing brothers and sisters in Christ'. They argue that there is no reason for them in failing to know all things accurately, or in part, while at the same time they argue that they cannot know all things.

Postmodernists ignore that, in spite of 'difficulties of knowing things and in communicating things with other human beings, a great deal of knowing and effective communication does take place' (Carson 2005:106). This arises from a flawed epistemology, which has led ECM leaders to fail to faithfully critique their culture, because of this weak methodological premise. In fact, even the Bible says, '[E]xamine everything carefully, hold fast to that which is good, [and] abstain from every form of evil' (1 Th 5:21). This is a useful admonition in a postmodernist society where many things are justified as good even though they do not naturally present any goodness. Without the use of scripture as the 'norming norm' over and against an eclectic appeal to tradition (Carson 2005:139-146), the ECM leads them to no objective truth in their search for reality. As a result, the ECM's cleaving to postmodernism fails to penetrate serious challenges (of mysticism and ecumenism) concerning their fidelity to the biblical truth (Carson 2005:87). They cannot responsibly handle historical and exegetical facts (Carson 2005:146-155).

Furthermore, the ECM emphasises that 'belonging', at the expense of 'becoming', is interfering with Church discipline. Carson argues that the teaching of the New Testament presupposes that the two are inseparable. Separating 'belonging' from 'becoming' negates the cross and the gospel of Jesus Christ, as offenders cannot be disciplined or excommunicated. Carson (2005:206) argues:

> For me, the most troubling facet of the emerging Church movement is the seeming cavalier manner in which the cross of Christ is handled by the best known and most responsible of the movement's leaders. Were this book to double its size, there would be space merely to survey the sweep of what Scripture says on this subject, virtually none of which seems to be referenced with any seriousness or exegetical competence by the emerging Church leaders' published discussions.

Carson focuses on the majority of the influential ECM leaders, without balancing this with ordinary ECM members and other people of little influence. This led him to produce a complex text that can only appeal to people who are well-versed in theological discourse rather than neophytes in the faith. His book is also written for ECM believers as he fails to deeply address some of the major concerns of non-ECM believers (such as issues of mysticism and ecumenism that are foundational to the ECM formation), examining it from the sidelines of the movement. This is because he tries to provide a 'measured response' for a postmodern epistemology to Churches that are strongly rejecting tradition and/or grand narratives of postmodernism and are instead creating their own *ad hoc* views of the Church without the Bible and tradition to offer them legitimacy. Furthermore, he fails to recognise that ECM leaders do not turn to scripture to adjudicate conflicts that are in the Christian tradition. Finally, he advises the ECM leaders' questioning of the historical reliability of the Bible, telling them, like those who followed him – Hans Frei (1993) and George Lindbeck (1984) – to 'live in the flow of the biblical narrative' (Vanhoozer 2003:42). Rather, readers of the Bible should be allowed to raise questions of doubt on the truthfulness of the narrative instead of giving such a myopic counsel (Carson 2005:144).

Carson contributes a lot to this thesis by teaching readers how to respond to unfaithful permutations of the gospel in the ECM, and the ever-changing face of American Evangelicalism. He is a skilled writer and conservative scholar who skilfully presents sound research on biblical theology. His book introduces the ECM, assesses it and addresses several of its most glaring weaknesses. This book can be used as a model of how to powerfully, graciously, wisely and faithfully interact with some errant views and sometimes mistaken people in the ECM. The model of response is derived from Carson's nuanced understanding of theology, history and philosophy that helps to adequately advise on a postmodern epistemology. The model can be used when investigating the diversity of the ECM itself, as Carson accepts that human knowledge in post modernity is finite and biased by social location. In the Bible, Paul used some form of cultural adaptation to preach to the Athenians

at the Areopagus (Ac 17:16-34). This is important in theological and exegetical fidelity to identify the merits of ministerial vocation and method that can swim against the cultural current. Carson succinctly subjects the ECM leaders to the authority of scripture, because fidelity to the Bible is a priority if Christians want to use God's self-revelation as their epistemological point of departure.

Carson further clarifies modernist and postmodernist views of the Bible and the contemporary Church. His faithfulness to scripture orientates the reader to examine the implications of the ECM, which are similar to experiential New Age spirituality. He further clarifies wrong-headed ecumenism, and how the ECM blurs the intended distinction of the Church from the world, preferring cultural trends that increase evangelistic effectiveness even when they are in error, and the emergent return to iconic forms of worship.

Carson writes from the perspective of the ECM in the West, where he and the ECM share the strong common culture of modernism and postmodernism with Western scholars and philosophers. African scholars and philosophers are still grappling with the aftermath of independence and the reconstruction of their culture and philosophy, as it was colonised during its pre-modern stage. The use of ACHA, with its cleaving to the communal society, provides a fulcrum upon which the cultural system of the people helps to inform our analysis and evaluation of the African Church's struggle with postmodernism and its dis/contents. This study contributes to an African epistemology (the African way of knowing) during this time of postmodern changes. The study regards the changes as a new form of modernism, in which both modernism and secularism are terms that mean one and the same thing – the invasion of the world with an acceptable form of worldliness (Wells 1994).

While referring to Carson's discussion of the ECM, reference can also be made to Diana Butler Bass' four publications, who, like Brian McLaren, Marcus Borg, Bishop Jack Spong and other American authors have considerably influenced Christianity in the West, especially among liberal Christians seeking for a Church rather than a faith, fitting to address the needs of a third millennium believer. Bass, in her ground-breaking book, *Christianity After Religion* (Bass 2012), assesses the declining trend in Christian attendance and affiliation among American Churches as being caused by an emphasis on religion rather than spirituality. Churches that focus on spirituality continue to

thrive. This book is useful, for it looks back to a new great awakening, which is the source of the RM's origin. The origin of this movement is shrouded in spiritual revival and new social and political identities.

In *A People's History of Christianity*, Bass also argues that beliefs and practices are hallmarks that nourish Christian communities. Thus even Irenaeus (ca. 130-220 C.E.), the bishop of Lyon and disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna "sought to strengthen the church by helping new Christians experience the love of God through the practice of faith" (Bass 2009:36). She recites an alternative history of Christianity that does not use power and hierarchy. This book enlivens movements, personalities and spiritualities that ignited Christian worship and social activism as an inclusion of vital communities that built on the beliefs and practices of the Church. The emergence of movements has been a historical celebration of the Church's faithfulness to the mission and message of Jesus Christ, sometimes using corrective measures by constituents who rebelled against Church-state complicity such as reformers and restorers. This is the reason why she refers to it as 'generative Christianity' (Bass 2009:38), and it closely resonates with the current Restoration Christianity in the COCZ, making it quite relevant for the current developments in the COCZ.

In her book, *Christianity for the rest of us*, Bass describes how mainline Churches in the USA flourished without mimicking evangelical mega-Churches (Bass 2006). She offers a methodology for eager mainline Protestant Churches to remain faithful to their traditions by consistently practicing hospitality, worship, contemplation, discernment, justice and diversity. From the list of Churches that consistently used the core expressions that helped restoration Churches to rediscover authentic Christian faith and witness in the USA, the Disciples of Christ Church is critically linked to the COCZ in methodology and practice, since most congregations in Zimbabwe were founded by the Disciples of Christ Church.

In 2004, Bass has already illustrated the persistence and dynamism of mainline Protestantism (Bass 2004). Her insider descriptions of meaningful changes and struggles, especially on women in ministry debates, unity and diversity in community, and the battle between current contemporary innovation and maintenance of tradition are quite relevant to the COCZ challenges with the Zimbabwean religious landscape of Pentecostalism and Church politics. In the same way, Boff

(2012) refers to the education of children from upper classes in developing ethical actions and practices in groups that are religiously, politically, scientifically and technologically empowered. These privileged classes exist in Churches and have an immense responsibility for liberation theology. The scholars referred to below are in line with the issues being discussed here.

Marti and Ganiel (2014) indicate that Christianity in the postmodern society has been influenced by loose, transactional associations of individuals and groups, reacting to modernist dominant modes of Christian practice in the world. They oppose mega-Churches and solemn mainline ecclesiological models (Marti & Ganiel 2014:32). The emerging Church is quite a new and rich area of study, borrowing much from the Christian traditions of Evangelicalism and others. The researchers use social science methods in their study of the ECM such as surveys, interviews, ethnographic data and fascination, as well as colourful and illustrative vignettes of the ECM's vibrancy as a living phenomenon. The study looks at the ECM in the USA and Northern Ireland, and positively asserts the Church's attempt to realise a new Christian *modus vivendi* (mode of living, or way of life) in a postmodernist society. It also asserts that the ECM has become transnational in identity.

Marti and Ganiel (2014:6) describe the ECM members as middle-class, degreed professionals with postmodern concerns, stating, 'Emerging Christians are a discernible, transnational group who share a religious orientation built on a continual practice of deconstruction'. The emergence of the ECM can be located in the concept of deconstruction, which loosely refers to Derrida (1997) and Caputo (1988), as well as other participants. 'Deconstruct' in this context refers to an openness to challenges, rethinking the way to do Church, reconfiguring faith and reimagining how to serve in the Christian Church as people see it fit in their own lives.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1982) refers to deconstruction as involving a re-visioning and hermeneutics of suspicion, remembering and proclamation. The ECM's religious orientation is built on the practice of an overarching feature of deconstruction and operated by religious entrepreneurs from the institutional Church. The leaders shape the theological debate, giving legitimacy and constancy to the future of the movement.

Modernity's individualisation 'involves the management and assertion of one's individuated self yet simultaneously involves connection, empathy, and love for others' (Marti & Ganiel 2014:166). Ulrich Beck (15 May 1944 – 1 January 2015) states that cooperative egoism is a characterisation of secular modernity that gave rise to individual religiosity, abandonment of the Christian tradition and ultimate decline of religious institutions (Beck 2007). Beck (2010:39) further writes that "with increasing modernization, religions do not disappear but change their appearance." The ECM is deconstructing faith (Christianity), using the deconstructive strategies that can be concisely related to the work of the renowned French philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy, a friend and colleague of Derrida. The Christian gospel rather calls for the unseating of the self and its shaping to be relational, interdependent and accountable to others. In 2008 Nancy wrote a book on the deconstruction of the Christian faith (Nancy 2008).

Nancy argues that the ECM members view their Churches as offering alternative spaces as they recalibrate 'multiple religious identities' (Nancy 2008:18), react to norms of institutional structures and engage entrepreneurially with the Christian tradition. The ECM runs deconstructive congregations, which are alternative trajectories that illustrate how they differ from institutional Churches. Institutional Churches are painted in negative hues by the ECM members, who refer to themselves and their 'entrepreneurship' as deconstructive, radical and anti-institutional, in their re-engagement with 'true' postmodern Christian values. The ECM emerged from the secularised modern Church that was influenced by individualism and pluralism, and this attempt to overcome the divide between the secular and the sacred is meant to allow individuals to develop a new critical identity of their faith in non-conformist ways. Nancy (2008:20) highlights how the ECM members attempt to discuss issues of doubt, truth and God as well as to inform on how to 'practice' the faith. The Churches are described as inclusive, experiential, participatory and energising. The goals of the ECM thus cannot be differentiated from the evangelical movement of early mega-Churches as depicted by Donald Miller (1997). He thoroughly discusses how the ECM is driven by human experiences, without statements of faith and how they exercise a post-creedal plurality.

The ECM's pluralist approach to congregational life has led their congregations to focus on a radical community, religious relativism and the equipping of saints to live as missionaries of the ECM in their communities. These principles have attracted some people to the movement, while

at the same time forced some individuals to leave the movement due to its values. For instance, Marti and Ganiel state that the ECM focuses squarely on the belief that fellow Christians should not judge the beliefs and behaviour of other Christians, and that people can therefore exercise a moral freedom (Marti & Ganiel 2014:17). To some people who left the ECM, this was an expression of 'too much love' to the people so that it can be seen as unconditional love, making it difficult to enforce a moral code into the lives of believers (Marti & Ganiel 2014:38).

Members of ECM congregations are shown as engaging in the Christian faith, using the dogmatic formulas of the institutional Churches they originate from (Marti & Ganiel 2014:205). ECM members are largely from small groups that participated in worship, especially disillusioned young adults in the evangelical Churches of the mid-1980s and 1990s. ECM members, however, are more open to new ways of practising Church. Marti and Ganiel have also demonstrated that they were disappointed by their past experiences (Marti & Ganiel 2014:207). ECM members, therefore, may also be uncovering new relationships with God as they converse with others and follow Jesus Christ. To do this, they facilitate a shared leadership, celebrate experimentation, value creativity and foster a 'neutral religious space' (Marti & Ganiel 2014:39). The ECM participants view these practices as 'essential to their personal spiritual growth' (Marti & Ganiel 2014:42; Guest 2015). The ECM, however, has weak leadership and power structures in comparison to the institutional Churches, although there are some ECM leaders like Peter Rollins, who were singled out in the study as clearly wielding power and authority in ecclesiastical circles. Marti and Ganiel (2014:119) indicate that Rollins spoke about Ikon [a Belfast-based collective or South Korean boy band recently formed by YG Entertainment] saying it does not care about its clients. This is because "Ikon is hardly an institution at all, a more literally and visibly deconstructive quasi-institution. It is relatively new and no one knows how long it will be around" (Caputo 2007:129). They imply that Ikon did not concern itself with the benefits members were getting from its services, but that it was merely providing space for relationship building and support to people's visions. Members are therefore encouraged to use Ikon without the leaders' responsibility. It is unfortunate that some members of Ikon, like Sarah Williamson, a 2002 BBC *Young Musician* competition concerto finalist, found a lack of ministerial care on the platform, and was at variance with the commission of Jesus Christ for his followers to make disciples, and to responsibly and actively 'do unto others', and not to passively wait for members to disciple each

other, or 'do unto themselves' (Marti and Ganiel 2014:121). Peter Rollins (2011b:27) stresses that 'the fundamental Christian event involves exposing the contingency hermeneutics', which is a distinction of name and event of God, while being attracted to deconstructive theology and arraigned to materialist theology.

Rollins repeatedly suggests that many ECM members view themselves as belonging to a 'political' movement, but no evidence or achievement in this regard is provided (Rollins 2011b:57). He focuses on white middle-class members, meaning that other racial classes whose people are abused victims, marginalised and vulnerable, are not given space in the Church. He seems to accept that the ECM is doing a new thing, referring to his previous works in 2011 and 2006 (Rollins 2011a; 2006). The ideas in these writings can be traced back to the mystical Christian tradition, like the 14th century's *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Anonymous). The text attempts to deconstruct *Deus Absconditus* (the [un]knowing God), that is the experience of the presence of God, and the experience of the absence of God (Nikoletseas 2014:80).

Finally, Marti and Ganiel developed theories to capture the ECM orientation around the world instead of using conventional sociological categories which were found to be inadequate to deal with these ECM congregations. The ECM congregations have the capacity to hold the ethos of both the individual and the community, and to challenge people who criticise it for embracing postmodernist ideas. Postmodernist ideas have a tendency to fragment and do not aim to be durable in the life of the Church. The ECM is rather seen as pluralist but also institutionalising, to embrace a diversity of identities so that the Churches can perform 'strategic religiosity' (Marti & Ganiel 2014:60). In this way, the ECM deconstructs Christian traditions mostly familiar to its participants through its rituals and theologies, which in a way facilitate an empowerment of individuals in their religiosity. The process of deconstruction is supported by individuals and the community and is forged on congregations that are attractive, because of their ability to promote a 'religiously individualized self, one that strives for a type of non-conformity that co-mingles ambiguity and conviction' (Marti & Ganiel 2014:77; Cooper 2017; Guest 2015).

However, the major weaknesses of the ECM are that they focus more on what they condemn rather than what they stand for, while opposing the bureaucracy and hierarchy in confessional Churches

as well as the dogmatic/judgemental attitudes within their setting. The ECM is disorganised but closely-knit with insular or hidden structures, which make the congregations informal but intimate, and therefore difficult to exercise transparency. Consequently, the in-crowd decides and exercises leadership without any requirement for accountability (Marti & Ganiel 2014:121). The ECM thus depicts various forms of relationality and individuality that are problematic and not compatible with the ways of thinking in the historic Christian tradition.

The strength of the book written by Marti and Ganiel is that it has a notable sociological analysis. This book marks the first, among sociological researchers, to focus on the ECM in a persistent and well-evidenced way. It masterfully takes the task of describing a religious phenomenon with confessional Christianity that rejects a common theology, thereby simultaneously rejecting a hierarchical and fixed leadership structure and a common definition. It seriously calls students of the ECM to understand the organisation in a comprehensive way, while using various modes of engagement that do not reduce the ECM to a counter-reactionary movement against Evangelicalism. It also captures the ECM's emphasis on openness and inclusivity to a wide range of Christian traditions and ecumenism.

Marti and Ganiel are interested in orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy; hence they do not spend much time on explaining the philosophical ideas of Derrida and others, although they are aware of these influences on what is taking place. It needs to be accepted that a deconstructive philosophy is at the core of the movement and that this has changed the consciousness of Protestant life and work in the West. However, Marti and Ganiel (2014:160) are interested in describing how the ECM members can 'follow Jesus in the real world' of career choices, politics, and contemporary lifestyles in view of their religious devotion 'outside what Emerging Christians see as corrupt and oppressive political, economic, and, in some cases, ecclesial systems'. They marshal a wide range of illustrations using social theory, which enrich the reader's understanding of the ECM and raise new questions on the re/formation of religious identities prior to the postmodern era. Questions on differing ecclesiastical and cultural contexts help to generate an understanding of the ECM's development patterns in this book. Marti and Ganiel succeed to outline the ECM, to show its distinctive features and how it functions as a socio-religious entity.

The weakness of their book is that it fails to investigate the place of forgiveness among the ECM members (forgiveness was highlighted by Derrida in 1997). Marti and Ganiel, however, do not give a description of the ECM members (or their respondents) on compassion and caring. This is because they have failed to investigate the consumerist tendencies of the ECM, especially its structure of business ethics to ensure that the Church keeps growing.

The book of Marti and Ganiel further suffers from a lack of adequate engagement with the traditional aspects of the Church. They ignore it because they are 'polemical' (Marti & Ganiel 2014:208) when they inquire the failure of the Church of the modernist society. They also engage more with the West without engaging other contexts; they rather use publications from other places, which is obvious in the direction and formula of their arguments like counter-sectarianism in the ECM. They do not really engage deeply with modernity and post-modernity so as to reflect on the value of secularism and pluralism being embraced by the ECM Christians for the purposes of accounting the degree of secularity and non-religion in the movement. This makes it difficult for the authors to map, if at all, the multiple alignments that distinguish the ECM members from confessional Christians. For instance, engaging with the cultures would help to discover the kind of spiritual resources that the ECM members use, the compatibility of patterns with middle-classes, the role of the ECM on the emerging trends, etc.

Marti and Ganiel contribute by introducing the ECM to people who are unaware of them and give useful insights to those who are familiar with it. They adequately define the ECM and also describe the nuances in the movement, utilising a good writing style, especially to readers not familiar with social science research, and non-scientific readers. They have done this by focusing on interviews with ECM members. While social scientific writings on the strategic religious zoning of the ECM are an important piece of research, Marti and Ganiel use direct quotes from ECM believers stating why they broke away from the confessional Church, thereby grounding social theory on concrete experiences.

Insights gained from this research will augment an ethnographic study of the COC in Zimbabwe among the Shona and the Ndebele people. The thesis probes into some of the questions that the above documents did not probe, like whether the COCZ is repackaging liberal Christianity or is

starting a new faith, and what reasons force us to be interested in the transformation of the COCZ and the historical significance of the COCZ with reference to its transformation? Change has mostly been engineered by those considered to be in the nonentity rather than those in the religious right. This thesis also wants to help in shaping the future of the transformation process of the COCZ and to protect those who are disillusioned by stagnancy and disinterested in becoming part of the faith community. The transformation of the Church in Africa is a fertile ground of research. Observations from this study cannot reverse changes that were brought by Western Christian missionaries in the secular and African societies. The researcher attempts to provide comprehensive snapshots of the COCZ and the critical moment it finds itself in. Opposing parties to changes in the COCZ will be engaged, while trying to understand the life worlds of the leaders of each of the factions and their orientation to the modern or postmodern epistemology.

Miller and Yamamori wrote *Global Pentecostalism: The new face of Christian social engagement* (2007) in which they have interviewed Church leaders and attended Pentecostal Church services on four continents in twenty countries, spanning over a period of four years. The authors bring current demographics in the Christendom from countries they visited during the period of research. These include many social service programmes and activities such as orphanages, medical assistance and drug rehabilitation centres associated with Pentecostal Churches.

These authors bring a balance to the growing influence of Christian transformation through the influence of Pentecostalism on the global scene. The phenomenological realities of Pentecostalism indicate that it is a religious movement affecting social and political activities on a global scale. Pentecostalism is significantly involved in the social ministry of developing nations, as these researchers discovered that it has an unmatched social dynamism with unmatched impact on Jesus' Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20). Pentecostalism has had an impact on individual changes through conversion and beyond, but they questioned the Pentecostalism's transformative effect beyond the level of an individual. This raises a host of questions: Can Pentecostalism provide hope for social transformation? Pentecostalism has been rejected by social scientists as opium for masking structures of inequality and for sustaining the *status quo* – can it provide a positive effect that can lead to upward social mobility? The authors state that '[t]he central theme of this book is whether Pentecostalism in all of its different manifestations can have an impact on the many

problems facing our world and especially developing nations?' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:31). In the final chapter of their book, they relay the thesis of their work, stating that 'Pentecostals are increasingly engaged in community based social ministries' and 'some of the most innovative social programs in the world are being initiated by fast-growing Pentecostal churches' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:6). This helps to break the misconceptions of Pentecostal worship, music, eschatological stereotypes, demographics and the secularisation theory. While Pentecostals are listed in their classes and varieties, Miller and Yamamori focus on holistic and integral Pentecostals.

The authors indicate that Pentecostalism is making a great contribution to the common global future of Christianity. To describe their encounters during their research, they coined the phrase 'progressive Pentecostalism' to mean 'Christians who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and the life of Jesus and seek to holistically address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of the people in their community' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:212). Such Christians were regarded as holistic and therefore dissociated from prosperity preachers not concerned about social needs. Holistic Christians are concerned with the social needs of local communities and they provide holistic beliefs, ministries and motivations to members for progress in the life of the group (cf. Brusco 2009). They respond to development needs rather than the provision of aid, through holistic programmes that operate in different contexts to address the problems of communities, without differentiating the social and spiritual tenets of the gospel from their actions. The weakness of the movement is its failure to challenge structural inequality or to face the political structures perpetrating it. In some places, Pentecostalism has adopted 'frontal assaults' on corrupt systems, although in the mainstream, 'progressive Pentecostalism' emphasises a 'quiet revolution' or a 'trickle down' model of social change that result in developing a new class of morally upright leaders with strong moral values (Brusco 2009:126-127). In this way, 'Liberation Theology opted for the poor at the same time that the poor were opting for Pentecostalism' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:15; Sutterluty 2016). This view differs from the one of overthrowing institutions through the use of force of arms, but by offering an alternative morality of purity and harmony over against protest and opposition.

Miller and Yamamori are sympathetic towards the features of the Pentecostal experience, faith and worship, in which case the social programmes are an extension of the religious dimension of the phenomenon. In chapter 5 of their book, they refer to 'Encounters with the Holy Spirit', which shows that Pentecostals' social engagement is informed by their understanding of worship. It states:

> The root of Pentecostal social engagement is the experience of collective worship. It is the divine-human encounter that empowers people to help their neighbour as well as engage in various community building activities. It is also this encounter that humbles people, enabling them to be, in the view of the believers, servant of others (Miller & Yamamori 2007:132).

They note that worship style is a motivation for Pentecostals, as it relates to their experience of the presence of God in their lives. This helps to distinguish a fundamentalist Christianity from progressive Pentecostalism, based on experiential worship. Worship is both a private and public business, motivating Pentecostals to engage in a holistic progressivism through their engagement in social action.

Their study process is, however, fatal, because they did not spend enough time at every location, as studies in an area could not take more than ten days each. In his book review, Brusco (2009:118) views the case reports, stating that they are 'like fund-raising letters from an international aid charity'. This is because the book is illustrated by a video that was shot by Miller, which gives a sense of immediacy for fieldwork among Pentecostal Christians. The video has no subtitles, narrations or translations. The book's weakness is further found in its inability to separate truly indigenous from foreign funded and initiated programmes. Finally, the book marginalises women, devoting only the last two pages to their role, yet most of the social programmes founded by Pentecostals were founded by women (Brusco 2009:129-134). It needs to be understood that more women are attracted to Pentecostalism compared to men, and therefore the authors should have systematically analysed the issue of gender in this book. They have rather regarded women as 'social entrepreneurs' rather than crediting their individuality, 'creativity and drive' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:209). This lack assumes that social programmes are done by exceptional people and not by women in person.

Overall, Miller & Yamamori succeed by challenging stereotypes about Pentecostalism, for it should be recognised as 'an emergent force within World Christianity' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:15ff), rather than a fringe moment. Pentecostals are more successful in their economic lives due to their ethical living without drugs and alcohol, and because they are encouraged into entrepreneurship to invest their energy in progressive work. Most Pentecostals who interacted with the researchers were found to operate good social services as well as having better educational opportunities. For this reason, most people had a feeling of control over their lives without much worry about the economic depression that was looming as spiritual matters gave them a greater upward social mobility. They can be credited for understanding Pentecostalism's responsiveness to the local situation and people's lives. They also distinguish between 'progressive Pentecostalism' and liberation theologies. In this way they provide a gist on the implications of the global transformation of the Christian faith, although more rigorous and grounded work on the research still needs to be done to arrive at 'progressive Pentecostalism' (Miller & Yamamori 2007:2, 4, 258).

This thesis provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of change in the COCZ, acknowledging the challenges posed by both indigenous initiatives and foreign funded programmes. It also asserts the place of women in the transformation process which began with women sponsoring the founding of a conference centre and its consequent construction, among other things.

Moody (2015:27) provides a 'turn' to the theology of Paul from a Western political philosophy. She traces the arguments into the philosophical heritage of the death of God in the works of both Nietzsche and Hegel (Williams 2012), while respectively utilising the deconstructive and materialist [radical] theologies of John D. Caputo (2007) and Slavoj Žižek (2014; 2012) to explain her radical theology. She explores the meaning of passing through the death of God and abandoning the death experience to live the life of a Christian. She also demonstrates how the theology of the death of God is transforming people in their religious practices on a daily basis, by examining the works of two radical figures at the margins of the contemporary Christian experience in the changing Western religious landscape, namely Peter Rollins and Kester Brewin (2004:78). Moody argues that deconstructive practices are able to make religious communities part

and parcel of the wider collection of materialists in which the death of God is used as the hinge for the expression. She interweaves complex philosophical theories with religious practices to make philosophy a significant method of radical theology for emerging Christian communities. This helps to challenge theologians and ECM Christians to engage in the dialogue between theory and practice.

Moody's book, *Radical Theology*, is a scholarly and philosophical publication built on the views of the University of Lancaster (Moody 2015). She uses theism and radical theology to support her arguments, theoretically exposing Caputo and Žižek, and practically discussing Rollins and Brewin. The book makes an impressive theological tour of reading the faith from a/n a/theist's and materialist's perspectives, by using psychoanalytic and deconstructive frameworks. Moody (2015:1) states in the introduction:

> Engaging in a close reading of Žižek's materialist theology and Caputo's deconstructive theology will allow me to make the case that a Caputian a/theism is the proper framework for a Žižekian fighting collective. This central claim means both that Žižek's political community of believers in a Cause is properly a/theistic, ir/religious or faith/less and that Caputo's philosophical a/theology is also a cultural imaginary and socio-political practice – a way of life, form of sociality, or mode of association.

Moody exposes the philosophical arguments of her theoretical sources like the Moroccan born Alain Badiou (2002), Slavish born Slavoj Žižek (2014; 2012), French born Jacques Derrida (15 July 1930 – 9 October 2004; 1986; 1997; 2002; 2011), and Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (13 April 1901 – 9 September 1981) and American philosopher John D. Caputo (2007). She explores emerging Christianity in view of a community of subjects, commenting:

> If...the division between those who are faithful and those who are not is a difference that is to be truly universal, then my idea is that this distinction can enable a work of thought about an a/theistic community of subjects, that, following Derrida and Caputo, faithfully assume responsibility for the incoming event of alterity, hyper-reality and absolute futurity and for pragmatically translating such insistences into existences (Moody 2015:151).

The book is mainly theoretical, for it engages the Lacanian trajectory of Žižek's work on the critique of an ideology, leading her to her own conclusions on the materialistic death of God. Moody (2015:39) argues that all things are fantasies as 'there is no big Other, nothing to

consistently sustain the presence and coherence of guaranteed Knowledge or Meaning, Belief, Enjoyment or Desire'. She refers to the book of Job which, according to her, shows that 'God is weak and impotent...the big Other as the Subject Supposed to know the meaning, or to guarantee Meaning itself' (Moody 2015:44). She argues that God is a fantasy. She also uses Paul's teaching that all things are permissible for qualifying the meaning of the Jewish laws to a Christian. Christians therefore act or abstain in relationship 'to the extent to which they [their actions] are beneficial for the work or labour of building up the community of Love that is faithful to the Event of Christ' (Moody 2015:51). After the death of God, what remains is the community through its material practices and not the law. In this view, the ECM can be reviewed like other social movements of yesteryear that are purposed at redistributing material resources other than the fear of God.

Moody also argues with Caputo, who is truly the anchor of her approach. She introduces and explains the central ideas of Caputo, saying:

> Caputo explains that post-secularism and post-modernism do not mean being over and done with modern secular critiques of religion or returning to some form of pre-modern religiosity...but, rather, being enlightened about the Enlightenment...or repeating the Enlightenment with a difference...that recognises the contingency of all our hermeneutic decisions, of all our reasons and rationalities (Moody 2015:67).

Moody's argument is that the call to decide on anything can be anchored in 'God', as in pre-modern societies, or in 'reasons and rationalities' as in the modern and postmodern societies (Moody 2015:71). Of significance in this process is the 'event' and not 'God' (Moody 2015:71). She accepts that the theology of Caputo, drawing upon Derrida's deconstructive theories, should fully affirm the goodness of the material in ways that no other approaches by radical theologians like Pickstock, Milbank and Ward (1999), in their book *Radical Theology* are able to do (Moody 2015:77). The desire for material realists, she shows, is to have another world within the available space and time other than the other-world of confessional Christianity. Therefore, 'Caputo's theology of the event turns to the real and the material in order precisely to remain attuned to the hyper-reality, to the insistence that is going on in the real and the material' (Moody 2015:95). She argues that this view leads to a faith with/out belief. She states that her 'idea is that a/theism is...an exemplary name for this faithful response' (Moody 2015:108). With 'a/theism', she is referring to a theology that lacks decision between two determinate positions – atheism and theism.

Moody further exemplifies and deeply remains practical by interweaving in her work the highly complex philosophical theories of Derrida and Caputo with her practical result of emerging Christianity, in which she builds bridges between theory and practice. She, however, continues to expose Derrida and Caputo in her online conversation with Critchley (2012), and the *Political Theology* website (Patterson 2015) and journal (2013). She also refers to the works of Kester Brewin's Vaux, Peter Rollins' Ikon collectives, Lewis Hyde and Hakim Bey (Moody 2015). These scholars and their practices are used by Moody to justify her position of a/theism. She further discusses 'transformance art' and 'suspended space' and the Church's emerging after God (Moody 2015:53). She also refers to a few Pauline passages in making a comparative argument to the works of Christian scholars on the social and political transformation of Christianity today. Some Christian scholars mentioned by Moody helped to explain the meaning of emerging Christianity, especially Marti and Ganiel (mentioned above; Moody 2015:236). To that end, Moody states:

> My exploration of the radical elements within emerging Christian discourse suggests that there is potential for a concrete movement to gather around this religious turn in radical political and social thought and that it might be possible for ir/religious collectives to join in with others in such an endeavour. However, the effectiveness of any emerging Pauline practices of suspension has yet to be documented (Moody 2015:237).

The major weakness of her book is that it helpfully describes a movement to those unfamiliar to it, but leaves the discussion hanging in thin air, as she does not give a decision on whether or not the ECM represents the a/theism she is talking about. The ECM is not related to cultural reform, but rather acts as an instrument of change or a beneficiary, in which case it is participating in capital redistribution and is colluding with neo-liberalism (Moody 2015:234). She uses the *Deconstructed Church* of Marti and Ganiel (2014) to interpret the possibilities and ambiguities of the ECM (Moody 2015:236). Also, her reference to scripture is inadequate as she quotes scripture without paying attention to its context. With that, she refers to modern Christian scholars throughout her book without explaining their philosophical perspectives. The shifts made in the book from one author to the other, can be critiqued for being apologetic in appropriating traditional theistic materialism. She even acknowledges this in her book:

> While I will argue against a reading of Caputo's radical theology of the event as simply a way to resurrect God, I also acknowledge that radical theology can be (mis)read within emerging Christian discourse as a form of negative theology

designed to enable us to discover the God beyond the 'God' of idolatry and ideology (Moody 2015:8).

Moody (2015:53) contributes extensively to the debate of a radical encounter with the Triune God, using the elements of 'transformance art' and 'suspended space'. It also needs to be acknowledged that she attacks a clandestine theistic reading of theology that lacks rigour. She fairly treats questions of radicalism to new readers of a post-theistic and post-materialist Christian theology. Atheists and theologians need to fruitfully converse with each other to help each group engage in a truer encounter with the Triune God. This book is useful for Bible college ministerial theology or apologetics classes, for it can provide a platform for engagement with radical questions and answers.

This thesis is contributing to research with a case of a Church experiencing radical theology, providing a contextual reading of all scriptures used. It also clearly and deeply explains the relevance and place of Christian scholars and thinkers used here.

In his book, *The divine magician*, Rollins (2015a) turns the tables on people's conventional understanding and expression in traditional Christianity. The book is divided in three parts: the Pledge, the Turn and the Prestige. In his second book, *The magician* (Rollins 2015b), he uses the same tools to explore a radical interaction with the world, arguing that the Christian event being re-enacted in the Eucharist is a magic trick similar to vanishing acts performed by great magicians. In the first part of his book (Rollins 2015a), called the Pledge, we receive a divine object, but in the Turn (second part) it disappears and in the Prestige (third part) it returns again. Rollins argues that the object that returns is not really the same object that appeared and vanished in the first place. Therefore, when God returns, it is not simply a return of what was presented in the first place; the return is a radical interaction (of God) with the world. Rollins (2015a) uses this framework to explain the lost power and mystery of Christianity in the Church today. In this book, he pushes the margins of Christian theology to present a newer vision of a postmodern faith. He depicts a revolutionary and refreshing perspective on traditional notions of Christianity, with the central argument being the place of love in the magic trick, which the current Church must recapture and apply.

With the three parts of *The divine magician* (Rollins 2015a) he wants to show how both sin and God exist within our lives at one and the same time. Christianity, he argues, is not 'concerned with a set of beliefs concerning the world, but rather calls us to enter into a different way of existing within the world' (Rollins 2015a:11). Here he attempts to offer Christianity with a subversive reading of its own content of faith. He also challenges conservative/liberal/progressive readings of Christianity as well as those who despise it (Rollins 2015a:11-12). This exhumes how belief should practically function in human life and how useful things in human life can lead to the transformation of life in the world. In the event, Rollins is not comparing God to a magician, but rather critiques our conceptions of God.

Firstly, Rollins refers to the Pledge, which is a creation of a 'sacred-object', anything thought to fulfil people's lack, such as 'money, health, a relationship, or religious practice' (Rollins, 2015a:13). In Christianity, the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden runs as a symbol of the Pledge. By forbidding the fruit, it becomes a 'sacred-object', creating a sense of lack in human lives making the fruit the only 'sacred-object' of satisfaction to that which is lacking. It is only after transgressing the prohibition that one finds that the 'sacred-object' cannot fill the lack. Prohibition on its own is not a problem; the problem is in the human anxiety and unrest that lead to an 'excessive drive for the fruit' (Rollins 2015a:29). Rollins argues that 'Paul understood that the prohibition (what he called "the Law") was not the water that extinguished excessive desire, but a fuel that fed it' (Rollins 2015a:30). In this way, 'the Law' is the Pledge (prohibition) that directly connects to and fuels sin in human lives. Romans 7:7 (NIV) states: 'For I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law', because 'the Law' creates an excessive desire for a sinful lack that needs to be filled.

Secondly, Rollins refers to the Turn, where the 'sacred-object' is made to disappear, for instance at 'the Turn of Crucifixion' (Rollins 2015a:55). In Christianity, the death of Christ led to the tearing of the temple curtain, which in fact was once torn by the Roman armies a hundred years before the coming of Christ. The public was shown that there was no 'sacred-object' behind the curtain. The death of Christ and the tearing of the curtain thus reveal the emptiness in the space behind the curtain. The death of Christ on the cross rather suggests that there is a gap or space within the 'Triune Community of God self':

> The subversive reading of the Crucifixion unveils a form of life in which we realize that there is no sacred-object that will make everything right…It is this shocking experience of absence that lies at the very heart of what it means to experience conversion – an event that is most quashed in the actually existing Church, a reactionary space which betrays the scandal of the cross attempting to hold on to the idea of a sacred realm existing somewhere 'out there' (Rollins 2015a:62-63).

The Turn also implies the taking away of sin by Christ to remove human separation from God: 'Christ experiences the loss of that which grounds each of these realms [religious, cultural, political] by undergoing a death that signalled one was cursed [separated] by God' (Rollins 2015a:75). The Turn brings 'forgiveness of sin', which is 'the experience of being loosed from the sacred-object' (Rollins 2015a:80). It frees people from perpetually seeking to solve their problems by pursuit of the 'sacred-object' (also dealt with by Rollins 2013). The Turn is understood as the removal of human debt caused by sin. Christ's death is not seen as payment to provide human fulfilment and satisfaction, but to clear the debt so that human desire for fullness is cleared. Rollins shows us that religion offers a 'sacred-object' which is not observable to the public when the priest goes behind the curtain (see He 9:3-4; Ex 35:12; 40:3; Lev 16:2), helping people to get over with deception. This frees people from a Christianity created by people to imprison members rather than release them.

Finally, Rollins discusses the Prestige, that is, when the 'sacred-object' reappears. Here the trick is revealed showing the difference of the dove in the Pledge to the dove in the Prestige. Rollins (2015a:90) explains: 'In the Prestige, we receive back the sacred, but no longer as an object that seems to dwell just beyond our reach. It returns as a type of ghostly presence that haunts our reality, as an experience of indefinable depth and density in some part of our world'. The force by which the 'sacred-object' appears is not any longer with supernatural force and power, but with collectivity in a community of faith that assumes responsibility for bettering the world in which they live. Rollins adds that 'the resurrection testifies to a Return in which the sacred is revealed as having no place in the world and then, in the blink of an eye, is discovered in the lived experience of care and concern for the world' (Rollins 2015a:95). In a way this leads to hope,

> a hope that makes demands on us, that calls out to us, and that asks us to put our weight behind it. It is a hope that tells us we can make the world a better place, that we can transform society and enact justice, but only if we put our effort into it. In the words

of the philosopher Walter Benjamin, it is the hope that we might become the messianic answer to those before us who cried out for justice (Rollins 2015a:101-102).

Hope is therefore brought by the fact that the 'sacred-object' is now present in mundane and corporeal terms. It is no longer hidden behind the curtain. Christ is here presented as a trickster to the magician. This rather critiques religion from within, with Christ's position in a human being's life (Rollins 2015a:123ff), disrupting people's expectations and subverting their religious orders in radical and revolutionary ways (Rollins 2015a:132).

Rollins (2015a:140-144) concludes this book by describing back-staging – 'Behind the Scenes' – within the people's ideological beliefs. It critiques both a fundamentalist and liberal faith, for it keeps people from radically challenging conservatism in the face of a Christian call to live differently in this world. Ideologies, whether religious or secular, provide a cultural boundary (systems and structures) for including or excluding people. Christian conservatism rather leads Christians collectively to be 'agents of decay' (Rollins 2015a:149-150). He therefore calls for the 'disappearance of the pastor' to hint on how radical theology must be exercised in the world (Rollins 2015a:167-172). In this case, the radical Church ruptures the systems and structures instead of offering alternatives to the existing boundaries. A radical Church claims to be a community that transcends any tribal boundaries (Ga 3:28). In this case, Galatians 3:28 drains out the destructive acts of ideological power that foments ethnic violence and tribal incrimination. Here the focus is more on how people believe rather than on what people believe: Rollins suggests that there should not be any 'focus on "correcting" a religious belief that we think is incorrect [for that] obscures the more important and difficult task of discovering why a particular belief is held in the first place and how it functions in our lives' (Rollins 2015a:171). Rollins discusses the divesting of power within communities, systems and structures by creating organic structures and positions that retain the responsibility of faith within the community, rather than the leadership or the clergy. The leader, rather, should be a mediator who vanishes from the scene and opens up the possibility for transformative change (Rollins 2015a:179); the leader should therefore have a magic trick of disappearing from the scene in the same way Jesus resurrected from the dead and was replaced by the Holy Spirit (Rollins 2015a:179).

This allows the Church to embody maturity and intimacy with the Christian faith in loving and serving the world. The Church thus begins to deepen its search into its faith-substance and reveals the veiled truth in the content of its beliefs. The loss of the 'sacred-object' allows Christians to stick with Christ for certainty and satisfaction in their lives. This helps them to re-envision their faith as a site of transformative change that practically makes people and their world to participate in deconstructing oppressive systems and structures (physical and psychological). Rollins influences both cognitive and affective domains as it weaves philosophical symbolism with practical stories (parables) in human life and the world. He makes one question their belief in such a way that it opens up a door for the mystery of their faith.

*The divine magician*, however, has an underdeveloped practical application of radical theology (also called 'pyro-theology') in Rollins' earlier publication, *How (not) to Speak of God* (Rollins 2006). It shows that he was influenced by the philosophies of Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (13 April 1901 – 9 September 1981), Slavoj Žižek (2012; 2014 John D. Caputo (2007, 1987); and the UK-based Kester Brewin's *After Magic* (2013). Rollins (2006) discusses the daring fringes of radical theology, potentially raising critical review from groups within the ECM. This thesis has benefited from the information in this book concerning the philosophical basis of Christian engagement with the social realities of members as well as the use of Christian resources to liberate members from human machinations.

With their book *Transformation Theology*, Davies, Janz and Sedmak (2007) bridge the comprehension gap between academia and the Christian practitioner, with reference to the ordinary members of the Christian community. Their major emphasis is on the location of Christ in the midst of unending scientific discoveries that continue to profane the former teachings of the Church. In this way, the authors want to provide 'groundwork for bridging the gulf that often exists between academic theology and the community of faith' (Davies *et al.* 2007:3). Below, the book's content, its relevance to the discussion and its strengths and weaknesses are discussed, ending with the gap in the book that this study wants to fill.

There are three sections, divided into six chapters in their book. The first section, Foundations, sets the principles of the proposed theological orientation towards 'the encounter with Christ in

the act' (Davies *et al.* 2007:31). The second section is by far the most readable and interesting. It focuses on the Church and life (doctrine) and concerns the question of the location of the human Christ. Here the authors argue for the recovery of the ascended Christ and also for heaven as a place of Christ's domicile. This work can be compared to the work of Douglas Farrow (2004) in which he explores the nature of transformational theology by analysing the doctrine of the Christian act through scripture, incarnation and the Trinity. In the last section of their book, Davies *et al.* explore social transformation where the Church and the world can find points of intersection. The points of intersection are provided for by politics, philosophy and neuroscience.

This by Davies *et al.* (2007) is relevant for this study, as it criticises Christian theology as being out of touch with the lived experiences of the people in the world today. It views divine revelation as representing a rupture within or a 'wound of knowledge' (Williams 1991:52, 98). In the 20th century, people began to view time, space and their place in a completely different way. This differs from the pre-modern society where the cosmology of the Bible belonged in a finite and enclosed universe. Nobody questioned the truthfulness of the narrative, or the existence of heaven and earth. The society accepted the glorified Christ as a present reality, relating to his works and deeds as well as his glorification at the right hand of God. The authors indicate that this changed with the coming of the scientific revolution in the 16th century. The religious epistemology that the earth is flat and the sun revolves around the earth was challenged by Galileo Galileo who was proverbially hanged on a stake by the Church for suggesting something that discredited the established religious tradition of their interpretation of the creation story. With the discovery of the heliocentric universe, the unity of the Bible, especially the idea of the scriptural heaven, needed to be re-imagined, as well as the idea of a risen and glorified Christ at the right hand of the Father. The book therefore asks a sensible question in the midst of all these developments: 'Where is the Christ?' (Davies et al 2007:5-6, 11, 22, 27, 141, 250). Their argument is that the exalted Christ, who was found in the doxological language of faith, was lost in the era of modernity. During the same period, an academic language was developed to articulate Christ's present reality in the modern scientific era, for example the development of the historical-critical method resulting in the debate on or quest for the historical Jesus. In the postmodern and post-science era, these methods fall short of language to remain relevant or able to articulate Christ's present reality in the life of the Christian. The authors argue that this failure is exhibited by the fact that what was

arguably the key doctrinal teaching of the early Church, that 'Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father in Heaven' (Mk 16:19), has become wholly redundant in the postmodern Church (Davies *et al.* 2007:7). This makes the book important for this study that is being done in a Church struggling to understand itself in the context of the postmodernist society.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Church has entered into the throes of the second scientific revolution – the information society (Robertson 1990:235-254). The world has advanced so greatly in neurology and cosmology that the human mind and matter are mysteriously drawn together by quantum physics, uniting the human being and the environment. Theology has also taken a step up, with radical orthodoxy, to provide groundwork for bridging the gap between the believer and the scholar. Davies *et al.* (2007:3) relate that they want 'to provide groundwork for bridging the gulf that often exists between academic theology and the community of faith'. This is why they are suggesting that there is a need for a reorientation in the way people do theology. This is rather an introduction of a new tone in the theological music. The authors are astute on creating a new theology that focuses in all aspects of the human's actions on a relationship to human agency, freedom and judgement. This book is therefore written with regards to the human beings' view of the postmodern world, their place and contribution, and their actions regarding the current theology. The authors' approach is based on the understanding that human beings should reverse the tendencies of the modern era on theology, where the emphasis was placed on human thought rather than human actions and other bodily responses. The authors argue that their book shifts theology back to human actions and thoughts, and as a consequence thereof, allows the exalted and saving Christ to shape the theology of the Church.

This book is not an easy book to read. In fact, many reviewers and commentators on the book have argued that the hallmarks of a good theology are its accessibility by ordinary readers. Only the section and chapters written by Oliver Davies is easy to understand. The problem of the book is neither its philosophical depth nor the complexity of the conceptual sophistication, but a weakness in its communicative language. This leads one to question why people create new theologies if they cannot clearly and convincingly articulate themselves to the ordinary reader. However, *Transformation Theology* is a ground-breaking publication on a new theology. In fact, it follows the launch of a radical theology in 1998, and its seeds can be traced back to the work of Milbank,

called *Theology and Social Theory* (Milbank 1990). The authors introduce a new way of theological work which is ground-breaking and declare a contemporary way of theologising on the identity of Christ in a postmodern society. In fact, their book does not only launch a new theology, but also a new movement in the way of doing theology today.

This study is done in contrast to the COCZ of the colonial era, in which the modernist views of doing Church has led to the problems the Church is facing today. Taking from the brave launch of new theologies, and especially TT, this study is using ACHA as a platform to discuss how the African Church must look at its relationship with Christ. While the study will consider the theological suggestions of some African scholars on the African interpretation of Christ, including his ancestor-hood, the researcher will also introduce the African epistemological parameters where it is not only the person's mind that must be considered, but the totality of the human being: The mind, the heart, the hands, the neck, the stomach, the waist, the clothes and the feet. This represents a holistic analysis of theology based on human thought, feelings, actions, skills, ethics, intentions, options, culture and needs. This will help the reader to understand the significance of Christ for a postmodern world and specifically for an African Christian – in their mind, heart, hands, neck, stomach, waist, clothes and feet.

Davies *et al*. present the way in which Christ must be understood, for instance, in an African context. This is even more clarified in the trilogy (3 volumes) written by Robin Gill, an Anglican priest and sociologist of religion, called *Theology in a Social Context: Sociological Theology* (Gill 2012a; 2012b; 2013). In these volumes Gill deploys a developed blend of theology and the social sciences (psychology, sociology and philosophy), in order to offer illuminating accounts of ecclesial life and praxis. In this trilogy he uses sociology and theology interactively in three related ways, each the title of a volume: *Theology in a social context*, *Theology shaped by society* and *Society shaped by theology*. This trilogy has revolutionised the way in which theology has been done in relation to the society.

In his first volume, Gill (2012a) argues quite convincingly that the social context is a foundation for effective theological work. He adds that sociological views are full of ideas that can support the resurgence of religious fundamentalism and ends this volume by stating that the social context

of the modern world is becoming more and more secularised. In his second volume, Gill (2012b) states that theology is a 'socially constructed reality' (Dahlbom 1992:101), which is mostly related to those in power, and at times, it is shaped by powerful cultures and societies. Theology is therefore a social system that is shaped by relationships. He ends this volume by explaining the role of music in shaping theology, resulting in unexpected resonances in society. In the third volume, Gill (2013) claims that sociological concepts are often influenced by cultural changes. For instance, in the development era, Max Weber influenced the society concerning work ethics (Weber 2013:9-12; 34, 49, 181): Theological virtues were transposed into the capitalist world and the idea of 'if you do not work you do not eat' (1 Th 5:13) is transcribed into new tones. Gill maintains that the debates about being honest to God, which were developed at the end of modernity in the 1960s, affected the global society. This can be related to the current debate on faith and social capital. At the end of this volume, he argues that the use of bioethics in public health has enriched and deepened the use of theological virtues in the public domain.

With this trilogy, Gill represents a landmark in the field of the sociology of religion, as it helps to establish normative periods that are used to categorise the process of deriving meaning. The sociology of religion describes a phenomenon in such a way that a common person can understand it. It gives a social account of what is happening in order to create categories of meaning and knowledge. Religion is here deconstructed and treated as an object of scientific analysis, being projected into a dialogue between the sacred and the profane. He did this, as religion is unable to construct reality. For this reason, Bell (2006:27-46; 1992) argues that people have forgotten that they have created religion and that they also create science – science and religion are therefore objects of human creation. In fact, there is no science subject – social or human – that does not depend on interpretation, using their prescribed rules of the grammar of assent on what they see. The sociology of religion rather uses a neutral approach – the 'humanistic-oriented perspective' (Aikenhead 2003:1-110). While sociologists describe their experience, religionists ascribe meaning to the same phenomenon. This confirms the realities of the religious experience, and sociology helps to complement the experience.

While the trilogy is helpful in describing what religion is doing, it fails to realise that there is a ternary relationship between God, humans and the world. If sociology only analyses belief

systems, both sociology and religion can engage in self-serving inquiries, as religion can invent relationships by deconstructing sociology in order to create a faith (cf. Milbank 1990). For this study, a valid contribution of religion and society help to enrich the religious perspectives of a Church undergoing changes like the COCZ, which has followed the American ideology of denying local contributions to theology, apprehension and the acceptance of synthesised theology.

Ahern (2013) edited a book, called *Visions of Hope: Emerging Theologians and the Future of the Church* consisting of the writings of 22 young theologians from seven countries, who did not directly experience the processes of the Second Vatican Council. This first generation of younger Catholic theologians offers their reflections on Vatican II in relation to their experiences 50 years after the Council. They indicate that the Council's legacy lives on and that the Church is obligated to engage with it. Ahern refers to Pope Paul VI who has stated: 'The conciliar decrees are not the end of a journey, but rather a point of departure for new destinations' (Ahern 2013:5). This book is divided into six sections: The first section consists of a spirited essay by Massimo Faggioli, called 'Is Vatican II Still Relevant?' This essay is significant as it sets the tone for the entire collection. It keenly places emphasis on the Church's teachings on the way forward. The author argues that Catholic teachings need to be further developed, as some of the teachings are not really useful as they are. This would help the Church to recover signposts that can be used on the Church's way forward. The essays in this book, however, demonstrate that the Catholic Church has hope for the future. The authors are aware that there is a similarity between the questions asked by Catholics and these asked by other Christians around the world. They display a spirit of ecumenism in which Christians everywhere ask questions about Church ministry, the Church itself, liturgy and interreligious dialogue, as well as engaging socially and morally with the world. The essays are well-informed and creative, especially with a biblical recovery which was seminal in the Council. They further engage with Conciliar and Post-Conciliar documents concerning the teachings and the 'tradition' of the Church as well as the experiences of Catholics in local assemblies. This book acts as a bridge-builder to other Christians and communities, as the essays call for genuine Christian teaching and practice among all men and women of God in the world. It gives the Church no option but to practise what it teaches.

The major weakness of Ahern's book is that most of the authors were educated in the United States and Belgium, although they are originally from seven countries including African countries. Being educated in the West, gives a myopic view of the issues under discussion, for the authors are mainly drawing from liberal sources and thus present homogenous views. While the writing's quality and theology cannot be contested, the book's reference to 'emerging theologians in the future of the Church' (Anderson 2009:8, 39, 68, 72) should seriously consider theologies generated from countries of the south, as the future of the Catholic Church may be in Africa and Latin America. Secondly, the book being written by theologians who were educated in the West, unwittingly perpetuates a crisis that may erupt concerning sexuality, like what recently happened in the Anglican communion. The book contributes towards suppressing people's voices in the African Church, especially on sexuality and the issue of families for Catholic priests, as well as issues of gender where Roman Catholic sisters cannot become deacons.

The book re-energises the discussion of the Second Vatican Council in the Catholic Church and provides a balanced assessment of the Council together with a way in which it can be used to benefit the Church today. The engagement reflects the future of theology in the Catholic Church and brings hope to the whole Church of God. The book spells out the liturgical concerns in the Catholic Church. Its weakness is counteracted by this thesis which is carried out in Africa where, if the Church's demographics is correct, the Church is purportedly going to grow larger compared to the West. The research will highlight issues of concern to the African population, such as issues of sexuality and morality and the epistemological parameters of the place, allowing the marginalised groups to speak up.

Scott (2014) begins his book by defining apostleship as follows: 'The assumption underlying all of the contemporary Charismatic/Evangelical accounts of modern apostles is that these are Spirit-empowered/reliant pioneering ministers whose vocation and ministry have their origin in God. This charismatic **gift, ministry** or **office** of apostle is not, in popular Evangelical or Charismatic conceptions, synonymous with ordained ministry' (Scott 2014:xi; original emphasis). Advocates of the charismatic apostles believe in the apostle's gifting by the Holy Spirit for Church mission and maturity (Eph 4:11-13). In this book, Scott considers the theological rationale for the office and viability of the apostle.

Prophecy is the 'in thing' in prosperity congregations today. This has replaced the previous debate on apostleship of some 50 years ago. Scott discusses the title of charismatic apostles from the time Pentecostalism arose to prominence in the 1970s and investigates and appraises the idea in the context of the British Church. He discusses the scriptural evidence of apostleship today, why it has been questioned, the character of apostles and their viability in Christian mission. The author firstly refers to how mainline Churches understand the ministry of an apostle, as well as how upcoming Churches interpret it – this is understood and promoted differently across denominations. Scott provides contemporary and historical evidence for the use of the term, supplying a counter-biblical writing and legitimation, as well as theological and ecclesiological critiques. He then states, 'Although certain popular conceptions of the charismatic apostolate are dubious on Scriptural grounds and are disastrous ecumenically; there are some which work, which are biblically legitimate, traditionally acceptable and are flexible enough to work within older Church structures as well as new ones' (Scott 2014:207).

This book of Scott closely relates to the two volumes written by Ferguson in 2014, called *The early Church at work and worship* – two useful documents for understanding the early Church. Even though it may not be what Christ intended, it may have had some closer marks to the establishment Christ founded. In these two volumes, Fergusson discusses liturgical practices in the early Church. The volumes are written in essay forms and are clearly exemplified with content on the pre-baptismal catechetic instruction in the early Church, an understanding of baptism from the Eastern fathers and focusing on eschatological expectation of the 1st century. The author also includes martyrdom, the origins of infant baptism and burial inscriptions. However, the first volume is made up of material from the mid-20th century that does not display the discoveries that have been made up to now. This limits its current practical value, although it retains an historical interest. He also treats the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus as early 3rd-century work, stating that doubts about its identification 'have been successfully dispelled' (Ferguson 2014:73). Recent scholarship has rejected its attribution to any single author, as it could be a composite work spanning over three centuries.

On the ordination of Jewish rabbis, Lawrence Hoffman concludes in his article, *Jewish Ordination on the Eve of Christianity* (Hoffman 1979:11-41), that the term 'rabbi' did not come into use until after the destruction of the Temple (cf. also Bradshaw 2018). Individual rabbis, of course, appointed their own disciples, but the ceremonies for the process are not known.

In the postmodern era, the debate on charismatic apostleship is conducive, although it has implications on the structure of the Church. Criticism can be levelled against people who desire to be apostles, for they seek a status equal to the 1st-century apostles, while others seek for personal aggrandisement in a movement where individuals are prominent. The debate has been done before, firstly in the 19th century by Edward Irving of the Catholic Apostolic Church, and then in the mid-20th century *Latter Rain Movement* which was then developed by notable proponents like Derek Prince, Terry Virgo and Peter Wagner (Riss 1982:32-45; 1987; 2002; Hutchinson 2010). The debate is bound up with restorationist longings of the Church's imagined pristine leadership structure that was linked to the notions of charismatic authority. The office is similar to that of a prophet. This requires conversations about inculturation, because of the emerging new trends of being Church. Catholic writings are useful for this exercise, before the study can engage on the contemporary attempts in the COCZ.

## 2.7 Developments of Catholic-Inculturation Evangelicalism

The time between Vatican Council II (1962-1965) and the first Synod of African Bishops (1994) marks a period when Catholics seriously considered African evangelisation. In this dynamic era, Africa participated strongly in missionary work. Vatican Council II taught that local Churches (Catholic dioceses) are agents for indigenous Christian missions. The impetus for this was supported by documents developed from the Council, like *Missio Ad Gentes* (1965), which defined missionary work as evangelisation and Church formation. This placed a huge responsibility on local Bishops as they engaged missionaries willing to serve them in accordance with their needs (*Missio Ad Gentes* 1965:6, 26). Missionary work became a reciprocal activity (co-responsibility) between sister Churches (cf. Oborji 2001:116). Oborji puts it this way: 'This is a rediscovery of the local Churches as the primary agents of mission' (Oborji 2008:155). African Catholics have embraced the activity with joy and gladness for the opportunity to participate in sharing the Good News of Christ. This is because 'Africa is in dire need of the gospel message for, through the

gospel, God builds up his family' (Oborji 2008:6; Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa 1994; Pope John Paul II 1995a; Second Synod of African Bishops 2009; Pope Benedict XVI 2011b).

Evangelisation in Africa was not done through only the preaching of the gospel, but having a deeper relationship with Christ who transforms those who despair in the human community. Churches and their members displayed a living message and witness of joy, kindness, goodness and peace. Evangelisation restored human identity and dignity, promoted peace and justice, and brought the human cosmos into closer proximity with the divine. The transformation of every aspect of human life helped to achieve a mission. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* (no. 33) refers to this kind of mission as 'mission Ad Gentes, pastoral care and new evangelization' (Oborji 2008:156). An emphasis on new evangelisation refers here to newness of zeal, method and expression. This message applies to almost all Christian denominations on the African continent. Churches are implored to work out how a new evangelisation of Africa can be applied in their local contexts.

For the Catholics, a new evangelisation led to a birth of new hierarchies, institutes and religious communities (congregations). The African leadership became strong and increased in numbers, resulting in an increased followership. By 1994, Cardinal Josef Tomko at the Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, reacted accordingly:

> In Africa today there are 412 ecclesial jurisdictions, excluding 18 circumstances dependent on other Vatican Curia offices; 66 of these are under missionary Bishops or other missionary orders; 327 are governed by African Bishops (to which must be added 15 auxiliaries). In all Africans constitute 90% of the total number of Bishops in Africa today (Tomko 1994:18).

A new evangelisation of Africa led to increases in members of the religious vocations (priests) as well as lay members. There was also an increase in institutes of higher learning for ecclesiastical orders across the continent (Oborji 2008:157). The founding of a number of religious institutes in African Churches is an indicator of the success of the period of new evangelisation (cf. Oborji 2008:158). In fact, the numbers of Christians increased at an approximate rate of 3.55% annually as opposed to a 2.7% population increase. By 2000, it is said that there was a 45.4% Christian presence in the entirety of the African population (Oborji 2008:157). At this rate, almost 86%

110

would be evangelised by 2050, while Catholics could probably be rated as the fastest growing Church 'where the increase [record of *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae*] has been 50% in the last ten years' (Oborji 2012:156). Numerical growth, however, does not indicate that African Churches have arrived at adulthood, but that they managed to utilise their autonomy to develop locally tolerable liturgies and theologies. However, Church structures still need to be organised. In fact, local Churches are replicas of missionaries who pioneered the work. This modelling renders African Churches forever subject to their mother Churches. This has led to the need and demand for inculturation.

Most of the Catholic Churches developed their own forms of the 'celebration of Mass', for instance in Zaire-Congo (cf. *Notitiae* 24, 1988:454-472), while most of the African Churches have transitioned their rites of Christian passage (Oborji 2008:158). Churches have adapted traditional initiation rites to an acceptable Christian rite. This can be referred to as a Christianisation of traditional ceremonies, or a traditionalization of Christian rites in order to incarnate, in/acculturate and evangelise the message of Christ in a meaningful and acceptable way among Africans (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa* – Pope John Paul II 1995b:§ 1, 5, 8, 12-14; *Africae Munus* – Pope Benedict XVI 2011a:§ 1-6). Baptism, marriage, healing and prayer acquired a regional charism that engaged one's attachment to the Christian faith (Oborji 2008:158ff). Most liturgies, though, focused on the Eucharist, where Christ was celebrated as King. In West Africa, festivals celebrated annual outings where song and dance, fanfare and presentation of gifts at Easter became part of the Eucharistic prayer (Oborji 2008:158). Churches managed to fundraise and participate in offertory singing and giving (Uzukwu 1997:270ff). These activities were accompanied by theological reflections that interpreted the Christian message to provide concepts and models that suit the African Christians. The African reading of the Christian mystery was done in the cultural context of the people. They embraced African realities which needed inculturation and liberation as Africans encountered the gospel. Cultures became appraised as a means to deepen the Christian faith in Africa. The role of culture in evangelisation became important for liberated countries, especially for women and the poor. Theology reflected on the past injustices that continued to create instability in the African politics and economics. African Churches became attentive to cultures of oppression in traditional and modern African societies as well as elements of ethnic, racial and colour prejudice (Oborji 2008:160).

Vatican II and the preceding Synods therefore led African theologians to reflect on the central question: Who do you [African Christians] say that I am? (Mt 16:15; Oborji 2008:160). Arguably, Christology is the most central doctrine of the Christian faith, hence every local Church wanted to give its own contextual understanding of this phenomenon. A clear understanding of Christ, his person, nature, significance and message would help the Church to authentically address the needs of the human race through African perspectives. Christ has therefore been called 'ancestor', 'first-born of creation', 'liberator', 'master', 'healer', 'King', 'Chief', 'mediator', 'lover', 'redeemer', 'Saviour', etc. (Oborji 2006:196ff). This development is helpful for the COCZ's own transformation process as these lessons can be transposed into the life of the Church.

### 2.7.1 The Post-1994 Synod of African Bishops

The first synod of African Bishops gave the African Church its self-definition and self-awareness for evangelisation. It considered major African realities in the life of the Church, and hence advanced the idea of a family to guide the evangelisation of the continent. The Church as a family of God on earth acts as an inculturation principle that summarise an African understanding of the Christian community. The concept is fully rooted in the Christian tradition and the culture of the people. Local Churches thus become living testimonies of this fraternity, solidarity, peace and communion. African families share their joys and trials through community dialogue and friendship.

With *Missio Ad Gentes* (1965), local Churches were formed and solidified, leading to a boosting in numbers (Pope John Paul II 1995b:47). Catholic Churches expanded in surrounding communities. Evangelisation here is the building up of the family of God. This invites humanity to participate in the Triune God's sociality together with all created reality (*Message* no. 25 – Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa 1994). The family of God is an *ecclesia* that was developed to help proclaim and evangelise African personae. While inspiration came from scripture (cf. Eph 2:11-22), it appealed to Africans who appreciate blood lines in the extended family system of greater value in their community life. The Church as a family of God complements images contained among African communities. Oborji states:

> The communitarian accentuation of the family makes the new model a real African reading of the Vatican II concept of the Church as communion or as the people of God (cf. LG 3). It is an African cultural heritage which, if properly studied and applied, has many pastoral advantages especially for the African local Churches (Oborji 2008:162).

The second Synod of African Bishops in Rome (2009) on *The Church in Africa in the service to Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace* (Mt 5:13, 14), offered the African Church a new avenue for self-critical evaluation (Jordan 2005:333-351). The Church's significance in the wider geopolitical contexts, shaping contemporary Africa, was explored. As the first Synod emphasised inculturation, the second Synod gave attention to issues concerning social doctrines of the Church. This was a creative assembly that reflected on the many ways to contribute to social peace, justice and reconciliation in a conflicted continent. These conflicts were a major challenge to the Church, given that in 1994 alone, Hutu Catholics murdered over a million Tutsi Catholics with machetes, many of those who had taken sanctuary in Churches. Pope John Paul II wrote about the genocide in Rwanda saying:

> What is happening in your countries is a terrible tragedy that must end. During the African Synod, we, the pastors of the church, felt the duty to express our consternation and to launch an appeal for forgiveness and reconciliation. This is the only way to dissipate the threats of ethnocentrism that are hovering over Africa these days and that have so brutally touched Rwanda and Burundi (Lorch 1995).

However, the two Synods attended to the fact that the African Church has started forging relationships between different African ethnic, religious groups and cultural backgrounds. Churches needed to be the first communities to remove rancour and suspicion between different ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism in Africa has affected civil and ecclesial communities, frustrating community development and Christian evangelism. Pope John Paul II further writes in *Ecclesia in Africa* Article No. 49:

> It has been rightly noted that, within the borders left behind by colonial powers, the co-existence of ethnic groups with different traditions, languages, and even religions often meets obstacles arising from serious mutual hostility. Tribal oppositions at times endanger peace, if not at least the pursuit of the common good of the society. They create difficulties for the life of the Churches and the acceptance of pastors from other ethnic groups. This is why the Church in Africa feels challenged by the specific responsibility of healing these divisions (Pope John Paul II 1995b, *EA* No. 49).

At the end of the Second Synod, Pope Benedict XVI emphasised in *Africae Munus* (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a:§ 34), the essentiality of the conversion of the heart for the building of reconciled, peaceful and just communities, saying:

> Reconciliation is not an isolated act but a lengthy process by which all parties are re-established in love – a love that heals through the working of God's word. Reconciliation then becomes at once a way of life and a mission. In order to arrive at genuine reconciliation and to live out the spirituality of communion that flows from it, the Church needs witnesses who are profoundly rooted in Christ and find nourishment in his word and the sacraments (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a, *Africae Munus* No. 34).

Creating and building plural local communities that are loving and welcoming are a major work of local Church evangelisation. This deepens relationships to prepare for a new evangelisation of Africa that encourages authentic Church formations for the common goal of bringing African Christians to a full witness of Christian conversion, activism, Biblicism and crucicentrism, in order to overcome menaces of exaggerated ethnicity and intra-religious hatred (cf. *Africae Munus* no. 163 – Pope Benedict XVI 2011a; Bebbington 2005:244-249).

In Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*), the ATR was accommodated, as stated below:

> With regard to African traditional religion, a serene and prudent dialogue will be able, on the one hand, to protect Catholics from negative influences which condition the way of life of many of them and, on the other hand, to foster the assimilation of positive values such as belief in a Supreme Being who is Eternal, Creator, Provident and Just Judge, values which are readily harmonized with the content of the faith. They can even be seen as a preparation for the Gospel, because they contain precious **semina Verbi** which can lead, as already happened in the past, a great number of people 'to be open to the fullness of Revelation in Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel' (Pope Paul VI 1975:115; original emphasis).

Above all, the Catholic emphasis on the new evangelisation of Africa provided hope and promises in the context of increasing secularisation and surmounting differences. While, in the 1st century, the Africa of the Mediterranean zone (Alexandrian school) contributed to the doctrines of the Church, sub-Sahara African Christians participated at the end of the 20th century. A new evangelisation of Africa involves love and salvation (cf. Kalilombe 1981:66), as the continent addresses a myriad of its problems. These problems cannot be practically solved by anyone from

outside Africa. Pope Paul VI also points to issues of injustices to be addressed and justice to be restored – particularly in the socio-economic and political arena of post-colonial Africa, where ethnicity, culture, religion and race ruined the potential of the continent. This has interfered with authentic discipleship. New evangelisation has to build communities to avoid ethnocentrism and extreme particularism. Solidarity among Churches needs to extend to personnel- and resource-sharing (*Ecclesia in Africa no.* 63 – cf. Pope John Paul II 1995b). In *Africae Munus* no. 172, Pope Benedict XVI supports this, stating:

> Since the vocation of all men and women is one, we must not lose our zest for the reconciliation of humanity with God through the mystery of our salvation in Christ. Our redemption is the reason for the confidence and the firmness of our hope, 'by virtue of which we can face our present: the present, even if it is arduous, can be loved and accepted if it leads towards a goal, if we can be sure of this goal, and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey' (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a; cf. also 2007 – *Spe Salvi* no. 1).

The Catholic Church has also taken seriously the processes of inculturation, evangelisation and incarnation. The process is bearing fruits, and many serious Churches can consider taking up the new form of evangelisation in order to build and grow Churches.

### 2.7.2 Feminism and Inculturation in the Roman Catholic Church

Chimhanda (2011a; 2013; 2014) is a religious black Zimbabwean feminist theologian of the *Congregatio Jesu* of the Catholic Church, who argues for both feminism and inculturation. She argues for the liberation of women, using the major doctrines of the Christian faith, especially Christology and the interrelatedness of God, humans and the cosmos. In her articles, *Women and the Roman Catholic Church with special focus on Zimbabwe* (Chimhanda 2013:1-17) and *African Theology of Land: A Shona Perspective* (Chimhanda 2014:33-47), she argues for an appropriation of women's creation image (*imago Dei*) and baptismal dignity (*imago Christi*) status and vocation (*missio Dei*). Women's presence in the RCC is regarded as a presence of the *imago Dei/Christi.* Sharing in Christ's mission confirms their baptismal vocation in the world (*Ad Gentes*), to all peoples, nations and languages in all of their aspects of life in and outside the Church (Chimhanda 2013:1).

At Church, women are not regarded as part of the family. Chimhanda reiterates the main themes and messages of the Synods of African Bishops that were supposed to bring joy and hope to Africa in order to achieve the evangelisation, inculturation and incarnation of Christ in people's lives (Chimhanda 2013:1). This is in line with the principle of *aggiornamento* (updating), championed in *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII (1963). Preaching the word of Christ (evangelisation), presented Christ (God) in flesh, thus incarnating both Christ and his word (*EA* par 60 – Pope John Paul II 1995b; cf. Jn 1:14) to all peoples of the world (*Missio Ad Gentes*). Inculturation (*Missio Ad Gentes*, no. 1; cf. Mk 16:16) thus became an essential element of enfleshing and inserting the gospel message in place (cultures) and time.

Denial of women to participate in the essential vocation of the COCZ is an indication that women are seemingly not properly transformed by the gospel values, implying that women are not fully saved by Christ's self-emptying (kenosis) through the Pascal mystery of his death, resurrection and redemption (*EA* § 61 – Pope John Paul II 1995b; cf. Jn 12:24, 32; Php 2:6-9). Paul's theology argues that women are saved through childbearing (1 Tim 2:15), while the COCZ tradition seems to subscribe subjugation to women. Cultural elements related to this view really need refinement, rejection, correction and elaboration (Nyamiti 1973:29-30) in order to provide seeds for evangelisation not to be compromised. Pobee (1992:34-41) shows that inculturation aims at reaching a third position (*tertium quid*) to allow believers to be at home in their own Church and culture. He therefore doubts that African women are at home in their own Church. A lack of solidarity, warm relationships, trust, dialogue and acceptance contradicted the theme of Africa as family of God in the two Synods of African Bishops that were held in Rome (1994, 2009) since Vatican II (1965:2). Using Shona proverbs and biblical views of the priesthood of all believers, Chimhanda (2013:4) feels that women should be allowed to participate in the same vocations as men do, stating that 'women feel much excluded, particularly in quintessential doctrines of faith and in worship' due to the African cultural operation 'on a pater familias and patria potestas foundation (father as head of the family and guardian of the children)' (Chimhanda 2013:4). This article therefore advocates for the affirmation of women's creation as image of God (*imago Dei*), their baptismal dignity (*imago Christi*) and vocation in the world (*missio Dei*) through their witness in the RCC (Chimhanda 2013:6).

According to Chimhanda (2011b), incarnation is a revelation of the act of God in contemporaneity and particularity of our human history. She advances the idea of *anthropocosmic* Christology similar to prophetic Christianity's practices of the present power of a deity. This is a revelation of God in creation, manifested in various forms to reflect the flipside of God's attributes in human identity and dignity. Chimhanda presents a pluralistic *theanthropocosmic* Christology which is radical and different in terms of the dialectic between the individual, community and the universe. Christ saves, teaches and transforms all of humanity – in light of this, Chimhanda emphasises ontology, epistemology and soteriology as universal orthodoxy and orthopraxis. The Christ emphasised by Chimhanda, knows no gender/sex, class, ethnicity or creed, as he transcends all human limitations and boundaries to embrace a catholic and apostolic action. The Christ Chimhanda talks about is not a totalising grand-narrative and exclusive person, but a meta-narrative and inclusive person through the process of incarnation to share moments of difficulty, joy, burden and pain, among others. Chimhanda focuses on the Christological design of the Paschal mystery that brings dynamism and drama in human life. This understanding is close to the prophetic understanding of the Christian faith, presented in her earlier work (Chimhanda 2011b), where she discusses Christ as the ancestor *par excellence* in Shona Christianity. Her discussions relate to deconstructing patriarchy in the Shona culture and the gospel, in order to liberate women from the Shona worldview of oppression. This understanding has provided a fertile ground for prophetic Christianity in Zimbabwe.

Chimhanda also believes that Christian theology should embrace God-human-cosmos interconnectedness, because 'African Bantu Shona theology of land is essentially a dynamic process of evangelization and inculturation that is done in order to affirm a people's identity, vocation, ancestral heritage and religious, socio-economic and political values attached to land' (Chimhanda 2014:33). The integrity of creation confirms the creation (*imago Dei*) and baptismal dignity (*imago Christi*) and vocation of believers (*missio Dei*). Thus, through a *theanthropocosmic* relationship, women are embraced in the Bantu Shona-Nguni *Unhu/Ubuntu* (personhood) values that include togetherness, friendship and hospitality (Chimhanda 2014:41-43). This relates to a mutuality of relationship in Shona African Bantu theology and spirituality's holistic view of communal ontology and epistemology (Chimhanda 2013:1). She argues for territorial integrity (Chimhanda 2013:10), quoting Manley who says: 'Morals governing life are issued by the soil and

breaches of these rules incur not only material penalties, but in extreme cases, also drought, disease, sterility and death. This is the very ground of chiefly authority even in these times of rapid change' (Manley 1995:72, 74).

In arguing for restoration and active appropriation of women's creation (*imago Dei*), baptismal dignity (*imago Christi*) and vocation (*missio Dei*), all of creation receives its creation (*imago Dei*) and baptismal dignity (*imago Christi*) and vocation (*missio Dei*).

## 2.8 Emerging trends in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

### 2.8.1 Leadership Challenges in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

This study also reviews current studies on the COCZ, beginning with an article by Masengwe, Machingura and Magwidi (2012). These proponents question the role of local elitists and leaders in their relation to local converts in the wake of a religious transformation, so as to acquire theological and biblical skills that, in turn, lead to the attainment of spiritual Christian maturity in the COCZ. They lament a lack of genuine leadership practices in the COCZ, as ironically, elites (ministers and elders alike), contributed more to conflicts than the resolving of conflicts. They argue that the problem lies in the Church's religious emphasis on autonomy that fails to address the COCZ's missional and redemptive goals to the world. The leadership style, emphasised mainly by American missionaries, disempowered local converts from objectively supporting the Church's key purpose. The COCZ governance failed to advance the excavated ideals and practices of evangelism, discipleship, ministry and Church growth. The COCZ practice of autonomy is diametrically opposed to the meaning of the term, leading to negative results in the Church. In October 2011, the men's fraternal conference was held at Matopos in Matabeleland with the theme, *The Church at the crossroads – Where to?* The conference proposed resolutions, through the *Matopos Declaration*, that have permanently affected the direction of the Church for men, determined to challenge African Church elites and empowered by the practice of autonomy to manipulate poor local converts (Masengwe and Chimhanda 2019:1-11). Researchers in the denomination highlighted some of these difficulties (Masengwe, Magwidi and Machingura 2012:185-194).

Bhebhe (2016; 2013) encapsulates the problems of leadership weakness in the Church, premised on the people's African religious traditions and culture, and leading to the problem of a multiple religious consciousness in the COCZ. The concepts he explores relate to African Christian practices of reverting back to their African spirituality when faced with existential challenges. Most missionary Churches like the COCZ suffer from this kind of multiple religious consciousnesses. In his PhD dissertation (Bhebhe 2013), Bhebhe focuses on the COCZ, while, in his article written in 2016, he includes national politics in his criticism. He argues that the African religious culture advanced fear that allowed the state to create cultic figures around their most powerful leaders like the national president. Bhebhe laments the lack of religious and theological transformation in the local Church to advance a national development, ethics and morality along the profession of the majority sector of the Christian religion.

Many students in the COCZ have become interested in exploring the Church's leadership and governance in the recent past. Of significance is Sibanda (2016) who obtained a diploma in Church Administration and Management with the ZCC. He argues that the COCZ has remained a missionary Church that has not been indigenised (Sibanda 2016:34). His contention is that it has no local structure to administer its evangelism, discipleship and Church growth activities, as missionaries from the USA and New Zealand persist to use their countries' missionary boards to run activities in the country. Sibanda (2016:6ff) argues that the COCZ needs a national administrative operational structure (NAOS) to facilitate its national activities. For this reason, despite the 120 years the Church has been in the country, the COCZ continues to struggle to grow due to poor evangelism, a lack of discipleship and focused Church growth programmes. For this reason, the Church lacks unity as a denomination and is financially struggling. The NAOS can be instrumental for the Church to run and operate progressively. Sibanda (2016:30) believes that if the NAOS is adopted, the COCZ will have a positive turnaround in addressing current challenges.

Mafohla (2017) explores the issue of the rituality of power between the clergy and the laity. He notes that conflict is intergenerational, intellectual, academic, elitist, ethnic and missionary-related and is concerned with survival needs, rather than differences in beliefs and doctrines. He condemns the ritual of power as fuelling conflict in the Church, which is not used to empower the Church on resources and development. Mafohla (2017:2, 6, 9, 27, 29, 31ff) therefore suggests that the

increasingly degreed ministers of religion will continue to pose a challenge to elders, which is a reversal of the past practices where elders were more educated compared to ministers of religion, who were drawn from the formerly failed class of faithful missionary employees. This shift of power requires that both lay persons and clergy attend joint-leadership conferences that should balance the ritual of power to increase clergy-laity accountability in the Church. This view is captured by Ramos (2012), who narrates how ritual and ceremony, sponsored by the Puebla Municipal Council, incorporated locals into attending, participating and judging the city's tumultuous political life. Mafohla fails to succinctly outline that the USA is sponsoring conflict through locals and that the indigenous rituals and ceremonies still contain foreign elements.

Ramos highlights this view of sponsorship by reviewing the historiography of ritual and the idiosyncrasies of power and identity in the colonial Puebla – a city in Mexico that is located between Mexico City and Veracruz. In this city, rituals were choreographed in the trappings of power which helped the municipal councilmen to consolidate their local and imperial rule. Many residents of the city were encouraged by public rituals to identify with the RCC, the Spanish Empire, a variety of corporations and Puebla city, for the municipality provided arenas for individuals to participate in the city life politics of power. Ramos portrays the royal decorum's silk canopies, funereal rites, royal oaths and feast-days' celebrations, as well as their Holy Week processions in brocaded robes and vice-regal entrance ceremonies in exploding fireworks and debates on the expenditure for such public rituals. Public rituals facilitated the central part of ongoing efforts of councilmen to negotiate 'political relationships' (Ramos 2012:xviii, 3, 151, 175). Due to these benefits, the councilmen of Puebla consistently defied the disapproval of costly public rituals by both the Spanish crown and the worsening economy, because they facilitated their power and identity in Puebla.

Ramos explains various ways in which politics and a political culture can be publicly forged, tested and demonstrated through ceremonies by taking the 18th-century colonial Puebla as an example. He discusses in a sophisticated and nuanced way, the role of ritual in negotiating and staging conflicts in Puebla. To achieve this, Ramos innovatively draws from a rich variety of written materials such as judicial cases, council minutes, printed sermons and official correspondences, to illustrate how public rituals became pivotal in the shaping of Puebla's complex political culture.

120

His book is useful for this study, not only because it shares the same affinities as this study, but also because it reflects on a similar culture than that created for the COCZ, while his descriptions resonate with the details of the ongoing experiences of the Church. Ramos, like Mafohla (discussed above), provides both the methodology and inspiration of how religion can be used to create an identity that permanently protects the interests of those in power through its suggested rituals and ceremonies.

InV8 is studying comparative leadership succession processes between the Dadaya and Mashoko Missions under the topic, *Leadership Succession in Church and Mission* (2018-2020) at the University of South Africa (UNISA). He uses the two mission stations to explore the question of leadership succession in the COCZ. His hypothesis is that missionaries employed poorly designed succession plans because the COCZ did not have clearly defined administrative and management structures to ensure perpetuity and institutional memory for the future of the Church (Magwidi 2018-2020). Disjointed succession plans have landed the Church's properties into the custody of self-serving individuals and little to leave for the future generations. The study queries the struggle between continuity and discontinuity on Church policy in the work and Church mission of the COCZ. The elements being examined, attempt to remain faithful to the COCZ's founding principles of the centrality of the Bible and the leadership of Christ in the Church. Missionaries rather employed Western socially esteemed principles to appoint or discharge Church leaders, thereby discrediting credible personalities and henceforth leaving the African Church with a leadership vacuum at the end of the missionary stay in the country. Using a postcolonial theory, he argues that the Church is being led by people who carry the by-product of the colonial mindset for missionaries, being mimicked in various ways by those who succeed them. In brief, Magwidi looks at transformation in the Church through the transformation of leadership, governance and management practices being responsible for accountability, responsibility and transparency for current and future generations (Magwidi forthcoming).

### 2.8.2 Gender Oppression in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

Machingura and Nyakuhwa (2015) lament that the COCZ lacks intelligent and transformed social and religious structures that include female leadership in Churches in the country. The authors condemn the gender segregation and patriarchal views of the COCZ that justify patriarchal

practices rather than divine norms and principles to regulate human behaviour in the Church. They pose a rhetorical question on whether the COCZ is upgrading or downgrading the status of women, especially on dealing with critical issues of orphan-hood, widowhood, as well as the disability and neglect of women in life, society and the Church (Machingura & Nyakuhwa 2015:92-114). The two authors interrogate Gal. 3:28 in view of Eph. 5:21-25, to establish how *sexism* and *patriarchy* affect women in the COCZ. The study proposes an elevation of the position of women in Church leadership, in view of scripture, which relates to the transforming nature in the COCZ. Masengwe, Chimhanda and Hove (2019:273-284) agree with Machingura and Nyakuhwa.

Tembo (2017) analyses the role of *Ruwadzano* in empowering women in Bulawayo to fight gender oppression. *Ruwadzano* literally means 'the women's fellowship', which is an important engagement of women for their spiritual and emotional growth. Women's identity and dignity, which resulted in role definition and power in the Church, was firstly advanced by missionaries who emphasised the provision of 'experienced oversight'. At independence, women were elected into leadership posts (Savage 1980:47, 52), but soon after independence, they were denied to hold any church offices. However, through *Ruwadzano*, women created their own hierarchies to defy biblical limitations over women's functioning in the Church meeting. With *Ruwadzano*, women claim equality to men as they do those things they are not allowed to do in a normal Church gathering. *Ruwadzano* thus makes women sensitive to gender oppression as they are afforded the opportunity to assert this awareness through their activities and gatherings. *Ruwadzano* is a response to the need for women to participate in rituals, worship and key decision making and administering the Holy Communion or baptism, recognising the presence and identity of women and therefore, their power in leading and governing Church issues.

Jonathan Jack (2017) discusses status discrimination between married and single women in the COCZ. Women among themselves elevate the marriage institution to show a difference between married and unmarried women. However, Jack (2017) argues that single women, despite the perceived challenges, have strengths that married women cannot match. He accepts that single women have certain spiritual and psychosocial needs that should be addressed by the Church, but they are not as bad as they are portrayed by jealous married women. Rather, horizontal oppression is a challenge that affects the lives of single women and the welfare of the Church. Single women

have genuine unmet needs which can be used to the advantage of the Church. It is important for the Church to provide psychosocial, spiritual-ethical, political, economic and ministerial or diaconal services in tandem with the outcomes of the large section of the Church. The literature reviewed in this section is important for this study and explores the issue of gender equality and female participation in the COCZ.

Churches, including the Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostal/Charismatic, Zionists and Apostolic Churches, have issues with women (Chitando 2004:151-159; Mapuranga 2013:303-317; Mukanangana, Moyo, Zvoushe & Rusinga 2014:110-122; Manyonganise 2010:13-26). This is also true in the COCZ, as well as other RM groups of Churches. Women comprise the largest number in the Church and are involved in most Church activities, except decision-making. This is systematically done by theological limitations and the under-representation of women in influential leadership positions. The nature of the Church, character of society and individual attitudes to leadership positions are manipulated in this process. Even over-qualified women lack the confidence to enter ecclesial offices, while they accept public offices (Masengwe, Chimhanda & Hove 2018:271-289). While Churches do not have gender sensitive policies, women themselves do not support other women's ascendance into the public arena, as their patriarchal prescribed roles lie in the domestic arena. Most upcoming studies by emerging theologians in the RM group of Churches indicate that female participation is being emphasised for the effective running of the Church.

## 2.9 Conclusion

This Chapter examined literature on key concepts for the study, namely the Church, the Kingdom of God, hermeneutics on the Church of Christ, Evangelicalism in the modern era and the emerging Christian trends in the postmodern era, the experiences of inculturation in the Catholic Church and the Zimbabwean experience of inculturation and religious consciousness in the COC today. The literature examined indicates that there are external forces (political, social, economic, theological, biblical, sociological, anthropological and cultural perspectives) as well as internal forces (the continuity of identity and mission in a diverse context) in the new religious and spiritual trends in Christianity. The Church has created modernism and has been affected by it. However, social events have proceeded ahead of the Church to create postmodernism, and the Church is being

challenged to transform along the new changes. Advances in globalisation, liberalisation and informationalisation pose a big challenge to the traditions, cultures and sacraments of the Church. The Church's own identity and mission are trying to keep in line with social changes and technological innovations that are transforming many aspects of people's lives. This contributes to the religious transformation of the Church in its contemporary missionary work, as the Church is forced to transform its internal form in order to be able to cope with the developing situation. It has to build structures that can foster sustainable relationships along with the transforming society, and to attend to its Christian call and the biblical mandate of evangelism and discipleship (Mt 28:18-20). The COCZ is thus seen as being caught up in this web of encounters with the world and attempts to provide tangible results through its social, religious, spiritual and practical activities. This Chapter has therefore outlined the literature that would help us to relate previous studies with contemporary experiences in the COCZ, especially its activities in the process of trying to fulfil its social, cultural and spiritual (gospel mandate) roles.

In this Chapter, a critical analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literature on the concepts of Church, the Kingdom of God, hermeneutics, inculturation, Evangelicalism, incarnation and emerging trends of Christianity in the world were done. The researcher has also contextualised the literature to make it relevant to the emerging situation in the COCZ. In the review, he has interpreted and evaluated key points and summarised the major findings in the studies. This has helped the study to establish the gaps in knowledge from the identified literary studies, as well as suggesting the role of the current study in filling the established gaps. From here, the study focuses on methodological issues and experiences.

# Chapter 3

# Research Methodology

## 3 Introduction

This Chapter describes the methods and methodology used for the study – the qualitative, inductive and descriptive methods. It outlines the conceptual and practical challenges of the study, introduces the research method and philosophy, attends to multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches and finally discusses research limitations and ethical considerations.

## 3.1 Research Concept

The presentation of many scholars on the identity and mission of the Church cannot be explained using one specific concept. The identity and mission of the Church has no conceptual boundaries, because of the multiplicity of definitions in the sociological, historical, political and religious understanding of the Church. Sengers (2012) describes the backdrop of Christ's own understanding of the Church (cf. also Van Niekerk 2006). The identity of the Church is relative to each and every tradition – this makes an objective study of the Church's identity difficult. Therefore, this study uses a constructive approach to examine the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) of the COCZ. The goal of this study is to develop a concept of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) that functions within the contemporary African Bantu Shona-Nguni cosmological reality.

In this Chapter, the qualitative approach is proposed, which is partly augmented by the quantitative approach with the aid of *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* for data analysis. According to Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016:124), the qualitative approach is a multi-layered process (cf. Figure 3.1 below for this justification). The approach is multi-sectoral, multi- and inter-disciplinary (philosophical, sociological [cultural hermeneutics], historical, developmental, anthropological and psychological) and intra-disciplinary (theological). In religion, Risk (2013) asserts that the qualitative approach begins at a point of faith (and belief) and therefore cannot fit into the positivist framework. Ricoeur accentuates this point in his postulate of a hermeneutics of faith, suspicion and engagement.

The qualitative approach, rather than the quantitative or mixed approach, is the best to use, since Systematic Theology is a discipline *sui generis* (of its own kind). This is because the object/subject of faith is incomprehensible and cannot be objectified. Furthermore, because it deals with emotions, experiences, narratives or structured storytelling, Systematic Theology deals with inductive reasoning drawn from existential experiences, the people's lived realities and a study of literature. The field's theological loci (that form the centre of the research) include the doctrines of God, creation and cosmology, providence, revelation (angelology, demonology, etc.), Christology, missiology, soteriology and anthropology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology. The study examines the ontological and epistemological parameters within which the COCZ operates. According to Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin and Zikmund (2015:viii, 9ff), qualitative research is guided by four frameworks: The conceptual, theoretical, methodological and analytical frameworks. According to Babbie (2017:391-396; Quinlan *et al.* 2015:128), data collection and collation through interviews are phenomenological (purely descriptive). The verbatim research tool is used together with the *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* software for qualitative data analysis. Interviewees were allowed to speak for themselves about their experiences and understanding of the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity).

The study finally identifies what is definable and what is not in the context of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) in the milieu of the contemporary Bantu Shona-Nguni cosmology.

## 3.2 Research Methodology

The choice of a method for this study depends on the research strategy. Considerations for the method selection included research topics, research questions posed, and a focus on contemporary events, scientific rigour and control over the interviewees' behaviour patterns (Huberman & Miles 1994:428-444). With regard to these considerations, the qualitative method was chosen, as it has more advantages compared to quantitative method. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:36) state that the qualitative approach utilises a group of methods used to deliver a coherent set of data and/or findings, which may be complementary to each other. These are used to reflect on the research question and suit the interests of the researcher. The nature of the qualitative methods chosen includes structured storytelling, narratology and a case study (Naumes & Naumes 2014:1-

301). This allows for deep meanings and understanding of the complex issues being investigated of the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) in the COCZ. Meanings are derived from small quantities of data on a number of constructs and variables (Neuman 2013:16).

The research also takes place on defined units of analysis (events and people in the COCZ) from specific sources (participants, documents and artefacts) through particular data-gathering methods (Caulley 2007:106-108; Creswell 2009:95-108; Patton 2002a:230-246). The study's data-gathering methods include document analysis, interviews and observations. For this reason, methodologies are defined by Holloway as frames or systems of research study procedures that are based on methods, theories and principles (Holloway 2005:293).

Methodology is here defined as a simple constitutional description of research components and subcomponents. This addresses the logical issues of the research process and underlies the choice of its logistical subcomponents (Yin 2013a:321-332). These components are inclusive of the context, participation and data, as well as ethical issues in relation to conducting research. This Chapter outlines, in detail, the research philosophy, design, theoretical framework, data collection methods and tools, data analysis and interpretation and data presentation. The Chapter finally operationalises how the data is going to be obtained to attain rigour, reliability, validity and trustworthiness.

This study adopts a combination of methodologies to describe, analyse and evaluate the experiences of the COCZ worshippers in light of the RM philosophies and their realities in the context of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity). It links to qualitative-interpretive approaches with epistemological, ontological, pragmatic and pedagogical implications.

The study uses analytical and evaluative approaches to determine the consistency of the transformation processes in relation to the founding charism, the Protestant Reformation and the new foundations through the RM. Serious consideration is given to the claims of the centrality of the Bible in the life and teaching of the Church *vis-à-vis* the practical use of the founding philosophies of the Stone-Campbell Movement (see below) in its pedagogical processes. Conversations will be used in describing, analysing and evaluating the use of tradition in the COCZ

and the need to redefine and clarify the contexts in which it arises. Finally, an emerging phenomenon in the life of the COCZ is discussed, while certain limitations are set in order to remain within the boundaries of the problem under discussion, which is identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity).

## 3.3 Selection of Research Participants

The selection of participants from an eligible and large sample of knowledgeable subjects was purposive in order to reach an answer to the research questions (Oppong 2013:203). Research participants were selected from the whole spectrum of purposively selected individuals from both the target and accessible population (Oppong 2013:203). 'Population' refers to subjects, objects, events, phenomena and activities specified for the purpose of sampling in a study (Brynard & Hanekom 2006:43). The strategic process of selecting participants for the study placed respondents into categories for purposes of representing the larger population (O'Leary 2004:103). Purposive sampling was therefore used for participant selection.

Sampling in qualitative studies entail that only a division of the study population is selected to facilitate data collection and fulfil the research enquiry (Oppong 2013:203). A list of individual members of a group is chosen using a procedure or frame to select eligible participants (Gilbert 1995:70). Participants were selected on the basis of their experience and knowledge of the issues under study (Oppong 2013:203). They had common characteristics, because they already knew something about the area of study (Merriam 2009). Purposive sampling has been used to deliberately select individuals with appropriate data to achieve the study objectives (Zhao, Kumar and Xu 2005:179). The selection of subjects was purposed on the logic of information-rich respondents to facilitate an in-depth coverage of issues in the interviews, also referred to as key informant interviews. This study covered individuals residing in six of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, while all the respondents originated from one rural community but were domiciled in one of the three places. It is practically impossible to collect data from every geographical part under concern, with every person allegedly knowledgeable about what is happening in the area of study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method, useful when reconstructing history, developing demographic data and dealing with ongoing challenges in an organisation (Zhao, Kumar and Xu 2005:179). Using purposive sampling, this study achieved its intended quality,

being achieved by a detailed and in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under study rather than mere statistical accuracy (Van Wyk, Taole & Nkonyane 2015:395-406; Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:45). Subjects were chosen across the strata, genders and ethnic variations.

Deliberately choosing people on the basis of the quality of information they possessed (Tongco 2007:147), the researcher selected the most productive sample from national and regional executives, including academics and theologians, who were believed to provide valuable data on the subject and thus answered the research questions (Marshall 1996:523). The national leaders who were chosen, were members of the NC of the COCZ with various committee portfolios. Added to that, executive members of the national committees from the main wing and the fellowships were chosen. With four registered fraternities for the ministers of religion, women's union, youth movement and men's fellowship, the researcher selected three individuals from each of the fellowships and three from the main wing. That accounted for fifteen individuals. Another list of interviewees came from individuals thought to have adequate information to enrich the study, and mostly the elderly, academics, women-theologians and activist individuals in the Church among others, most of whom were leaders at regional and congregational levels. Nine of those church leaders were identified. Therefore twenty-four individuals were selected and each interviewed at a specific time. The researcher also considered former principals where necessary, especially those who played a part in the past or supported the on-going process of change in the Church.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

By using structured storytelling, the interviewer can collect data from different sources of evidence that can be used to draw converging lines (Yin 2013a:321-332). The collected data can be triangulated (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville 2014:545-547). The interview method, observation and document analysis are good for triangulation, and in this study, documents were used to observe pictures, archival data and other objects. Also conversations were carried out which allowed observations to be done. Triangulation can be achieved at two levels. On the one hand, by using multiple sources to address different facts or parts of a study, or, on the other, by multiple sources addressing a single phenomenon (Yin 2013a:321-332). For the COCZ, use of these data collection methods meant that the issue was going to be studied thoroughly. The

issues examined had to address identity- and mission-continuity, as well as transformation in a diverse situation. Different methods were used to collect data (cf. document analysis and interviews), and an investigation for a single phenomenon also used different methods (cf. interviews and observations). This went along with decisions of events, times, activities, locations and processes to be followed and investigated.

All members of the COCZ were cooperative, and the researcher could freely choose whom to interview, as well as when and where, with data collection from primary and secondary documents. Two key people need to be acknowledged for assisting the researcher: Kenneth Wilson, who did his PhD in Anthropology on the topic *Ecological dynamics and human welfare: A case study of population, health and nutrition in Zimbabwe* (1990), at the University College of London, and who tirelessly scanned archival material of the Church of Christ Mission Department in New Zealand for my publications. Materials included books by Savage, *Forward into freedom: Continuing the story of missionary endeavor in Zimbabwe and Vanuatu* (1980), *'Achievement': Fifty years of missionary witness in Southern Rhodesia* (1950) and reports of the past international conventions detailing activities at the Dadaya Mission and what was reported about the work of the COCZ during those years. Prof. Wilson was introduced to the researcher by Rev Baka Nyoni. Prof. Wilson provided the required resources even though he had never met the researcher before. The second person is Fortune Mate, the senior minister of the CBACC in Bulawayo, who played a key role in doing research in the primary sources of information. He exhumed minutes of the missionaries who established most of the primary institutions and structures of the COCZ. The data contained therein, together with secondary sources from Prof Wilson, had much resonance for the years 1949-1965, after which the New Zealanders bid farewell to their mission sponsorship in Zimbabwe. The researcher used the following considerations for data collection: Geographical differences, demographical variety and hierarchical categories. Data collection was done from April 2017 to August 2018, mostly covering the three major regions of the COCZ – Midlands, Harare and Masvingo – as well as Matabeleland and Mashonaland West. Altogether, the study took a minimum of 260 hours of in-depth discussions, interviews, readings and observations.

### 3.4.1 Document analysis

Primary and secondary data sources are useful for augmenting evidence from sources (Yin 2013a:321-332). A wide range of primary and secondary data sources were collected and analysed. Documents confirmed and substantiated data that was gathered by other sources. These documents were obtained from books on the COCZ, as well as minutes and missionary reports in archival libraries in the Netherlands and New Zealand. Prof Kenneth Wilson and Pastor Fortune Mate were really helpful during the process. The Deeds Office in Bulawayo was also helpful by producing original documents on the history of the COCZ properties in the Dadaya Mission. These documents are included in the reference lists. On the list are documents on the COCZ's background history, especially annual reports, conference reports, newspaper articles, internet materials and internal newsletters. The researcher also utilised constitutions, yearly themes and pictures of activities.

### 3.4.2 Interviews

Interviews were very useful, considering that the COCZ is an open institution, without proper documentation of the activities and experiences of members. A lack of immersions means that poor feedback in the form of written documentation could be obtained. Data was also collected during national conferences for the fellowships and the main conference. In this way interviews formed a key part of the research study. This presented the researcher with the opportunity to explain the focus and intention of the study. The researcher obtained the position of each interviewee with the developments in the COCZ. He addressed issues of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy, as well as access and publication. In all the interviews, discussions were open-ended (cf. Yin 2013b) as they focused on the COCZ's background, developments and prospects for the future.

Interviews used semi-structured questions, sometimes informally and spontaneously presented. Only six questions were asked. No interview was recorded, and the reviewer tried to minute as much as possible of every interview. This was meant to achieve verbatim transcriptions, as the study used a phenomenological approach to understand how participants in their existential situations perceived their experiences. Interview guides used were open-ended to allow individuals to present variations of their responses. This is useful in a qualitative study. The study therefore

captured insights, views, beliefs, perspectives, motivations and experiences of the COCZ members on identity- and mission-continuity in diversity.

### 3.4.3 Observations

The 'Verbatim transcription, augmented by researcher-determined notation of nonverbal behavior, has been cited as critical to the reliability and to the validity and trustworthiness of qualitative research' (MacLean, Meyer and Estable 2004:113-114.). As a participant observer, the researcher observed the reactions of the participants to the study questions and responses and concluded that the transformation process was affecting the lives of respondents in critical ways. A participant observer is a person is a researcher who actively participates in the study and observes participants in their natural setting. The researcher plays an active role in the entire process (Yin 2013b). The study importantly used participant observation during conferences and prayer meetings at both conferences and congregations. The researcher attended all main national conferences and fellowships for the men and ministers, with varying degrees of participation.

The researcher's participation in the study affects the results and information being obtained. That helps to make the study true to life and shows that the problems being addressed by the study are realities in the lives of the participants. In this process, the researcher, who is a male member of the clergy in the COCZ, is positioned as an active participant and observer in this research project. He is a participant who consciously attempts to detach himself from the findings by suspending previous judgements and preconceived notions of the phenomenon under study. Research objectives, for research 'patients', affect respondents in 'therapeutic ways' (Grossoehme 2011:97-99). In qualitative approaches, the researcher therefore needs to know that the reader is a person who is engaged with the occurrence of the phenomenon, in which the reader is to be considered as an important part of the study, even though the reader does not actively participate in the data collection processes. This requires from the researcher to consider how his own biases can affect the results of the study. He therefore has to actively participate in the study.

In an attempt to understand the effects of the past on the present and future, participation in services and conferences as a delegate and sometimes officially, were done. Prior to the study, the data content and policy process of the COCZ were scanty. At all the conferences and Church sessions

the researcher was a participant – less than a researcher. His participation was subordinated to those activities in which every member of the Church participated. This immersed the researcher into the emotions, perspectives and behaviours of the members and sharpened his observation skills and protocols.

Bogdewic (1999:33-43) argues that the observer can either be purely an 'observer' or also a 'participant'. The part that the participant as observer plays, relates to the researcher whose activities are clearly known as a participant; on the other hand, the part an observer plays as a participant refers to when a researcher does not join in group activities, exercises and discussions. The researcher spends time gathering data through observation. The latter is when the researcher takes a distance from the observable group activities. Observers record happenings or events on their notepads. The researcher had to take note that he can be both a participant and an observer (cf. Bogdewic 1999:33-43). He, however, recorded personal stories as well as non-verbal cues and hues. This means that the researcher had to take notes with utmost care in order to minimise emotions on the data presented. In some cases, observations were taken in the mind and recorded at a later stage (cf. Schmidt & Klimoski 1991:145; Dooley & Gullickson 1995:1016; Adler and Clark 2011).

The researcher participated in board meetings at regional meetings, fellowship meetings and ministries committees. These meetings dealt with painful observations in the life of the COCZ, especially the divisions and fights going on. Charters and policy documents were sometimes discussed in these meetings. Evangelism activities in rural Matabeleland South were conducted as a result of these meetings. The regional vision and strategies were presented. Bulawayo, Zvishavane and Gweru are in a Great Triangle contract, where Churches are being planted by the three regions towards each other. The initiatives of identity and mission were observed from their attempt to recapture the missionary dream. Approximately 30 people from each region participated in the evangelism activities during every quarter. The researcher's participation in all these events was done without him influencing the others (cf. Bogdewic 1999:33-43).

### 3.4.4 Miscellaneous

A number of miscellaneous sources such as deeds, pictures, tombstones, informal conversations and personalities, contributed data, while others just supported the findings. Informal conversations, however, were very important; because they deepened the researcher understands of how people in natural settings behave. Unique and useful data were cited in this study.

## 3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

All the sources used are forming the phenomenon required for this study (Yin 2013b). Data analysis helps to organise tens of pages of data into meaningful arguments. Discrete field work notes are connected to conceptual categories of the study. These were done, because '[d]ata analysis in qualitative research is faced with the difficulty that methods are not well formulated' (Maier 2002:238). Sometimes it is not clear how a researcher reaches a conclusion (Miles & Huberman 1994:277-280). This problem can be overcome by planning data analysis in advance – to make it 'public, not magical' (Marshall & Rossmann 1999:147). For this study, data analysis formed a critical part of the interpretation of study results. This helped in data reduction, display and drawing conclusions and collating themes from the findings of *Atlas.ti 8.*

Data analysis began with the demographical analysis of data. Biographical data of the purposive sample for the qualitative study consisted of seven men (70%) and three women (30%) who participated in the face-to-face key informant interview sessions. Participants were well qualified, comprising of ministers with Master's degrees and the national president who is in the process of completing his PhD at UNISA. The rest of the leaders had professional qualifications such as a Doctorate in Entrepreneurship, two female ministers pursuing a PhD in Development Studies and Religious Studies respectively, a Master's degree in Education, a Diploma in Education, a Master's degree in Music (pursuing a doctorate in Music), a retired teacher (Diploma in Education), a PhD candidate in Political Sciences, a female student-minister and a Master's degree in Civil Engineering. All leaders had several years (ranging from 7 to 50 years) of experience in ministry, in their work and in the Church.

Data reduction is when field data is selected, focused, abstracted and transformed (Miles & Huberman 1994:277-280). Data was collated using the *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* tool. Interesting

sections with similar interests were classified together in verbatim form. Each section had its own code, in which keywords were recorded. This was similar to content analysis, as responses were placed in thematic categories (cf. Cromley and Campbell 1992). Data analysis followed themes and thus used the content analysis method. Content analysis is a thematically designed procedure for categorising historical, experiential and observational behaviour that may be verbalised or acted upon. For this study, interviews, discussions, observations and conversations were used to classify, summarise and tabulate the place of the local perspectives in the COCZ's processes and their effects on the continuity in diversity (Hancock 1998:17). Data for inclusion and exclusion were done, using analytic choices in the backdrop of research objectives. Only data relevant to the objectives were coded, using a theoretic orientation for phenomenological methods (cf. Yin 2013a:321-332).

Data display refers to a graphical tool used to convey information so that data is organised and assembled to permit comparisons and to make it easier to reach conclusions (Marshall & Rossman 1999:147-165). This helps to display the conceptual framework for empirical verification and explanation of the overlapping character of data. It leads to data matching and patterning to strengthen the study's internal validity (Yin 2013a:321-332).

Making conclusions, follows from data displays, as the researcher searches for meanings in order to build arguments. Using the research objectives to present the research study, interpretation of research findings wraps up the study with empirical facts (Naumes & Naumes 2014:142-171). Verbatim transcriptions were used to present the respondents' comments as close as possible to their words. The results, however, were interspaced with material relating to the research objectives. The research focused on interesting aspects of the objectives. However, the process of data collection, collation and interpretation is an interwoven process as qualitative data takes a continuous process in its formation until one reaches a data saturation (Miles & Huberman 1994:277-280). Three times, the researcher returned to the field in order to verify inconsistencies and ambiguities, and repeated data interpretation and analysis to extract initially overlooked data that challenged the set study criteria. This increased the study's reliability.

**3.6 Research Approach**

There are three types of research philosophies in common use today, namely the qualitative, the quantitative and mixed approaches. The mixed approach, also called the combined method, is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods (Bernard 2017). To understand it, one has to understand both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This study uses the qualitative approach wherein both narratives and figures are used, and where the figures are associated with measurements required for authenticating study narratives. In this section, qualitative and quantitative approaches are explained, although the study is mostly qualitative. The mixed approach is a combination of the two other approaches and is not discussed here.

*3.6.1 Quantitative Approach*

The quantitative approach uses numbers and therefore mainly depends on questionnaires, measurements and any method or survey that ends in quantifying the data and is associated with quantitative variables, for example, height, weight, scores and ratios. Numbers and statistical manipulations are for purposes of answering positivist and deductive arguments, whereas quantities describe the phenomena being used in measuring and analysing data collected in frequency counts. This study has chosen to use the qualitative research design in most respects, and the following discussion justifies the choice.

*3.6.2 Qualitative Approach*

The qualitative approach is the methodological concept that was mostly applied for this study. This method uses words and narratives (conversations), as the study bases data on human behaviour, human interactions and other social and environmental influences (Quinlan *et al*. 2015:125). It has foundations in ontology, epistemology and phenomenology. Qualitative research is the systematic collection, organisation, and interpretation of textual material derived from conversations. A qualitative study is an 'inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting' (Muhammad, Muhammad, Aijax, Syeda & Haider 2011:2083). 'Qualitative research methodology focuses on individuals' lived experiences as they are presented in thoughts, ideas, feelings, attitudes and perceptions. In addition, the research approach emphasizes human

behaviour and social interaction. It explores the quality of a phenomenon, not the quantity' (Öhman 2005:273). A discussion of the research design in qualitative studies observes theoretical and methodological commitments that describe the research problem, which in any case should consider the theoretical, ethical, practical, epistemological and ontological dimensions of the study (Bryman & Bell 2003:4-29). It is '[a]n underlying scheme that governs functioning, developing, or unfolding' and 'the arrangement of elements or details in a product or work of art' (Mish 1993:343).

According to Maxwell (2008:215), 'a good design, one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful functioning; a flawed design leads to poor operation or failure'. In this study, research design helps the researcher to understand the structure of the study as well as informing him on how the study will be carried out (Maxwell 2008:216). This method's research design 'should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007:24), as 'every type of empirical research has an implicit, if not explicit, research design' (Yin 1994:19). However, design in qualitative research should accept creativity/novelty, for without it, research designs tend to take the quantitative formula rather than the qualitative one. This is the pitfall in which qualitative research has many times fallen, as Sarah Tracy states, 'Despite the gains of qualitative research in the late twentieth century, a methodological conservatism has crept upon social science over the last ten years' (Tracy 2010:837-838). According to Malterud, '[i]t is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context' (Malterud 2001:483). This conceptual framework is based on the structure of cognition relevant for gaining objective knowledge using an aspect of authentic subjectivity.

Researchers, however, question as to whether qualitative approaches should be subject to the same evaluations as quantitative studies. This is similar insofar as data quality can be tested using reliability and validity. Validity is reached internally or externally (Yin 2013b; Dooley & Gullickson 1995). This study argues that it is inappropriate to use positivist elements to measure non-positivist elements. Rather, alternative criteria of conformability (or confirmability), dependability, transferability and credibility must be used (cf. Guba & Lincoln 1989:21-228; Marshall & Rossman 1999:147-165; Miles & Huberman 1994:277-280). The author uses the

second set because this study does not follow a strictly scientific approach (positivist as opposed to matters of faith) and thus does not intend to use an empirically verifiable theoretical framework. Added to this, readers and users of the material are likely to come from the non-scientific world, making the effort for scientific verification less useful for a religious and theological discourse. This is in line with developing a sound research methodology for qualitative studies in this field without developing a methodological promiscuity or being indifferent to methodological rigour (Van Maanen 1998:xxiii).

Qualitative data can be expressed in storylines through conversations (from personal interviews to focus group discussions), written texts (from journals, organisational minutes and prayers to letters), or visual forms (such as drawings, photographs and plans). This kind of research involves data presented either by an individual in the form of a case study (Risk 2013), or by a group in the form of interviews and focus group discussions. This approach uses interviews to explore people's experiences of phenomena being studied; using a series of questions as well as an ascription of meaning to individual people's experiences (Tong, Sainsbury & Craig 2007:349-357). The data collection gathered by the researcher involved literary studies on the phenomenon, interviews with the COCZ leadership and other members of the COCZ concerning the changes people are experiencing. The focus was on formal and informal interviews with leading theologians and national leaders in the COCZ, and members of the COCZ on the regional leadership levels (Tong, Sainsbury & Craig 2007:349-357).

This study emphasises the qualitative description of the changing phenomenon in the current COCZ. The data collation utilised a phenomenological approach, that is, a purely descriptive analysis of the experiences of the COCZ members on the changing phenomenon in their religious landscape. It described results in narrative forms as qualitative data using categorical variables, for example nominal data like gender, religion, age and ethnicity, where the study concerns measurements. The qualitative approach concerns phenomenological studies resulting from fieldwork, interviews (both in/formal and un/structured), ethnographic studies, and sometimes questionnaires, although they were not used for this study.

The strength of the qualitative-interpretive-descriptive design is that it defines transformation in the COCZ from the insider's own perspectives and definitions of contemporary changes. The paradigm focuses on the individuals' subjective experiences, which are sensitive to the contexts in which the COCZ people interact with one another in the major parts of the Church's high concentrations (Rogers 2012:1-17; Van Wyk *et al*. 2015:395-406). Added to this, the paradigm elicits the phenomenon of interpretation to negotiate a shared understanding of inter-subjective conversation in meaning-making with the COCZ leaders in the national structures and regions. The Church leaders are engaged to elicit data on their subjective experience of the changes taking place in the COCZ to enhance the formative and transformative agenda of the Church in the Zimbabwean context. The study uses interpretive phenomenology to recognise contextual factors that may influence an individual's construction of meaning from their own experiences. In this way, the research follows an integrated study of themes for the purposes of fusing relevant cultural elements to the transformation experiences in the Church (Geertz 1973:1-15). The study thus goes through a process of cultural border crossing, which involves the modern and postmodern African and American clergy and laity, the biblical commandment and the COCZ's mandate today. To achieve this, the study developed a qualitative-interpretive-descriptive design which is concerned with conversations and explanations (descriptions) of a social phenomenon (Hancock 1998:3). The phenomenon here refers to religious events such as conferences, worship experiences, ritual perspectives, personal views on identity and situations of power or concepts of religious transformation in the life of the Church.

The researcher has also applied the historical developmental approach in order to understand the past, the present and the prospective future concerning transformation in the COCZ. In this way, interpreting the transformation in the COCZ from its RM heritage was helpful as it deepened the researcher's knowledge of the Church's foundations and the developments that have taken place in history. The historical developmental theory utilised the interpretive approach to analyse and evaluate the extent to which the COCZ's clerical practices have remained in/consistent with the philosophy of the RM. This further examined how the COCZ remained in/consistently connected to developments of the Church in other parts of the world. This recaptured the founding theories of the RM thinkers, and how the Church has remained faithful to the intents of the founding fathers. The study takes both a descriptive and a hermeneutical analysis of the COCZ's identity and

139

mission continuity in the context of diverse experiences. Transformation in the COCZ needs continuous clarification, reinterpretation and redefinition to remain relevant to the ever-changing human society.

**3.7 Research Design**

Research design gives an effective plan on how the study was conducted, especially what was involved in the study process (Braun & Clarke 2013:336), as it frames the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Bell 2015:537-538; Mayer 2015:53-67). The research design for this study is phenomenological, because it deals with people's perceptions and their subjective experiences to realities (Braun & Clarke 2013:334). For this reason, interpretivism and constructivism are used to explain feelings, words and life-worlds, in order to derive a meaning and understanding of the phenomena. Qualitative studies have an orientation towards phenomenology, which applies to Systematic Theology as it falls within the field of humanities and social sciences (Bryman & Bell 2015:538). It normally uses the approaches of inductivism, interpretivism and constructivism (Bryman 2012:714). Perri 6 and Christine Bellamy (2012:304) relate that inductivism begins with the collection of data and a hypothesis-formulation, while it identifies data patterns (Creswell 2014:244) and interprets and analyses field results to formulate conclusions. Constructivism is a theoretical framework that is used to produce meaning to the responses collectively (Braun & Clarke 2013:328).

Meaning is constructed from interpreted practices and perceptions. The use of people's perceptions and perspectives is a phenomenological approach (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:388). The paradigm is philosophical and useful in conducting qualitative studies that require results in order emphasise people's biased experiences (Rubin & Babbie 2016:304). Representations of the researcher are not imposed on the research process (McQueen & Knussen 2013:526), in order to minimise the researcher's impositions on the conclusions. Data is presented to help understand the existential experiences of the COCZ's clinging to continuity in diversity in its mission and identity (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016:124). An elaborate description of research design is presented in the form of an *onion ring* (section 3.7.1 below).

### 3.7.1 The Onion Ring

The study used the *onion ring*, which is a metaphorical way to describe the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity in diversity (Wertz *et al*. 2011:124This is a qualitative approach, which is purely descriptive (phenomenological), using structured storytelling. Experiences of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) in the COCZ are spelt out in this study. The approach is recommended because its point of departure is the experience of congregants in the COCZ. Its assumptions are theological as it utilises faith as its starting point. The objects and subjects of faith are perceptions and emotions, which cannot be quantified easily.
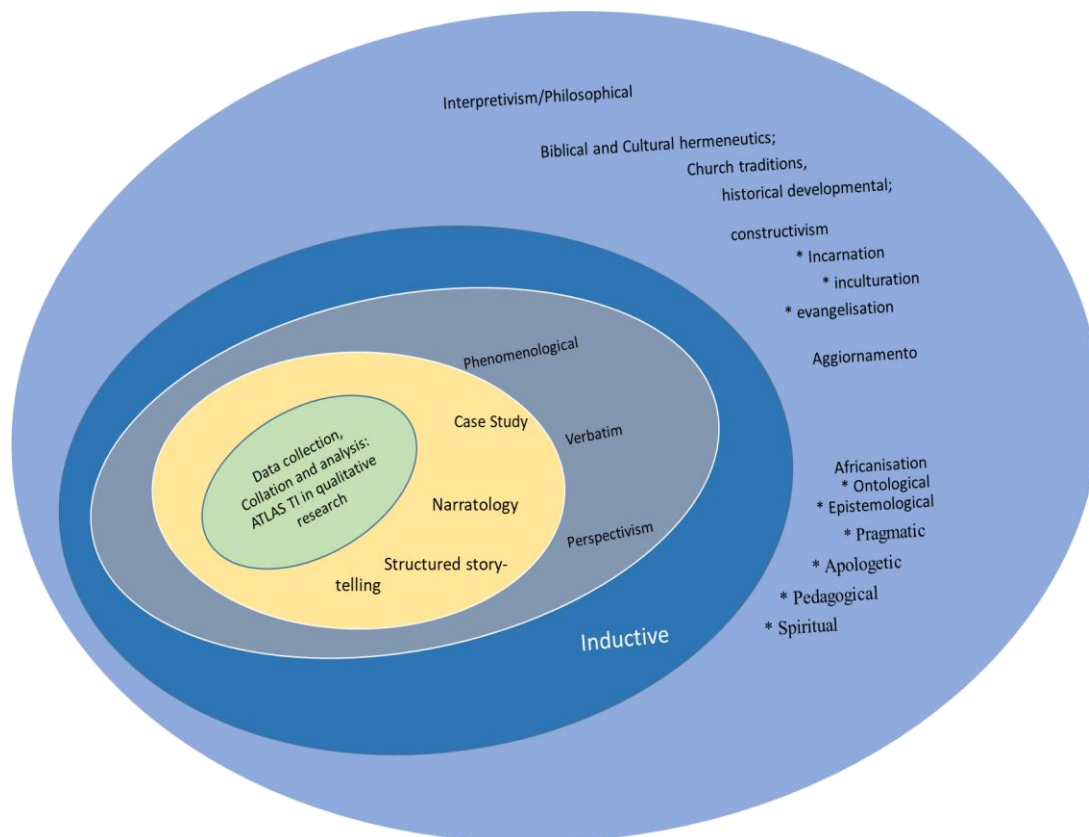


*Figure 3.1: The Onion Ring graphic presentation (Adapted from Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill [2016:124]).*

The *onion ring* accepts the companionship and building blocks of the research methodology. It has many layers of which only five will be used for this study. The outer layers, with cultural and biblical hermeneutics, Church traditions, historical development, constructivism, aggiornamento

and Africanisation, help to describe the approach's philosophical stance and theoretical development – in other words, these philosophical assumptions underpin this study. The middle layers describe and discuss the methodological choices of inductivism, perspectivism, interpretivism, phenomenology and verbatim approach. This includes the inner layers' focus on the type of research adopted, comprising of narratology, case study, and structured storytelling. The innermost layer describes the study's data collection, collation and analysis methods. The research strategy, population and sampling plan are implied in the diagram. Data collection relates to measurement instruments, the research guide, credibility and dependability of instruments, data analysis plans and ethical considerations.

The research participants for the study were drawn from the wide spectrum of the Church leadership in the national and regional main wings and fellowship groups. In structured storytelling, interviews were conducted considering age ranges, gender and class. Six open-ended questions were used. Each interview took about 45 minutes to one hour. The researcher observed the participants' mannerisms and attentiveness to the interviewer (Kumar, Sachan & Mukherjee 2017:299-306). As outlined in the ethical considerations in Chapter 3, the study seriously considered participants' secrets, and upheld their rights to confidentiality.

This study operates in the discipline of Systematic Theology, and it should be viewed from the underlying assumption that God's self-identity is revealed through his word, the Bible. In the COCZ, the centrality of scripture, using the Protestant principle of *Sola Scriptura* (accepts clear biblical texts as a means to interpret unclear texts) to interpret the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity). The process accepts both texts of the Old and the New Testament. This does not interfere with the process of incarnation, where God used the person of Christ to reveal God self to creation. In the Old Testament, prophets were sent with the message of God to his/her people, the Israelites. Christ is revealed to believers through the Holy Spirit – this relationship is maintained by God's self-communication through the Bible. The Bible is a consistent message of God to the world, which was written by a variety of authors, editors and redactors over many years,

reflecting on the relationship between God, Israel and the world (Sproul 2014).

**3.8 Research Frameworks**

*3.8.1 Theological Methods*

This study is done in Systematic Theology and examines the COCZ's spirituality and practices on how missiology, Christology, ecclesiology, pneumatology and eschatology become the good news of salvation in the incarnation, inculturation and evangelisation of the gospel. Theologically, God's mission in Christ from creation to redemption is the fulfilment of creation and baptismal dignity. Humanity has the opportunity to give glory to God. The glory of God is fully alive in a human being when God gives life to a person. Fullness of life can be obtained by preserving humanity's creation-dignity, which is the divine mission (good news). Theological methods imply that one lives out his/her faith, and in that case, it leads us to the Ricoeurian concept of the hermeneutics of faith (Josselson 2004:1-28). The hermeneutics of faith is a theological method that includes the creation and baptismal dignity of the *imago Dei/Christi.* Humanity is created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:27) and at baptism receives the baptismal vocation, that is, as noted in the Great Commission, to spread the good news of salvation (Mk 16:15). The baptismal vocation, seen in the Great Commission, focuses on Christology (leadership as patterned on Jesus Christ). Christology leads to providence, the Trinitarian unity and koinonia, incarnation, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology, and thus helps in the continuity of creation.

Living out one's faith demands that the creation and baptismal dignity of the human being is fully understood in the immanent and economic Trinity. The economy of salvation, according to Jowers (2006:421) and Mansini (1988:293-306), is seen in the interpenetration of the Godhead, which is also called *Perichoresis*. The glory of God reaches its fullest fulfilment on earth when the identity- and mission-continuity of Christ's mission on earth is accomplished. The idea that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God advances the idea of theological anthropology. This is the starting point of theology, because theological anthropology is something that is given on the subject of human creation in the image of God. Christ restores the image and likeness of God through baptism. Baptism, according to the reformist tradition, including infant baptism, is part of being in a Christian family (Spierling 2017). The creation accounts lay emphasis on the integrity of the cosmos. This theme is also pursued in 1 Peter 4:1-6 and with reference to Christ as the good

shepherd (Jn 10). Leadership provides the stewardship of God's grace to the whole world. This has implications for ecclesiology, especially *theanthropology* – the baptismal mandate and equality of all believers (Ga 3:28). Christ is regarded as the head and believers as different parts of the body (1 Cor 12:27). Christians exercise giftedness in different ways, working in harmony for the good of the whole body. This is called organic Christology. Theological methods begin with Christ as the head of the Church, and with believers as different parts of the body (who are differently gifted) but working in harmony with other body-members for the good of the whole body (organic Christology). In the body of Christ, emphasis is put on the care of the needful members of the body.

On the other hand, there is sacramental Christology, where Christ's presence is found in the distressing disguise of the poor (Chimhanda 2002:42). Emphasis is given to the care of the needful members of a community. Such kind of care is sometimes regarded as the incarnation of Christ in human life, also the humanisation of Christ and divinisation of humanity (the divine becoming human, and the human becoming more divine). Christ gave the example of God's mission in humanity through his incarnation with emphasis on humanisation (the divine becoming human) and divinisation (the human becoming more like God). The incarnation has an existential interpretation where it is viewed as a lived reality (Isherwood 2004:140-156). It also achieves contextualisation where the needs of the Church community are answered, including inculturation in leadership. In the models of African leadership, meaning is historically construed, demanding us to engage in the hermeneutic circle in order to come up with what the Bible and different theologians say about human salvation and transformation. *Ad Gentes* as the mission of God for the whole world emphasises the equality of believers (*Missio Ad Gentes* 1965).

In this study it also relates to contextualisation and inculturation, as their faith relates to the lived realities of local Christians. However, Christians and religionists do not live according to their faith as expected. This leads to a hermeneutics of suspicion, requiring researchers to embark on the hermeneutics of engagement (Josselson 2004:1-28). At this point, the hermeneutics of engagement with Christ's incarnation gives us answers on the current needs of the Church community, including the question of inculturation in Church leadership (Grudem 2004:25). Using the model of Christ incarnate means he must be incarnated in the lived realities of the local

Christians. Therefore, models of African leadership must be included in the Church's concepts of leadership, as its meaning is historically construed. This calls for the use of the hermeneutical circle (*onion ring*) mentioned above. Leaders who know the mind and heart of God, love God and their neighbours as themselves. To know and love God is to incarnate the gospel message in place and time – this includes inculturation.

Theological and biblical hermeneutics have implications for leadership styles. Charismatic leaders, like the early prophets of the Bible, always stated that 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me' (Is 61:1; cf. Lk 4:18). Being prophets, they were always the mouthpiece of God on earth. Therefore they always did not need to change their pronouncements, theyy also declared 'thus says the Lord' (cf. Jer 9:23-24; 26:19-21; 33:3; Ez 11:5; Ex. 7:17). With classical leadership, the hermeneutics of suspicion and engagement, for example by Amos, focused on addressing the corrupt leadership who exploited the poor. Prophetic leadership stood up for discontent. They dreamt about a better political order by revisioning and reconstructing a way forward for their society. In mapping the way forward for our society today, a question can be asked on how the Trinity brings unity into the Church – for instance, a question can be asked about a Uniting Church in Southern Africa like Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa or Uniting Reformed Church saying: What is so uniting about the Uniting Reformed Church? Reformed evangelical leadership is guided by the word of God. The Church is a New Testament replica of the people of Israel, because the new Israel is a covenanted people guided by the word of God, in a new dispensation. To be a Christian is a call to be like Christ (cf. 1 Jn 4:17). For leadership qualities, besides biblical models, the *Gaudete et Lactate Exultate* by Pope Francis (2018) presents a picture of leadership that recognises a cultural hermeneutics. To be uniting is to be contextual and to be integrative with the local expressions of the faith.

To conclude, theological methods have implications for Africanisation on a spiritual, comparative, pedagogical and apologetic level (Chimhanda 2014:33). This includes theological pragmatism, an imitation of Christ (1 Jn 4:17), holiness (being holy before God), living our lives in love and

wholeness to God and living life as a mission to God.

### 3.8.2 Philosophical Methods: Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a Western methodology that is currently being domesticated on the African continent (Fayemi 2016:2-18; Janz 2017:211-226; Oluwole 1998:151-159; Serequeberhan 1994:5; Okolo 1991:201-210; Madu 1992:26). It can be described as an approach, a theory or a methodology of interpreting texts, and in Africa's case it can be used to understand meanings and messages contained in ancient writings like the sacred texts. According to Ricoeur (1981:180), '[w]e can learn to read time backward as the recapitulating of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences'. Carl Holladay, on the one hand, argues that hermeneutics 'encompasses both the study of the principles of biblical interpretation and the process through which such interpretation is carried out' (Holladay 1985:384). Colin Brown (1979:59), on the other hand, defines it as 'the science of the interpretation of written texts in accordance with scientifically formulated rules and principles'. This contrast with the COCZ's maxims articulated by Thomas Campbell (1 February 1763 – 4 January 1854): 'We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent' (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6). On the interpretation of texts, Bielo (2008:10) argues: 'The Bible is its own best interpreter'. For this reason, Berry (2003:240) states: 'If it's not in the Bible, then these folks aren't going to do it…Whenever there are disagreements in the Churches of Christ, a reference to the scriptures is made in settling every religious question. A pronouncement from the scripture is considered the final word'. In the COCZ, the interpretation of the Bible is driven by the 'assumption that the Bible is sufficiently plain and simple to render its message obvious to any sincere believer' (Hill, Lippy & Wilson 2005:212). The purpose of hermeneutics in all these endeavours is to arrive at the message intended to be conveyed by the original author. Hermeneutics thus is an epistemological formula that provides sufficiency of the nature, source and validity of truth. Before going any further, this section discusses hermeneutics from its origin and use up to the current African context.

### 3.8.3 Hermeneutics in Western Philosophy

The term 'hermeneutics' derives from the Greek verb *hermēneuō,* which can be associated with the name of the legend, Hermes. Hermes was a divine messenger, who brought the message of destiny. He acted as the interpreter and carrier of the good news from the gods to the people.

146

*Hermēneuō* refers to the interpretation of such message. Heidegger (1982:29) adds that 'hermeneutics means not just the interpretation but, even before it, the bearing of [the] message'. Inwood (1998:385) elaborates on this, stating that hermeneutics is a process of interpretation, translation, explanation and/or expression. The term has many slants which are created by history, although the basic understanding is that of interpretation.

In the history of biblical interpretation, hermeneutics has gone through six stages, indicating a shift of emphasis in historical understanding. These stages were related to biblical exegesis, general philology, linguistic understanding, human sciences, phenomenology and systematic interpretation. Hermeneutics started as biblical exegesis (Palmer 1969:32-34). Biblical exegesis refers to the interpretation of the word of God – it draws the meaning out of a given text. Exegesis aims to reveal the inner meaning of a text, explicating the implicit message. It is opposed to *eisegesis*, which is the reading of one's own perceptions into a given text. Exegesis is a technique that is used to extract the inherent meaning/s conveyed by the author that is/are found in the text. It represents the real meaning/s and words of the author (God) to the people.

Palmer (1969:78-82) indicates that hermeneutics has been understood as philology by Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824) and Friedrich Ast (1778-1841), who expanded it to cover texts other than the Bible. Ast's thinking has led to the hermeneutic circle and the relationship of the parts to the whole. Wolf's view emphasises the importance of history to the interpreter in order to understand knowledge. He further suggests that hermeneutics has two sides, namely 'understanding' and 'explaining'.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) elaborates on the concept of hermeneutics as linguistic understanding. He refers to the science of linguistic understanding as 'general hermeneutics', which is a principle that has been developed to found all kinds of textual interpretation (Ricoeur 2008:51-52). Schleiermacher has extended hermeneutics to apply to all texts and not only to biblical texts (cf. Palmer 1969:90-92), referring to it as the 'doctrine of the act of understanding'. Here, two elements are emphasised, namely the 'grammatical' and the 'psychological' element. Using these elements, the hermeneutical process has become circular, for a researcher cannot understand a part of the text unless it is read within the context of the whole text, as much as we

cannot understand the whole unless we understand the parts of the whole. In the same way, we can only understand the whole if we can understand the author's intent, which is found in the text. This makes hermeneutics circular (Inwood 1998:386). The circle aims at understanding the mental processes, conversations and cultures represented in the words and meanings of the speaker/author of the text. Thus, interpreters of a text need to leap into the centre of the circle in order to grasp the full meaning of the text before the parts are understood, and *vice versa*.

Hermeneutics has also been understood as a discipline by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911). By utilising hermeneutics, Dilthey's goal is to formulate a truly humanistic methodology for human sciences. Human sciences include all studies that concern an understanding of human activities. Dilthey (1883) uses hermeneutics as a method to understand human sciences. He observes that the circular and historical nature of hermeneutics for humanity is made in history, and humanity needs to understand itself. The latter belongs to the psychological, while other things are historical.

As understanding has no starting point, it introduces the element of existence and phenomenology. Phenomenology is described by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) as *dasein* – the German term referring to existentialism. Heidegger presents *dasein* in his major hermeneutical work, *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1996)*,* as a phenomenological analysis of 'being in the world', determined by the human presence in the world (Heidegger 1996:47, 150, 157, 162). He argues that in order to understand, we need to appreciate that *dasein* is a capability of understanding the nature of being (Heidegger 1996:441, 429; cf. Oguejiofor 2009:81). Here Heidegger tries to show the significance of the circular understanding of ontology. The Heideggerian hermeneutics is fundamentally an ontology with the aim to understand and interpret the *dasein* as 'being in the world' (Heidegger 1996:183, 187, 227).

Gadamer followed in the footsteps of Heidegger, his teacher, and developed his own philosophical hermeneutics. He took his hermeneutics a step further by controversially asserting that '[b]eing that can be understood is language' (Gadamer 1975:474). Language marks both an imposition of a limit and a promise of a creative possibility, for thinking is bound by the boundaries of language. Fayemi (2016:5) summarises it as follows: 'Hermeneutics has thus encountered the positively philosophical question of the relationship of language to being, understanding, existence, and

reality'.

Ricoeur builds his view on earlier thinkers, and avers that hermeneutics is a system of interpretation. He regards hermeneutics as a theory or the rules governing an exegesis and interpretation of a particular text. The term 'text' here refers to a group of signs, symbols, dreams, myths and literary writings. Hermeneutics therefore reveals a deeper significance of a given text through a system of interpretation. It is a 'reflection upon existence and upon all those means by which that existence can be understood' (Hacketh, quoted in Madu 1992:26). Here the self is recovered, and the separation between the self and one's true being is overcome. Ricoeur utilises dialectical hermeneutics, in that no single perspective can attain a deep interpretative insight like self-understanding, which is central to the hermeneutical process. This awareness led him to the self-understanding of the *other* in the life of the self. Ricoeur (2008) seems to stress that there are no universal canons in exegesis, but separate opposing theories in regard to the rules of interpretation' (Fayemi 2016:5; cf. Palmer 1969:44).

In this historical excursion, hermeneutics is regarded to be concerned with understanding and interpreting the *self* and the *other* in the world. How we understand things relates to the differences in which people exist in the world (Kakkori 2009:19). Hermeneutics is therefore presented here as a quest for understanding and meaning-making in one's life, society and life period (Oguejiofor 2009:80). This is 'the totality of one's universe, which could be said to be constituted by one's cultural symbols' (Fayemi 2016:6). Having discussed the history of the term, we can identify basic elements of hermeneutics as context, history, tradition, psychology, intention, prejudice, understanding and language. Hermeneutics is here presented as a philosophical method of research which developed in reaction to the traditional tools of philosophy which were failing to understand the human existence and being in the world (Owolabi 2001:154). Hermeneutics was developed to restore the ideals of philosophy that were lost to the extremism of positivism, rationality and a pure analysis by the development of quantitative methodologies in the pure sciences (Owolabi 2001).

### 3.8.4 Hermeneutics in African Ethnosophy
Nowadays, hermeneutics has been considered to play a part in the African society (cf. Owolabi 2001). As a method it was developed to rescue the Western philosophy from extremism and

absolutism, through a positivist modernity. Owolabi (2001:154) explains: 'They maintained that all that modernist extremism had done against the traditional culture in the name of the modernist idols of pure analysis, strict rationalism, and stringent Methodism should be renounced'. Similarly, the use of hermeneutics in an African context is to recover the losses that were sustained during the times of slavery and colonialism, in which the 'agents of Eurocentrism and underestimation of African intellectual heritage' (Fayemi 2016:6) are being dislodged. African philosophers, however, have developed a hermeneutics of their own, called ethnosophy, which practically fails to align itself with Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Dilthey and Ricoeur, among others, because they were wary to repeat the Eurocentric-universalistic approach to human understanding that ignores the unique contribution of the disparate African cognitive distinction to human life (Hallen 2003:§ 8). In this context, hermeneutics refers to the methodology of reaching out, by means of interpretation, to deeper issues in human life like culture, history, language and symbols. It is used to understand certain lost ideas that are buried in the social history of the people. In Africa, several philosophers have attempted to develop a hermeneutical process that could be used as a bridge, and to rescue the philosophy of the people from itself (Okere 2004). Hermeneutics reminds the African philosophy of its cultural origins, and has biases, prejudices, interests and presuppositions to overcome. This presupposes that when philosophy is aware of its cultural assumptions, it can deal with its limitations and prejudices to appreciate good ideas from the past, as well as prevailing challenges in the present and in other cultures. Ultimately, this is useful for generating an ontological and philosophical dialogue among cultures (Okere 2004:§ 14).

Here, hermeneutics serves as an interpretative tool to rationalise dialogue and mediate between human experiences (Okere 1983). It creates a forum to understand cultures and peoples in their plurality and compatibility among each other. Hermeneutics helps us to rediscover our African values which have been adulterated by Eurocentric influences. It achieves this by interpreting symbols of the African culture to recover our lost riches (Okere 1983:ix). Hermeneutics interprets the African culture through the experiences of individuals, their philosophies, traditions, environments and histories. This approach rescues the African philosophy from the reductive ontologies of the Eurocentric society as it uses its own tools and traditions (Janz 2015:481; Fayemi 2016:8). This point of view was heavily criticised as nothing but 'patriotic romanticism that has nothing in mind other than extolling African culture and most especially his Igbo culture'

(Agbakoba 2005:236), and that 'philosophy seems to lose its enduring universal structure in Okere – the greatest master of the African hermeneutic school of philosophy' (Njoku 2005:101). Bruce Janz refers to Okere's adoption of hermeneutics, stating that 'there are limits to the extent the method can deal with meanings that are not simply there to be uncovered, but are the result of some violence that does not want itself to be named' (Janz 2015:481).

Serequeberhan (1994:1) describes hermeneutics as 'the means of returning to the ancient truths of mythologies that philosophy for so long avoided because of the aversion that Plato, the patriarch of Western philosophy, had for literary materials'. African philosophy situates hermeneutics as an approach 'standing between the particularism of the traditionalists and the universalism of the [post]modernists' (Serequeberhan 1994:5). The attempt by African hermeneutists is to bring the historical, cultural and intellectual era of the African person to inform the paradigms and priorities of their era (Serequeberhan 1994:6). Serequeberhan (1994:17-18) depicts a hermeneutics that has a horizon (historical location) on the one hand, and discourse (the interpretive process) on the other. It takes cognisance of the violence and counter-violence that Africa inherited from colonialism, where the distinct *other* was known by subjugation, inferiority and primitivity (Fayemi 2016:9).

Hermeneutics can be employed for the reinterpretation of the deep reflection of the underlying mythologies, symbols and traditions in African narratives and stories. It is therefore the only way that a deep interpretation towards a universal essence and a proper understanding of the cultural artefacts can be achieved (Madu 1996: xxxiii). Madu (1996) is concerned about establishing 'that symbols are philosophically relevant, not simply culturally relevant, and that hermeneutics is the best method for extracting the philosophical content' (cf. Janz 2015:483). Referring to Madu, Fayemi (2016:9) states that '[h]e uses hermeneutics to excavate symbolic resources and metaphors, meaning and significance of destiny in Igbo culture'. Hermeneutics is used to expose hidden meanings in supposedly lost thoughts as it establishes a rational connection between the past and the present. It uses myths and oracy to deeply interpret indigenous ideas. It can retrieve the authentic philosophical heritage of Africa in narratives and traditions by, for instance, analysing and criticising indigenous sages. Owolabi argues that 'the real initiative in the project of indigenous philosophical production rests with the trained philosopher rather than the local sages.

151

It is the responsibility of the former to reveal the hidden meanings embedded in the materials provided by the sages' (Owolabi 2001:153). He adds:

> The real desideratum in the quest for an authentic African philosophy, according to the advocates of the hermeneutic method, is not to prove that there are philosophers in traditional society, as the defenders of sage-ethnological approach would like us to believe, rather, the goal is to be able to retrieve the philosophical heritage in a form that will be useful to the contemporary effort of liberating and transforming [the] African society (Owolabi 2001:153).

This study also assumes that there is an enormous task of retrieving and interpreting knowledge and truth from the African intellectual heritage, consisting of tales, proverbs, symbols, songs, myths and sages. Oral narratives cannot be lost but need us to identify the schemes and paradigms of thought that were initiated by African thinkers for the development and use in transmitting this oral literary heritage across generations (Fayemi 2016:10).

### 3.8.5 Cultural Hermeneutics

This study is based on the STT to assess the changes that have continued to take place in both the African and American societies since the onset of the RM in the late-18th to 19th centuries, on a theoretical, conceptual, methodological and analytical level (Quinlan *et al*. 2015). The STT assumes that both African and American cultures have been changing over time and need to be reinterpreted in the interest of contemporary theologies and practices.

With this in mind, this study uses interpretive tools that take cognisance of the enduring centrality of the African people as subjects rather than objects. It utilises a hermeneutical approach, specifically the cultural hermeneutics of Musimbi Kanyoro (2001). While some scholars struggle with the viewpoint that culture can be categorised with theology, it is the view of this study that theology is a cultural process, although culture is a conglomeration of religion, ethics, art and language. Although culture may not be regarded as a theological method, it is a text that must be interpreted to set it into dialogue with theological doctrines about God, creation, providence, Christ and humanity, among others. It is interesting to note that postcolonial theologians have discovered the need to reconstruct Christian theology in order to fully liberate African Christians from colonial domination. This comes with the realisation that 'mission is one of the major components of colonialism and cultural imperialism practiced by both [female and male] missionaries in the

nineteenth century and beyond who sought to "transplant" both their churches and their culture [into the mission field]…[where] they preached the gospel message' (Russell 2004:3).

This thesis makes a hermeneutical study of the long history of missionary heritage in the COCZ, with the aim to resist patriarchal oppression as an African witness to God's care for the world. To do that, ACHA is used in the 'analysis and interpretation of how culture conditions people's understanding of reality at a particular time and location' (Kanyoro 2002:9), because ACHA 'presents the best example of engendered cultural hermeneutics available today' (Kanyoro 2002:19). ACHA provides a specific review of African cultural perspectives, in this case, of the work of Christ through the Spirit on the African converts. Here, cultural hermeneutics is central, for '"Culture" is a concrete social phenomenon which represents the essential character of a particular nation' (Holiday 2000:38). ACHA strives to make Christianity a product of the African culture, as the Senegalese proverb states, 'The chameleon changes colour to match the earth, the earth doesn't change colour to match the chameleon', or that the soil was there in which the tree was planted; it was the tree that came to be planted and not the soil that came for the tree (Manley 1995:72, 74; Sanneh 2001:43). In other words, ACHA is a hermeneutic approach that aims to change the colour of Christianity that was presented to Africa by Western missionaries, to adapt to the colour of the African soil (society) – the soil upon which the seed of religion has to be planted.

This study is not entertained by the change of faces from white missionaries to black African ministers and elders (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2019:6). It rather goes beyond the change of race and people to the core of the Church's teachings. The study uses various theories of hermeneutics to explore individual and collective human experiences. Experiences are understood through the use of language. This has implications for ethical reflections during data collection and the handling of the different stages. It protects the researcher, the participant and theological studies as a profession (Kumar *et al*. 2017:299-306).

### 3.8.6 An African Cultural Hermeneutics Approach as a Hermeneutic Method
Hermeneutics in ACHA is applied in this study by first acknowledging the historicity of knowledge, as reflection helps to understand and distinguish its characteristics and eras (Fayemi

2016:14). The study is critical for ACHA's ethnocentric intellectual tendencies that may universalise African knowledge for all peoples and for all times (Hallen 2003:13). ACHA may tend to universalise an understanding *vis-à-vis* to relativise some interpretations that are universal. According to Akpan (2009:81), '[a] major problem of the hermeneutical approach is that texts, an action, or culture could become [a] subject of various or several interpretations'. This study cannot state in advance what ACHA's interpretation is going be. Owolabi (2001:153-160) argues that a desire for specific interpretations is the presumptive entrenchment that interpretations should be testable by something outside themselves. He (Owolabi 2001:159-160) adds: 'What hermeneutics [and ACHA in particular] strives for, is the blossoming of the many flowers of interpretation, if this will generate dialogue within and across cultures'. However, there is a need to guard against ethnocentrism. In this regard, Innocent Asouzu (2007:62) relates:

> [Hermeneutics] seeks to dogmatize on fixed meanings attached to words, names, symbols, wise sayings; more often than not, by reference to some distant ages past...as long as philosophy does not fully free itself from ethnocentric excesses of this kind, it would continue to solve fake puzzles, battle with self-imposed restrictions and even with contradictions.

Self-immolation arising from an unintended ethnocentric commitment can be avoided if the hermeneutic approach absorbs into itself the principles of complementary reflection:

> [ACHA] should seek to capture culture within a comprehensive, universal complementary future oriented perspective and not necessarily relative to one's own circumscribed location only. It is for this reason that hermeneutics of culture must be complementary in orientation to be complete, and should it attain the noble objective it has set for itself. In this sense, culture within the ambit of complementary reflection can be grasped adequately within the context of all the actors and factors that determine the ideas of a thinker and those individuals and communities under consideration (Asouzu 2007:43).

Whether complementary reflection is a reality or not, it leaves the question without an answer! Rather, ACHA should help us to achieve a level of knowledge that transcends our diverse African cultures and works through procedures of analysis, criticism, experimentation and demonstration (Hallen 2002:70). Tate (2012:85) states that 'in literary studies, context may refer to the materials and situations surrounding the writing or reading of a TEXT. These materials and situations are historical, cultural, geographical, ecclesiological, ideological, and literary'. Oluwole argues that hermeneutics has humanism as goal, with its attendant constitution of achieving emotion, intuition,

interpretation, debate and synthesis. She writes:

> Interpretations, by their very nature, consist of relating different events to each other so as to work out a synthesis. Nature may be all logic and mathematics, which is of course doubtful, but man, definitely is not. Demonstrations of the effects of events on human life and interests are impossible through a system of logic that pays no heed to human relations and feelings. Mathematics does not postulate the effects of human sensations and emotions as determinants of human existence. Scientific analysis does not feed emotions into its computer (Oluwole 2001:117).

Based on this premise, she concludes that she does not regard the scientific alternative as superior to the hermeneutic alternative, for them, like in any other sphere of human experience, stress two separate options that are valid and inevitable for human success. Rather, these alternatives cannot reach a detailed understanding of facts without the use of interpretation. The difference between them is that the 'tools and methodology available within each endeavour are different and distinct even though both can, in the end, be related to human interests' (Oluwole 2001:121).

To conclude, ACHA has been discussed as an appropriate approach for this study. However, the viewpoint of Oluwole remains problematic, because hermeneutics originated within the European culture, making it impractical for ACHA to avoid being certified by the method's *alma mater* culture (Hallen 2002:65). Rather, the issue of authenticity presupposes an altruistic interpretation of the people's intellectual views, without the possibility of the interpreters to impose reflections and interests of their own times and locations. Above all, ACHA is a promising methodology for reflecting on the Church's history and contemporary challenges in view of overcoming the limitations of its application in an African context (Fayemi 2016:16), 'especially in the light of the [diverse and] problematic versions of encounter that exist in the past and present' (Janz 2015:484). For this reason, ACHA will be applied to elaborate on African hermeneutics, constructivism and deconstructivism, utilising the historical developmental approach.

### 3.8.7 Culture and Interpretation

The use of ACHA in this study is to ensure that culture is not regarded as sacrosanct. In fact, culture changes, and it requires the Bible to be used and tradition to enter into its transformative praxis. It needs to be understood that culture influences people's understanding of scripture. In fact, the Bible contains the Hebraic, Aramaic, Greek and Roman cultures that need to be interpreted

in order to understand a particular passage of scripture in a particular culture (Wahlen 2013:8). This is complex, as scripture carries the sacred word of the Creator. Culture therefore needs to be defined, understanding it as 'an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society' (Ratsara 2015:58). These behaviour patterns relate to language, customs, artefacts, feelings and attitudes. The study of the Bible should always realise the limitations of culture on the interpreter.

McQuilkin's questions on verbal inspiration (McQuilkin 1980:113-124) refer to the centrality of culture as a new issue on the authority of scripture. However, when biblical interpretation is updated to bring it into conformity with contemporary opinions and trends in society, it mars the original meaning, thereby legislating what the Bible should say rather than interpreting what it says. *Eisegesis* is the crisis ACHA may encounter, where biblical interpretation is more than just interpretation, but rather a scriptural rewriting of the Bible. In this case, interpretation of the Bible should use proper hermeneutics in order for the reader to understand what the words and phrases in the Bible meant at the time of their writing, using the grammatical-historical method. This is because the reinterpretation of the Bible to go along with new attitudes has legislated rather than interpreted the Bible.

It needs to be understood that the Bible also speaks to the African culture while it is wrapped in the ancient cultures of the Middle East. The challenge, however, is on the selection of one ethnic culture *vis-à-vis* other cultures, as God conveys himself to humanity. Hearing the gospel in a culture that was used by God instead of some ancient African culture can be challenging. The question could be posed as to why God chose Israel to reveal himself to the whole world (Sullivan 1988:105). This created hierarchies towards approaching God, and thus particularistic tendencies of Christian salvation. However, the Bible also points towards universal truths which can be useful to other cultures (Wahlen 2013:8). Wahlen (2013:5-8) proposes that universally inclined cultural forms should be regarded as offering a direct application of scripture, while restrictive cultural forms need to be regarded as having an indirect application of scripture.

The issue of culture in certain passages of scripture has led to increased discussions on particular doctrines of the Church, like women participation, the use of instruments or acapella music, and

to diverse subjects such as participation in politics. One text that has remained controversial is the Pauline prohibition of women to plait their hair, which is a reflection of what was happening in Paul's time – that temple prostitutes at the temple of the goddess Diana in Ephesus, were known to dress in gold, jewellery and braided hair in order to entice men to sleep with them. Goddesses in Ephesus where believed to live in the underworld (cf. Ac 19; Ledbetter 2001; Arnold 1992:14, 23, 26). Bhebhe (2013:54) calls this the 'third tier'. Numerous underworld goddesses in Ephesus, 'including Hekate, Selene and Ereschigal' (Jacobs 2001:31), from whom Paul has liberated magicians (Ac 19), were believed to influence human sexual behaviour. In this way, local worldviews have been looked down upon, making us question in this study whether ACHA can help to mould the Bible or the Bible can help to mould ACHA to benefit local Christians (McQuilkin 1980:113-124). In this way, we will examine the hermeneutical framework of the founders of the RM, which are believed to be embedded in the worldviews of the founders.

### 3.8.8 Applying Hermeneutics in African Oracy and African Theology

This section discusses hermeneutics in two parts – its application in philosophy and in theology. The first part discusses philosophy.

Oluwole (1998:151-159; 1997a:95-121; 1997b:32-42; 1999a; 2001; 2016) has done research on a hermeneutical analysis and interpretation of the Yoruba oral traditions. She intended to rediscover the critical views of the Yoruba people in their oral texts. Although her reflections do not mention the term 'hermeneutics', nor characterises her method, her work applies hermeneutics. The oral texts are believed to contain inherent philosophical materials, which were not *per se* an analysis or interpretation qualifying the philosophy of the texts. She indicates her goal to

> document, study and understand the deep meaning[s] of different oral texts expressed in various African languages for the purpose of identifying the in-built literary genres and conceptual paradigms in which African sages formulated their thought[s] within [the] specific conceptual structures. It is within such structure[s] that their philosophical and intellectual worth can be determined (Oluwole 1999a:29).

Oluwole argues that her objective of engaging African oral texts and materials in African languages was for the purpose of discovering indigenous philosophical thoughts buried in these languages. According to her, 'the researcher needs to identify and formulate adequate tool[s] for

accessing and knowing the nature of the assumed elements of reality, whose knowledge and understanding would help human being[s] in coping with [their] life [lives] and experience[s]' (Oluwole 2016:181). She adds: 'What should directly interest the philosophers is not the cultural behaviours of the people, but the intellectual style [evidence of critical philosophy] established by oral texts in different African languages' (Oluwole 1999b:100). The hermeneutical study of African literature, thus, promotes a comparative intercultural rational that provides a veritable foundation for modern African philosophy.

Oluwole (1997:140), however, warns African intellectuals not to fall into the trap of subjecting African thoughts to the paradigmatic tests of Eurocentric thinking, as that robs the African intellectual heritage from its authentic existence. Intellectuals also need to engage in analysis, criticism, explanation and justification of oral works of Africans to explicate the implicit truth rather than create new philosophies that will not enlighten the issues in the texts (Fayemi 2016:12). She admits that no engagement can be conclusive or exhaustive, although it focuses directly on existential and social problems revealed in the narratives (Oluwole 1997:140). Thus, non-uniformity in interpretation aids in continuous dialogue, which continues the process of questing and answering to offer every differing view an opportunity to expose its merits or demerits, similarities and differences. Fayemi (2016:13) argues, 'Discussants in a dialogue are not out to completely destroy and/or annul each other. The goal is to promote mutual understanding'. Fayemi further outlines the essentiality of dialogue to hermeneutics:

> Dialogue is more of an attempt to analyze, explain and identify different ideas, beliefs, principles and conceptual schemes so as to discover reasons that account for noticed differences among philosophies. It is an aid to comparative philosophy. The fundamental goal is to make room for deeper understanding and full appreciation of the basic elements and features that account for the undeniable diversity in human intellectual traditions and cultures. The envisaged result is to explore conditions for greater mutual understanding that breed reciprocal respect rather than one that creates competing regimes of episteme that widens the artificial vacuum (Fayemi 2016:13).

Oluwole (2010:7) believes that fruitful discoveries about African traditions of philosophy are possible if discussions take a hermeneutic dialogue rather than the dominant scientific and

positivistic approach of the Western philosophy.

The second part of this section concerns theology. Hermeneutics in African theology has been thoroughly researched and discussed. However, it has not yet elaborated on all the underlying issues. Earlier proponents of the use of hermeneutics in theology are Western theologians such as Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in his posthumous classic publication, *Prima Pars: Summa Theologica* (Aquinas 1702)*,* where superlatives like 'super' and 'supra' are used in a phenomenological dialogue. The existentialist theologian, Rahner (1978), advances the viewpoint that human beings are transcendental and lives in an infinite horizon of experience that keeps on moving. For this reason, Pope John XXIII (June 1961) introduced *aggiornamento* – the theology of the signs of the times, saying:

> The ecumenical council will reach out and embrace under the widespread wings of the Catholic Church the entire heredity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Its principal task will be concerned with the condition and modernization (in Italian: *aggiornamento*) of the Church after 20 centuries of life. May it be that side by side with this, God will add also, through whatever edification we may offer, but above all by merit of the omnipotence of the Most High who can draw new chosen sons from the very stones, one other result: a movement toward recompositions of the whole Mystical Flock of Our Lord (Pope John XXIII, 1961).

*Aggiornamento* advocates for a return to the roots, because the Christian revelation is a continuous experience (historical developmental). This was picked up by Neumann and Shorter who introduced the concept of inculturation. Inculturation observes that interpretation should look at the essential elements in a culture, to reject, correct or expand the meaning (Van der Merwe 2016:589-606). The Vatican Council II introduced the idea of the paschal mystery*,* because some things have to die (completely) in order to resurrect in a new form (Hunt 1997; Anderson 1988). The Synod of African Bishops that took place in Rome in 1994, gave a post-synodic exhortation of a new evangelisation of Africa, in *Ecclesia in Africa* (Pope John Paul II 1995b:97)*,* where Christians need to feel at home in their culture and Church. This appeals to the postmodernist approach to biblical interpretation, briefly discussed below.

It needs to be acknowledged that African theology has borrowed much from Western hermeneutics, especially the idea of inculturation. Proponents of inculturation are, among others, Gadamer, who talks about the fusion of horizons, where the text and the reader become one through

dialogue (Gadamer 1997:62, 180, 244; cf. Vessey 2009:531-542). Inculturation, which is mutually inclusive of contextualisation, evangelisation and incarnation of the gospel message in time and place, refers to the African person's lived reality. The idea of inculturation is discussed in Pobee's dialogue between African and Western theology on the teachings of the Bible (Pobee 1992). It is also picked up by Nyamiti (1973), who refers to new situations that result in comparison with the pragmatic, apologetic, pedagogical and spiritual levels. This brings us back to Kanyoro's cultural hermeneutics, which can be evaluated for its worth in this study in the following section.

### 3.8.9 De/Constructionism and the Modern Methods of Interpretation

This section focuses on the postmodern reading of the Bible where we use deconstruction as a key tool in the reading of the Bible. First of all, the background to social de/constructionism is provided in order to make it easier to discuss the concept later. There are several postmodern methods of studying the Bible, of which social constructionism forms the key element.

Social constructionism has been used to come to terms with the nature of reality, or to make sense of the lived world, which is constructed rather than created (Andrews 2012:39). It concerns itself with the nature of knowledge (ontological issues) and how it is constructed (epistemological issues). This makes society both an object and a subject of reality where meaning is shared through the people's beliefs, agreements and understanding. Social constructionism originated in the 1980s in sociology as part of the postmodern era in qualitative study methods. It relates to the accuracy and usefulness of observations as study reflections of the observed world (Murphy, Dingwall, Greatbatch, Parker & Watson 1998:1-274); it also relates to the social processes of knowledge rather than the individual mental processes of knowledge (Wertz *et al*. 2011:124; Wilson 2007:20-37).

Social constructionism originated in part from an interpretivist approach to thinking (Burr 1995). As interpretation, the focus is on meaning-making, negotiation, sustenance and modification (Schwandt 2003:353-364; 1997a:69-83; 1994:118-137). The world of life is understood by means of the experience of those living in the world. In this process, interpretivism seeks to scientifically study and describe the subjective human experience. For this reason, objectivity in interpreting subjective experiences becomes difficult to achieve. However, scholars attempt to apply a logical

empiricist methodology, especially in the symbolic interpretation of human inquiry. In other words, social constructionism implies that knowledge and truth are constructed, although it corresponds to something real in the world (Schwandt 2003:353-364; 1997a:69-83; 1994:118-137). Human beings are engaged in trying to know what it is to be human as opposed to discovering scientific data in the world (Steedman 2000:53-62). This is beyond a social understanding of the natural world, but it is the making of that world. The concern is therefore on the nature and construction of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann 1991), which is created through the interactions of individuals in society (Schwandt 2003:353-364; 1997a:69-83; 1994:118-137). These interactions can be regarded as objective reality since it influences people's habits and routines, resulting in it being cast into patterns, which are reproduced effortlessly.

An objective reality creates a general store of knowledge that is institutionalised for use by future generations and gives room for creativity and innovation, as routinised and habitualized knowledge are reaffirmed in these individuals' lives (Berger & Luckmann 1991). This reality differs from subjective reality which is achieved through a first-person experience and learning from others (through socialisation). A subjective reality gives one an identity in society, because identity originates from society rather than from inside the person (Burr 1995). In fact, socialisation mediates an objective reality, rendering social reality a place of meaningful significance for the individual who internalises it through language (Berger & Luckmann 1991). Language is the medium through which concepts and thoughts are constructed, which helps to structure the way that the world is experienced (Burr 1995). The conversation remains an important means of modifying, maintaining and reconstructing subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann 1991). Subjective reality shares common conceptual meanings and an understanding that do not require redefinition every time it is used in a conversation. However, Schwandt (2003:353-364; 1997a:69-83; 1994:118-137) argues that reality is also radically constructed as it cannot exist outside human experience. Social constructionism should therefore be understood in contextual and relativist terms, as there are multiple realities due to varieties of human experiences (Burningham & Cooper 1999:297-316).

Social constructionism needs to be understood in the contexts of realist and relativist terms (Craib 1997:1-15). This is because reality is created and dependent on individuals, which creates a tension

between subjective and objective reality (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007:97-139). This questions the credibility, legitimacy, meaningfulness and usefulness of data generated from a methodology that uses multiple accounts of realities to human livelihood, like in health (Murphy *et al*. 1998:1-274). Realism and relativism therefore represent two polar points between subjective and objective realities. This creates a problem for research, as realism ignores the way in which reality is created to assume that constructs are true, while relativism concludes that no reality takes precedence over other realities to represent a social reality. This confuses ontology and epistemology, and thus makes philosophy difficult to understand. In fact, this erodes the status of ontology while increasing the status of epistemology. The question that needs an answer, is: Can anything be known which has no independent existence? Epistemology should rather subsist to the independent existence of knowledge which it must strive to discover rather than create. In line with this, Hamilton (2002:60-69) defines knowledge in terms of beliefs that can reasonably offer a rational confidence in the validity of truth.

David Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), a French philosopher, studied and wrote about the sociology of knowledge. He argues from a social and cultural perspective that there is a blind spot on the patriarchal lenses, with perspectives on new experiences such as the bringing of feminism into a critical analysis. Perspectivism is a way of seeing things changing in life (due to changing lenses), like Christian Churches (like the COC), fundamentalist states, women created from men's ribs, myths, Churches that read the Bible in a specific manner, women that should be submissive rather than being relational to men, especially with reference to leadership.

What follows is a brief discussion of some of the postmodern methods that are linked to social constructionism.

### 3.9 Other Postmodern Methods of Interpretation

Post-modernity has recognised the special position of the reader/listener in the interpretation moment, similar and also equal to the author and the text (Osborne 1991:366-385). Research has pointed to deconstruction as a necessary process in textual interpretation, showing that it is valid to expose the false assumptions inherent in the strict traditional interpretation of the text. Some of the postmodern methods of interpretation include social sciences, structuralism, rhetorical

criticism, reader response criticism and de/constructionism.

De/constructionism is a linguistic attempt to build up or undermine the expectations of the reader of the Bible concerning the biblical text, especially in exposing its alleged structures. The method exposes the reader to the biblical text's literary and linguistic system to receive only the meanings that the system can possibly make (Hasel 1994:5-34). In this study, de/constructionism is not applied to only understand the Bible, but also Christianity and the African society in the context of the postmodern transformation. De/constructionism denies any text a fixed or stable meaning; therefore the meaning of the text depends on the reader's acceptance of statements as being truthful (Hasel 1994:5-34). This is regarded as a gap between the reader and the author's horizons that cannot be completely bridged or fused (Gadamer 1975:273-278).

Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) is regarded as the decisive figure in the development of 20th-century hermeneutics, who influenced Ricoeur and Gianni Vattimo (The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy 2009). He argues that the more one moves to the horizons the more the horizons move away from them, and in this case the more they need to be fused in order to reach a destiny. Gadamer developed a dialogical approach in hermeneutics that is distinct and grounded in the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and Heidegger (Vessey 2000:70-76.). His approach rejects subjectivism and relativism and denies any simple notion of the interpretive method in grounding the linguistic understanding mediated by the tradition. He interestingly rejects any idea of hidden teachings in Plato and yet employs the Platonic dialogues as key philosophies of his method. Gadamer did research on the works of Plato with the aim to understand the Platonic dialogue and dialectic in order to repeat the dialogic movement in a way of understanding the philosophy. He further contradicted his position by arguing that no text can be interpreted accurately as the interpreter and their theoretical foundations need to be critiqued and questioned. This is why he argued that there is no single normative meaning of the scriptural text.

In this study, the COCZ has been understood, or rather its RM theology has been understood in different ways by different groups of followers. To understand the COCZ's position on transformation, one needs to enter into the COCZ text and dialogue to understand the philosophy

supporting the current transformation process.

### 3.9.1 Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a holistic demonstration of logic and rhetoric to maintain an illusion of completeness on the whole (Aichele & Phillips 1995a:7-18). It dismantles the logic and rhetoric of an expression in a text to identify points of failure in the system to exclude that which is the other. With deconstruction, one identifies points of failure in a system, in which coherence can only be found by excluding and forgetting that which it cannot assimilate. The challenge is when that which cannot be assimilated plays a central role in the system (Derrida 1986:151). In practice, deconstruction exposes the hidden, denied or repressed meaning from an ordinary reading. Aichele and Phillips (1995b) argue that meaning is not in the text but is imposed upon the text (cf. also Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter 2000). Meanings originate from the reader rather than the text, making interpretation an expression of power, exercising violence on the text in the act of reading (Derrida 2002:58). Deconstruction challenges construction, which is a hermeneutics of violence as it offers another metaphor to describe the reading process. This puts the written text into the interests and desires of its readers. The reading circles around the textual object are to play with it, to tease it and to exclude and deceive it, without any reverence for it (Aichele & Phillips 1995a:7-18). This makes deconstruction a postmodern method of reading the Bible as it imposes a structure on the text, for this kind of interpretation violates the text (Anderson 1989). It assumes that interpretation is impossible.

Derrida's main concern in deconstruction is to critique metaphysics and its impact on the theory and practice in philosophy and writing. He rejects two main characteristics of Western philosophy, namely that meaning is grounded in metaphysical presence and that time is oriented to its end (Derrida 1986:9-31; cf. Makaryk & Sumner 1993:25-26, 141, 356, 638). Derrida suggests two alternative ideas, namely that meaning is an affair of language systems of difference without positive terms, and that writing is prior to speech (Derrida 1986:10; cf. Makaryk & Sumner 1993:41, 58, 69, 212-217). With this he wants to persuade others to reject Western metaphysics by claiming and demonstrating that written words do not stand for spoken words, which do not stand for thoughts, which do not stand for truth, and these are not referents of the metaphysical world. He therefore suggests that textual interpretation is done in a certain way (Derrida 1986:9-

31; cf. Makaryk & Sumner 1993:584-585, 596-597) as there is no common understanding of the author, as well as his message and values. In other words, his radical epistemology is opposed to the formalist conceptions of textual autonomy belonging to traditional Christianity. Walhout avers that Derrida has contributed to dialogue where the Christian critic responds constructively to the challenge of his philosophy (Walhout 1986:22).

Derrida's deconstruction is also understood to remind and demonstrate the failure of all philosophies to prove the existence of God (cf. Underwood 1986:12). Fact is that philosophy has disproved God's existence for over a thousand years, and deconstruction is no exception. 'A careful reading of Derrida's work shows that he is less relativistic and nihilist than his opponents fear, and less innovative and original than his proponents wish' (Nehamas 1987:37). It was therefore recommended to reject deconstruction (Jacobs 1991:345), because its acceptance rejected the Christian mission of purifying the dialect to proclaim the message of peace and the kingdom of God.

Derrida also offered a compelling and consistent view of his experiences in the world. It is unfortunate that this failed to offer an adequate substitute foundation. His world view became self-defeating when he presumably failed the test of 'undeniability' and necessarily denied that logic applied to reality. He offered no proof that structure produced meaninglessness (Derrida 2011:103-191) – it was just a claim without proof of a foundational principle.

### 3.9.2 Historical Developmental Approach

In this thesis, the COCZ needs to be understood as a Church that has developed through time, and hence the historical-critical method can be used to understand important events that have taken place in the COCZ. The study examines the development of theology in the COCZ in view of how the RM thinkers and followers have interpreted the Bible in the more sophisticated times of the modern and postmodern eras (Maier 1977:607-633). Some texts recorded supernatural activities, making their interpretation even more sophisticated, as interpreters tended to leave out the divine elements for scientifically verifiable human elements. Interpretation of the Bible thus has assumed progression of religious and theological thought from primitive to more sophisticated ideas (Wahlen 2013:6). Most changes have been influenced by Greek philosophy and the evolution

theory of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) on the interpretation of the creation stories. Earlier on, without evolutionary thinking, St. Origen (185-254), influenced by Greek philosophy, suggested that the creation story must be understood allegorically, which was later supported by St. Augustine (354-430) (Hasel 1994:5-38). Soon after the death of Charles Darwin, Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) was born, and he introduced the concept of demythologising the biblical texts. This means that some biblical texts cannot be interpreted literally as they contain a metaphorical stint.

On the historical development of theology, Chimhanda (2002:15) suggests that a critical-rational-pragmatic approach would help to integrate theory with practice, especially the discourse of orthodoxy and orthopraxis in the debate. Holiday (1997:48-50) underscored this view in his perception of personhood as reconciling thoughts and practice. The issue of praxis, which gives rise to transformative praxis, is given more and more emphasis by scholars and theologians at the end of the second millennium (cf. Kasper 1999:32-48; Kanaris 1998:295-310). In this context, praxis refers to the practice and application of a principle as opposed to reasoning about a principle without the use of knowledge and skills. The emphasis shifted from rationality to pragmatics (Kanaris 1998:295-310). In this study, the views of Lonergan (1971) provide an important understanding, as he divides theological thinking between the past Christian doctrinal heritages and the illuminated present and prospective future (Sala 1972:468-477). The illuminated past relates to our conscious and intentional operations. Sala adds:

> These are the levels of experience that result in the acquisition of data, the level of intelligence that seeks to understand the data acquired, the level of judgment that ends in the affirmation or negation of the hypotheses brought forth by intelligence, and the level of decision in which values are recognized and the methods or means are chosen that lead to the realization of those values (Sala 1972:473).

Theology is divided between the two principles where static theology relates to research, interpretation, history and dialectic about the past, while reflective theology relates to doctrines, the foundations, systematics and communications (Sala 1972:468-477). It undertakes to discover data in all four levels of consciousness under the first principle. It also undertakes to understand historical facts, to resolve dialectic conflicts, and to take intentional steps to objectivise the horizon of understanding implicit in the existential events of conversion. Concerning the second principle, Sala states, 'In doctrines he (sic – interpreter) expresses judgments of fact and value. In systematics he (sic – interpreter) seeks coherent and appropriate understanding. In communications he (sic –

interpreter) attempts to provide suitable data for the diffusion of the Christian message' (Sala 1972:473).

With the critical-rational-pragmatic approach, a number of emancipations of the people who are marginalised seem to initiate the process of transformation in the COCZ. Concerning the 'categorical imperative', Immanuel Kant emphasised the treatment of individuals as ends in themselves rather than as only means to an end (cf. Holiday 1997:48-50). These transformations have related to the inclusion and even ordination of women in the Church and the pastoral oversight of the Church in the place of elders, among others. However, the critical-rational-pragmatic approach seems to have some problems. In a patriarchal society, the subjective and inter-subjective critical-rational-pragmatic appropriation of Christology (Chimhanda 2011b:19, cf. Ruether 1983:125) has tended to treat men as the *logos* (mind – superior mind in a theological discourse) and women as the *alogoi* (mindless – heretics in a theological discourse). This study takes a critical-rational-pragmatic approach to consider the trajectory of scripture and the transformation of the COCZ worship, leadership and identity over the years. This position will be discussed in the following Chapters.

## 3.10 Church of Christ Traditions and Ideological Captivity

The COCZ was formed as a transformative movement – a restoration movement – and it has always believed in thoroughly researching the scriptures to resolve ecclesiastical and theological issues. The tradition is open to new information from a fresh interpretation of the Bible and world developments. However, the protest movement was developed to fight against clericalism, causing the movement to become anti-clerical, including the Churches they themselves formed. In this way, it can be surmised that the COCZ is in support of transformation, although its position at this stage is very stagnant. Masengwe, Machingura and Magwidi (2012:185-194) bemoan the usurpation of autonomy in the Church by African Church Elites (ACE), causing the Church to fail in its endeavour to go beyond the RM principles. The abuse of the principle of autonomy by ACE has led the COCZ into some sort of ideological captivity to suppress the rights of women, youths and the underprivileged. Those who oppose sexism, tribalism, nepotism and injustice through social action, are labelled and condemned as unholy and unacceptable. On the other hand, those fighting for the people's freedom can also become captives in the contemporary situation to the

extent that this moment becomes a defining moment for all Christians to reach. The COCZ needs to understand the context of history, for it is in this history that the Church is trapped in the ideological moment of captivity. Schreiner (1989:986) avers: 'Only an ecclesiology construed historically can truly free us from ideological captivity'.

Those who support liberation theology, use Marx's social analysis theory (Boswell and Dixon 1993:681-702) to understand the dynamics of marginalisation. Jeffrey Reiman (1995:47) proposes that the defenses for the crimes of the rich people are that these crimes were committed in a process of exercising their professional responsibility. The individual is judged on the basis of failure to fulfil their responsibilities to society, without asking the question whether society has fulfilled its responsibilities to the individual (Reiman 1995:157). In this book, the rich get richer and more powerful to force the poor to enter into some unintended circumstances due to the structure of the society. Ironically the struggle in the COCZ developed due to the adamant behaviour of the previously poor clergy and elders who rose up to unjustly benefit from Church investments. This study therefore finds favour with Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1970), where the oppressed often become the oppressors of the future poor people, while authentic liberation should instead lead to reconciliation of the oppressors and the oppressed. With regard to the COCZ, the transformation process needs to guard against a reversed oppression, as the liberated Christians resist being vindictive to their former oppressors and the future poor.

According to Guo, *et al* (2016), it needs to be understood that there is a relationship between the structure of an organisation and the agency of an institution. This shows the way of how knowledge is to be acquired and the processes of acquiring it. The problem has to do with the historical conditioning and the COCZ's openness to change. This study has discovered that the COCZ struggles with the application of autonomy, the issues of leadership, Church doctrine – especially ritual activities – and the issue of Church identity. The COCZ has decided to remain an extension of the American Church without rooting the Church in the country. In this way, structures facilitate or undermine agency. Blaikie (1993:99) indicates that structures deal with human actions and acts, interrelations of agency and structures in institutions, among others. Here, ontology is important because of its connections with security. However, Thorpe and Jacobson (2013:103) state that ontological security is an ability to seriously consider one's experience of reality and its continuity

in the context of established patterns and institutions. The present conditions of life (modernity and post modernity) undermine the handling of existential contradictions in life. Human beings want to live according to their animal nature (by instinct) as well as above nature (as conscious reflective agents) (Giddens 1981:236-237). That which is from nature attempts to exercise power over itself leading to a crisis of existence as the human body reasons and assumes adjudication over inorganic substances. Therefore, the politics of survival and the attempt to emancipate others in the struggle against deprivation, poverty, discrimination, social exclusion and political oppression become key. This forces the COCZ to create an ingenuous dialogue (dialectic) between the Church's traditions and post modernity.

### 3.10.1 The Hermeneutical Approach of the Restoration Movement Founders

Stone and Campbell, as founders of the RM (Hawley 1976:101-106; Allen & Hughes 1988:27-32), understood the Bible to be the book of all books, the supreme and all-sufficient guide for the entire human race. However, the two patriarchs were affected by their backgrounds – Stone with Baptist congregationalism and Campbell with Presbyterian Calvinism – as they adopted the RM polity of congregationalism. With this combination, they built a common integrated interpretation of the Bible that combined the two extremes – congregationalism and Calvinism – thus enabling the Church to interpret the scriptures in unique ways. The first hermeneutical guide for the COCs was published in 1956. This provided '[g]uiding principles for the interpretation of the Bible' (Haddon 1956:457). These 'guiding principles' were based on the belief and understanding that the scriptures were accepted as authoritative and infallible – the true word of God. This has led to the spread of the tradition across all the Commonwealth British countries, while the tradition remained distinguished due to its 'rational cast' across conservative COCs (non-instrumentals), liberal Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ and independent Churches of Christ/Christian Churches (Casey 2004:491). The interpretive approach has remained intact among all of its traditions and families (Casey & Foster 2002:1-67; Hughes 1996:370; Webb 2003; Tucker & McAllister 1975:206, 380; Harrell 1966:48). The tradition has re-established the centrality of scripture in the Christian Church.

On a rational calculus (common sense realism), it is stated that '[Alexander] Campbell, trained in the Scottish Enlightenment at Glasgow University, followed rhetoric George Campbell and other

Scottish intellectuals in accepting the Baconian Method of inductive reasoning in all areas of knowledge, including scriptural interpretation and authorisation of Church practices' (Casey 2004:490).

Adding rational calculus to Baptist congregationalism implied that hermeneutics and preaching became the central tenets of the restoration of the 'Churches that might strike some as a strange quest: to restore the primitive Church found in the pages of the New Testament' (Casey 2004:489). These autonomous Christian congregations are associated to one another through common beliefs and practices, sought from the Bible alone, and see themselves as restoring the New Testament Church to its pristine forms. The movement saw itself restoring the Church through 'the unification of all Christians in a single body patterned after the Church of the New Testament' (Allen 1988:54). Restorationism had an impact on how the Church interprets the Bible, although they do not consider themselves as a new Church or denomination, but as a reproduction of the Church that was established by Jesus Christ, that is, restoring Christ's Church (Foster & Dunnavant 2004). A. Campbell said that the goal was to '[c]all Bible things by Bible names' (Rhodes 2005:688), and that became an early RM slogan, avoiding divisive names and hierarchies, as Christ established a single Church and not several denominations. Thomas Campbell expressed an ideal of unity stating, 'The Church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one' (Allen and Hughes 1988:688). This resonates very much with our argument that Christ's mission was to announce the Kingdom (reign) of God, rather than the Church as we know it today.

While the Campbellite movement was characterised by 'systematic and rational reconstruction' of the early Church, the Stone movement was characterised by radical freedom and a lack of dogma (Garrett 1983:106-108). Barton Stone was a strong opponent of slavery, as he saw no biblical justification for it and therefore called for an immediate emancipation. A. Campbell's experience of separation between the Methodists and Baptists led him to argue for a scripturally regulated slavery rather than its prohibition. This was more of a political problem as blacks and whites did not worship together, not even in the Church. In fact, blacks had formed their own Churches (Foster & Dunnavant 2004:619). Despite their differences, the two movements agreed to restore the early Church Christian freedom by uniting believers towards the goal of achieving a model of apostolic Christianity (Garrett 1983:108). This was the basis upon which they interpreted the

scriptures as a source for doctrine (a word they preferred to theology). It needs to be admitted that their point of view was heavily influenced by the American SGA. The Campbellites tried to resist what they thought was a manipulation of their camp gatherings, which were 'an important matrix of Barton Stone's reform movement' (Foster & Dunnavant 2004:368), which shaped the evangelistic techniques used by both in the RM. This strict adherence to the scriptures led to various problems in the movement as each group could interpret and follow its inclinations, and this led to differences on music and Church governance, among others.

The COCs have used the restoration ideal to interpret the Bible as the only source of truth for a Christian life, although there is a general liberty for its interpretation from congregation to congregation (Shelly 1984:123). This is based on the assumption that the Bible is a simple book that is written in plain language, understandable by any sincere reader. This translates the Bible and its message to be the blueprint/constitution of the Church (Holloway & Foster 2001:212). Berry (2003:240) has observed the faith of Christians of the RM in the Bible, stating, 'If it's not in the Bible, then these folks aren't going to do it'. This has led to a historical use of three approaches in the COCs, namely 1) analysing commands, examples and inferences; 2) analysing the patriarchal and Mosaic-to-Christian dispensations; and 3) the grammatico-historical analysis of the Bible (McAlister & Tucker 1975:387). They understood that the Bible was written over a time span of more than one and half millennia, by different inspired authors, with widely different professions, and different spiritual gifts. The Bible should therefore be read in its stylistic varieties and diversities, including praises, myths, histories, epics, chronicles, poetries, songs, prayers, laws, parables, allegories, prophecies, biographies and letters, among others. The COCs have emphasised the need to study the scriptures to buttress their theological conception and practice. For this reason, the COCs have produced many Bible linguists, commentators, debaters, translators, polemicists and historians, as well as the ablest Bible students (Casey 2001:681; Berryhill 1988). This is because students were schooled in logic, elocution and homiletics in most of the COC's Bible colleges (Casey 2004:492).

Keeran (2017; 2018) produced an interesting step-by-step method on belief and the interpretation of scripture, in all its genres, writing styles, plots and discourses. This has given the Church specific tools, leadership skills and the organisational acumen of the Campbells, so that, wherever they

171

went, they could build renowned educational and health institutions in their missionary mandate and Christian vocation.

The three strategies mentioned above have been used by different people in different contexts, while still postulating that the Bible is its own interpreter (Ferguson 1996:443). The Bible has one central message but lacks harmony due to the lengthy time-span of its writing; however, the COCs have the general impression that their hermeneutics is entirely based on the first principle of command, example and inference. Interpretation has basically been deductive with a heavy influence on their commitment to ecclesiology and soteriology (Ferguson 1996:443). They have also used inductive reasoning, especially in collating and analysing the Acts of the apostles' conversion accounts to determine the necessary steps to take towards one's salvation (Ferguson 1996:443). With changes in the degree of emphasis on Church and salvation in the recent past, one student of the Bible states:

> In most of their theologizing, however, my impression is that spokespersons in the Churches of Christ reason from Scripture in a deductive manner, arguing from one premise or hypothesis to another so as to arrive at a conclusion. In this regard the approach is much like that of science which, in practice moves deductively from one hypothesis to another, rather than in a Baconian inductive manner (Ferguson 1996:443).

This is because they are not allowed to do anything that is not expressly supported or forbidden in the Bible (Cartwright 1987:242-247). This led to debates in the 1980s on the 'Essentials of New Testament Christianity' (Foster and Dunnavant 2004:21). Commands have been viewed as turning into legalism while the character of the Triune God was considered for hermeneutics. This was a new hermeneutics that has since declined due to the increased 'focus on "spiritual" issues like discipleship, servant-hood, family and praise' (McAlister & Tucker 1975:388). However, many scholars in the COCs started to embrace modern methods of Biblical criticism, and more generally, the classical grammatico-historical method, which provides a basis for openness to alternative approaches to understanding the Bible (McAlister & Tucker 1975:389).

### 3.10.2 The Guiding Principles of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The COCZ takes its cue from the RM founders' hermeneutical approaches, stating that the purpose of the Church in the world is to foster unity across society, and to restore the early apostolic

Christianity. However, this can only happen if every congregation can exercise its own autonomy, and all denominations abandon their sectarian names to be called Christians only, but not the only Christians. In this instance, the COCZ emphasises expansion and mission in the world. However, these guiding principles have had the potential of dividing the COCZ due to the problems of ideological captivity. The COCZ has unsettled ecclesiological questions doctrinally, theologically and biblically. The worldwide Church has produced a resource, *From the Open Forum* (Ad Hoc Committees 2010), which is useful for dealing with divisive issues in the Church. The book was written by an *ad hoc* committee between 1983 and 2009, to explore the future of the Church. The COCZ learned much from it as it goes back into the history of the Church as well as moving forward into its future by removing the negativity of the founding principles. The negativities are found in the doctrinal controversies, since the Christian Church was incepted in the 1$^{st}$ century. The same controversies have lived in the Church throughout history and were inherited by the RM. This study questions how the COCZ handles delicate subjects with potentially divisive issues such as doctrines and practices of the COCZ today.

### 3.10.3 The Approach of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe to Hermeneutics

The COCZ's approach to hermeneutics observes that scripture is interpreted with scripture (using the reformed way of exegesis – *Sola Scriptura).* However, there is no exegesis without *eisegesis* (presuppositions) (cf. Kaiser & Silva (2009); Pobee (1992; 1979); Punt (2003:59-85; 2006:885-907; 2005). Exegesis is used in biblical hermeneutics, to elaborate on unclear statements. The COCZ believes that all scripture is inspired of God (Rhodes 2005:125) and that scripture is the best interpreter of itself (2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1-2). This COCZ approach presupposes that the Bible transcends the cultures of the ancient Near East, and it serves all cultures, races, nationalities and contexts in every human era. The Bible therefore provides a fresh revelation for its contemporary reader, requiring scholars and readers of the Bible to humbly submit their biases, opinions and conclusions before they can hear God speaking to them in a fresh way. Thus, to determine scriptural meanings, the Bible must be used in the same way that literary writings are studied, because meanings are derived from contexts in passages and from the totality of the scripture. Simple meanings can be derived from single passages, while deeper themes can be derived from the use of the entire Bible.

The COCZ also accepts the use of extra-biblical sources to explain the guidance that was provided to the biblical authors by the Holy Spirit, including history, archaeology, social studies and scientific discoveries, among others. The primary source of extra-biblical materials is found in the Bible itself. It helps people to understand biblical myths, allegories, proverbs, parables, prophecies of the future and the Psalms, among others. Biblical interpreters should understand that most written texts were formally expressed in the thought patterns of the ancient Near East cultures; that is why certain statements attribute responsibility to God for things he possibly did not do or allowed to happen (cf. Ex 9:12; 1 Sa 16:15). The COCZ accepts the Old and New Testaments as the whole counsel of God, believing that the New fulfils what was promised in the Old.

### 3.10.4 The Approach of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and Scholarly Vigour

The COCZ encourages scholars to thoroughly review literature on a subject, and to evaluate the Bible in line with the writings of its authors. While scholars and theologians in the COCZ can use extra-biblical materials and resources such as biblical lexicons, concordances, empirical reports and dictionaries to interpret the Bible, the central method is the harmonisation of scripture (the principle of scripture interpreting scripture). Many writings have been published on the methods of studying the Bible in the COCZ (Petter 2009; Allen 1986; Olbricht 1995, 2004; Sink 2004).

The COCZ's hermeneutical approach of using scripture to interpret scripture, upholds Gadamer's approach, which has decisively led to the 20th-century development of modern hermeneutics. Gadamer's approach has interpreted Plato's philosophy, emphasising that the relation of interpretation-interpreter is historically situated, and that meaning is historically construed. This means that the role and perspective of the interpreter is diametrically different from that of the biblical author. In the case where scripture must interpret scripture, the text must be regarded as the primary source. Gadamer refers to two horizons – that of the text and that of the interpreter – where meaning is to be reached in the fusion of these horizons. The author has produced the text within a context, and a careful study removes the mythologies as the Bible cannot always be read literally (Hasel 1994:5-34). In this way, interpretation needs to draw from the totality of scripture on any theme, which should take cognisance of *eisegetical* biases of previous interpretations. Biblical interpretations are done as a way of accepting that God intended to mould all cultures through the Bible.  It also needs to be recognised that cultural issues should be acknowledged; but

only when the Bible is given priority over human traditions and cultures. This means that cultural elements need to be examined in the light of the Bible, however, without avoiding contextualisation, but employing a biblically-controlled contextual reading of the text. In this context, the COCZ regards the Bible as the source of what one should know (ontology) as well as of the method of knowing (epistemology), using their hermeneutics. On transformation in the Church, the Bible needs to provide a key as conversion is itself a transformative experience and process in the life of a Christian. The biblical text should thus be viewed as part of the process in which the passage was written to interpret the scriptures.

## 3.11 Limitations of the Research Method

The research limitations are due to the specific nature of the COCZ as well as the research processes. Studying the COCZ alone cannot allow us to generalise results on all Christian Churches (cf. Yin 2013b; Black 1999). The study of the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) cannot permit us to infer that the conclusions reached are applicable to other Churches. The exploration, illustration and explanation of the phenomenon were limited, and applies specifically to the COCZ, which requires care in the generalisability of the study. The concepts used were useful in guiding the views and shaping the instruments for analysing the identity and mission of the COCZ. This is because the objectives of the study are qualitative and requires an in-depth discussion of the phenomenon in contemporary terms. The use of multiple cases could have increased the multiplier effect, but it could also affect the in-depth reporting as it reduces the proportionate attention that one case receives when there are many cases (Wolcott 1994:182).

Furthermore, researchers take decisions to record data, consciously and unconsciously using arbitrary decisions (Miles & Huberman 1994). If biases are not checked, using rival proportions of interpretations with scholars from other denominations together with the supervisor's checks, it limits the results of the study. Participant observation demanded a lot from the researcher (Yin 2013b; Patton 1980).

Finally, the study was done from the perspectives of the researcher: 'The attempt to produce a value-neutral social science is increasingly being abandoned as at best unrealisable, and at worst

self-deceptive' (Hesse 1980; quoted in Lincoln & Guba 1985:160). The assumptions, conceptions and research approaches of the researcher were personal constructions of realities. These could add biases that could increase the limitations of the study.

**3.12 Ethical Considerations for this Study**

The researcher had to ensure that this study has satisfied the ethical considerations of the institution where he is enrolled (Quinlan *et al*. 2015:42-43). Ethics protects three entities, i.e. the participant, the researcher and the profession. The researcher had unlimited access to the COCZ, its personnel and members, meaning that he obtained internal insights, accessed personal details and names, listened to personal stories and observed members' private moments, for instance exorcism of someone possessed by the spirit of witchcraft. This requires trust and faithfulness on the part of the researcher.

The researcher ensured that the proposed research design, in the stated population for the study, went beyond just stating relevant ethical approval and informed consent. He had to observe that the value of the study was not supposed to outweigh its injury to participants. Stake asserts:

> The value of the best research is not likely to outweigh injury to a person exposed. Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict. With much qualitative work, case study research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances. Those whose lives and expressions are portrayed, risk exposure and embarrassment (Stake 1994:244).

The research team heeded the trust of the COCZ participants and ensured that all participants were protected, in line with the minimal risk assigned to this study. The researcher also ensured that the study and interview scope were properly introduced in the consent forms (see the Appendix template). The process ensured that participants read the information sheets and that they would ask questions for clarification; the researcher also explained about confidentiality, including recording the interview, and completing the consent sheet. This was more important than the results which would end up in publications, as it had to protect individuals' privacy and anonymity through confidentiality observations (Grossoehme 2014:119). The researcher also designed self-imposed guidelines such as keeping all quotations and descriptions anonymous (Punch 2013). However, exceptions to the rule were on the Presidents, Rev Magwidi (national) and Mr Makuvaza

(Men's Fellowship). These leaders were shown the thesis report and were asked to authorise it. No interview report was published, and results were kept securely. This included that the researcher did not verbally share personal responses or notes with people who were not part of the research team. Only the supervisor could access the data. Above all, the researcher also shared his thoughts, ideas and recommendations with the participants in a reciprocal relationship.

Ethics is increasingly being recognised as key to qualitative research studies (Christians 2000:133-155; Denzin & Lincoln 2005:215; Fine, Weis, Weseen & Wong 2000:107-131; Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden 2001:93-96). Ethics assists in checking whether the data was collected in an acceptable manner, and whether it addressed problematic issues from the beginning of the study until its end (Orb *et al*. 2001:93-96). It attempts to ensure that principles remain valuable from the vision to its praxis (Swinton & Mowatt 2006:6). Validity refers to the 'trustworthiness' of a study, based on the ability of the final product to have referred to a model, 'rightness' and 'wrongness' of study results and conclusions, or alternative interpretations. The data to be collected is examined for how it supports or challenges the ideas and assumptions of the researcher, which impacts on the reliability of the study results. Reliability is achieved if results are repeatable (Grossoehme 2014:111).

The researcher, being an investigator, wields inherent power differences with the participant/s especially where disclosure may be stigmatising. In fact, the researcher is the major research participant, and if any disclosures relate to harmful information, the researcher suffers from the burden of keeping the confidentiality oath and protecting the society. If the study was done with integrity, the researcher may be able to handle severe reactions in a participant's life experiences (Grossoehme 2014:119).

Ethical misconduct in research could have serious consequences for the researcher, the results of his studies and his profession, as it would cause harm to the participants. Reports of investigators who breached the trust of participants and communities; or were sued for failing to properly conduct their studies, have put 'shame' on the profession and the researcher, and in most cases,

harming the participants (Wenger, et al. 1999:553-570).

**3.13 Conclusion**

This Chapter gave the theoretical underpinnings to guide the research process (Brewer 2000:1-9; Schwandt 1997a). The paradigm of the process and procedures are useful for data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2010). The researcher's interests are implied in the study methodology that is employed, while the study questions specify the intentions of the study on the transformation of the COCZ in a postmodernist society. The study uses questions to extract data on transformative models and influences of the transformation in the COCZ. In the founding principles of the RM, they did not accept the term 'theology' for the study of the Bible, using the term 'doctrine' instead. This study has tried to extract the data from the 18th-century context of the RM. Using particular methods and specific sources (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Patton 2002a:230-246), the study uses questionnaires, interviews (formal and informal) and focus group discussions. This helps to address the logical issues of the research process and underlies the choice of its logistical sub-components (Yin 2013a:321-332).

In short, the Chapter has discussed the research philosophy, research design, theoretical framework, data collection methods and tools, data analysis and interpretation and data presentation. It has also discussed how this data will be obtained to achieve validity, reliability, rigour and trustworthiness.

# Chapter 4

# The Understanding of Identity and Mission by the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

## 4. Introduction

The research findings are presented in two sections in this Chapter. The first section provides background information on the COCZ and the post-missionary enterprise. The second section gives an overview of the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) of the COCZ and explains the contextual circumstances to its challenges. It also attempts to discuss in detail, the COCZ's attempts at contextualisation, inculturation and Africanisation. The whole Chapter intends to present, analyse and discuss research findings free of interpretive biases, in their purest form, in terms of the conceptual framework adopted for the study – the phenomenological approach using verbatim transcription. The Chapter also analyses and interprets the data presented in the study. Under section 1.4, the following four objectives were indicated:

1. To state the contemporary understanding of the COCZ's Christian identity and mission from its founding charism.
2. To assess the local expressions of the Shona to promote the fulfilment of the COCZ's founding charism and missionary mandate.
3. To evaluate how African values and spirituality (on evangelisation, incarnation and inculturation) contribute to an ecumenical understanding in the COCZ.
4. To suggest how the founding charism and missionary mandate in the contemporary society continues to restore and transform the COCZ's continuity in diversity.

As mentioned in section 1.2, the research question is:

*How is the transformation of the founding charism of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ) underpinning identity and mission that is also informed by local spirituality for continuity in diversity among the Bantu-Shona Christians?*

The sub-questions to the research question are:

1. What does being the Church of Christ mean as founded by Christ?

2. What has the COCZ promoted, rejected or expanded from the Shona-Nguni Bantu ethic for the fulfilment of the Church's founding charism and missionary mandate?

3. How does the Bantu ethic of *Unhu*, in creative dialogue with the 'gospel of life' expand the view about the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe in particular, and the universal and ecumenical Church in general?

4. How can the COCZ better restore and understand its founding charism and missionary mandate so as to transform itself and the contemporary society?

The presented data is analysed by using *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* for qualitative research, while using a verbatim transcription. Data is presented and analysed in thematic and sub-thematic categories. Results are discussed in the sections below.

## 4.1. Biographical Data and Thematic Presentations

### 4.1.1 Profile of Respondents

The researcher officially interviewed twenty-four Church leaders and members at different times to provide the data necessary for this study. The participants included twenty men and four women between the ages of 30 and 70 years. The respondents had positions in the NC and executive, pastors' fellowship, youth committees, women's assemblies and men's fellowships. They held positions at national, regional and congregational levels. Only two respondents did not have specific positions in the Church but were significant in their congregations. One of them lectured music at Mkoba Teacher's College and the other one was a trained pastor involved in farming. Interviews were complemented by archival (primary) documents from the minutes of missionaries and writings about missionaries. The participants had a lot of experience on issues concerning the contemporary transformation of the COCZ, with perspectives on the past as well as future prospects.

# Section 1

# Brief Background on the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and the Missionary Enterprise

**4.2 The Church of Christ in the Contemporary Zimbabwean Context**

This section attempts to provide in brief, the background information, the missionary and the post-missionary enterprise in the COCZ. With the departure of the missionaries from the African scene, new leadership styles emerged, which prompted local Christians to embark on a new journey towards creating a new religious interaction which would be effective for evangelism, discipleship and Church growth (COCZ Strategic Plan 2015). The new leadership of the COCZ assumed that their spiritual product should maintain the value proposition tagged on its services to its clients. The COCZ established this on the basis that it had to excel in its services to its clients in order to gain a competitive advantage over other Churches. The new COCZ leadership began by sending a clear message to its congregants: 'Evangelism, discipleship and Church growth are our priority areas as a Church' (InV8 2018). This encouraged pastors to be obsessed with preaching, teaching and ministry to their members and society. The challenge was, how to inculcate this point of view. Ministers were believed to beneficially fulfil this superior service if they were given proper education. Resources were put aside to assist in ministerial training, and some even went for further ministerial formation. The idea of employee satisfaction was an input that would yield client satisfaction as pastors carry the image of the Church. In this way, the pastors of the COCZ were educated, because '[t]he way the Church [Church leaders] treats its pastors determines the way pastors treat their clients [converts]' (InV1 2018). Unfortunately, the constitutional process left pastors outside of the major decision-making board, causing them to become frustrated, traumatised and insecure. Bandera claims: 'The new constitution lacks consistency and a sense of direction, where pastors are pawns in decision-making, taken for granted and abused. The NC's delay to accept the proposed membership diversity will increase our leadership crisis' (InV1 2018).

This militates against the rallying desire recorded in the new constitution, to achieve leadership diversity and to propagate the values and vision of the COCZ. Without pastoral passion and enthusiasm, as well as constructive and uplifting practices, destructive attitudes carry the day. Growing Churches recognise a Christian diversity to allow pastors and leaders to develop 'to be

motivated, empowered, enabled and encouraged to be part of the Church of Christ family' (InV1 2018). These reflections are influenced by transformation processes in the COCZ, which have necessitated an examination of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) in the COCZ.

### 4.2.1 The Objective of the Transformation of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The constitutional initiative and the construction of the conference centre were meant to transform the COCZ culture of Western dependence on donations and teachings. It was meant to empower leaders to share the values and vision of the COCZ, and hence translate them into progressive evangelism, discipleship and Church growth endeavours. The pastors had to be equipped enough to be versatile in diverse situations in order to understand people, 'to have an increased level of client satisfaction' (InV8 2018). Many pastors have therefore engaged in further ministerial formation between 2012 and 2018, for this was believed 'to give every pastor the opportunity to self-develop so as to personally contribute to the future vision of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe' (InV1 2018). The COCZ's pastoral philosophy of empowerment was closely linked to the statement of accountability. Zebedee Togarepi has always reminded the pastors to 'preach every sermon as if it is your last sermon' (Zebedee Togarepi 2010). This leads us to discuss the results of the interviews.

## 4.3 Presentation of Themes and Sub-themes

Data was collected, using six questions to formulate themes and sub-themes as presented in Table 4.0 below. The six questions are attached in the appendices as research instruments at the end of the study. The questions are:

1. What did the Bantu mean by *Unhu* or *Munhu chaiye*?
2. How does this *Unhu* find full expression in the creation and baptismal dignity of the image of God/Christ?
    a. Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.
    b. In baptism, believers become Christ-like, co-heirs with Christ?
3. What does being fully human mean in the 'God-human-cosmos' (theanthopocosmic) reciprocal and mutual relationality?
4. Are there any Bantu elements of *Unhu* that are elaborated, corrected or rejected by the COCZ?
5. What are the distinctive marks of the COCZ that are:

a. peculiar to the COCZ?

b. in continuity with the pristine Church?

c. in continuity with its foundations in the USA?

d. in continuity with its missionary mandate from New Zealand?

6. What improvements has the COCZ done to the foundational principles, RE, American foundations, New Zealand missionary thrust and the Ecumenical (unity) Christian thrust?

The following tables presents themes and sub-themes for these questions..

| Table 4.0: Themes and Sub-themes | |
|---|---|
| **Main themes** | **Sub-themes** |
| The missionary enterprise | • Challenges to the missionary enterprise.<br>• The work of the Holy Spirit on the enterprise.<br>• Faithfulness to the founding charism.<br>• Continuity with the missionary enterprise. |
| Understanding *Unhu* (person-hood) as a concept | • Ability to live according to agreed norms and values.<br>• *Munhu Chaiye* (real/genuine person) is a person who possesses *Unhu*.<br>• *Munhu Chaiye* is seen as the masculine for decision maker. |
| Full expression of *Unhu* on human dignity | • Expression of *Unhu* in creation dignity (*Imago Dei*).<br>• Expression of *Unhu* in baptismal dignity (*Imago Christi*). |
| Meaning of full humanity in 'God-human-cosmos' (*theanthropocosmic*) relationality | • God-human reciprocity and mutuality.<br>• Human-human reciprocity and mutuality.<br>• Human-cosmos reciprocity and mutuality. |
| Bantu elements of *Unhu* in the COCZ | • Acknowledgement of Bantu elements of *Unhu*.<br>• Engagement of Bantu *Unhu* elements in the COCZ. |
| Distinctive marks of the COCZ | • Peculiarities in the COCZ.<br>• The COCZ continuity with the pristine Church.<br>• The COCZ continuity with its USA foundations.<br>• The COCZ continuity with New Zealand missionary thrusts. |
| The COCZ improvements to the Christian Religion | • Areas to improve the Christian religion.<br>• Strategies to improve Christianity. |

The aim of the study is to explore and review continuity and discontinuity with identity and mission in the COCZ, relating to the research question mentioned above. This presupposes that identity- and mission-continuity are shaped by diversities of cultures, time periods and social challenges. Results of Table 4.0 are discussed below.

**4.4 The Church of Christ and the Missionary Enterprise**

Archival material was useful for providing data on the missionary enterprise. Interviewees agreed with unanimity that 'it was inevitable not to become Church of Christ [for they were] born and bred in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe' (InV7 2018; InV16 2018; InV22 2018; InV4 2018; InV24 2018; InV2 2018; InV5 2018). This testifies to the success of the missionary enterprise. The missionaries assisted some children in school and also preached in communities. The Church provided existential needs such as food and clothing for children living in difficult circumstances and influenced some children to accept the gospel (InV11 2018). Testimonies of doctrinal identity mentioned by interviewees are an indicator of the fulfilment of the missionary mandate (InV6 2018; InV9 2018). Table 4.1 below shows the impact of the missionary enterprise on the Christian members of the COCZ.

| Table 4.1: Impact of missionary enterprise on members | | |
|---|---|---|
| Missionary enterprise in COCZ | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| | Born and bred in Church of Christ | 7 |
| | Children who were assisted by the Church of Christ | 1 |
| | Church of Christ doctrinal identity | 2 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

The fulfilment of the missionary mandate seems to have been achieved, because the children who were born and bred in the Church of Christ top the list. The list indicates that they were assisted by missionaries to belong to the COCZ. There are also some members who came from diverse backgrounds who are now attending the COCZ, stating that the COCZ doctrine has kept them in the Church. This explains the focus of the missionary enterprise to bring a new crop of believers from among the native children as indicated in Figure 4.1 below.
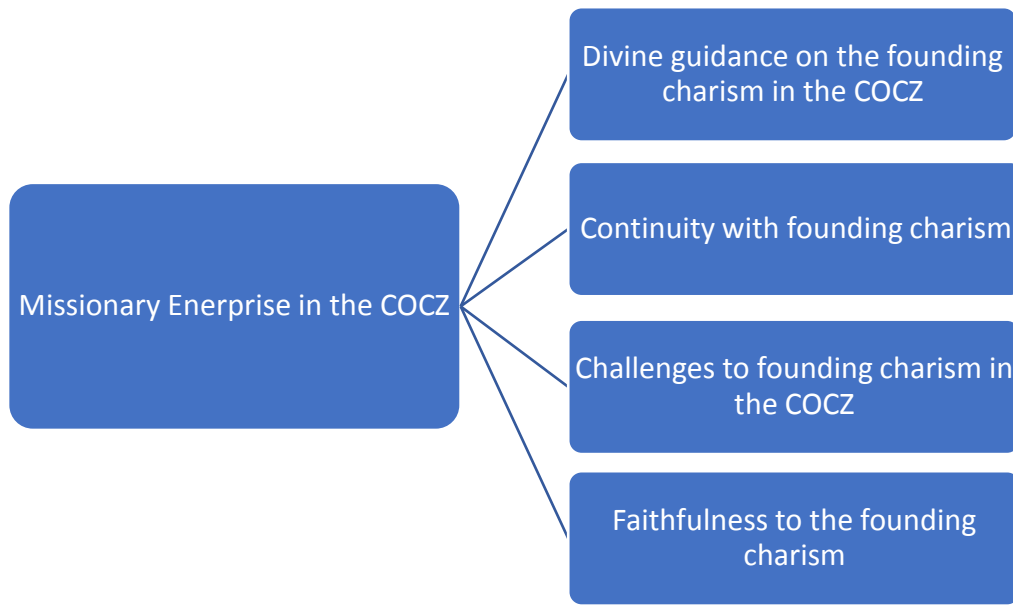
*Figure 4.1: Missionary Enterprise of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe*

In the minutes of 3 September 1954, the CBACC states:

> The Colenbrander was a mission centre where all missionaries to Southern Africa were received before they could proceed to their designated places of service. It was passionate about building Churches, Sunday school work, youth work, and a home centre for orphans or vulnerable children. It emphasised on charity and assistance to the poor. African children were more often than not given Christmas treats (CBACC 1948-1965).

New Zealand missionaries were involved in setting up mission stations throughout the country of Zimbabwe despite the financial limitations they endured (Savage 1983). Minutes obtained from the archives of the CBACC in Bulawayo indicate that the Church board represented the missionary deployment and activities throughout Zimbabwe (CBACC 1948-1965). In fact, when Pemberton started his work, Colenbrander was requested to carry out a census survey in Hippo Valley. The minutes of the Colenbrander Avenue Church Board Meeting Number 110 (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 23 November 1965]) state: 'Mr. Kennedy reported that he had been approached by Mr. Pemberton to provide members from the Colenbrander Avenue to do a house to house census at Hippo with a view to commencing a Church congregation amongst the Europeans'. They also engaged in outreach programmes to the African population, which they called 'native work'. The outreach was initiated after a missionary conference that noted that there was a new orientation of the African people where large numbers were drifting away from the conservancies to the cities,

185

due to the founding of industries (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 28 September 1950]). Conferences helped missionaries to pursue the agenda of the Church with verve. It is interesting to note that several meetings were held to discuss conferences (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 9 July 1953; 10 September 1953; 17 January 1954; 2 March 1954]). The focus was more on evangelism among the Africans than among Europeans (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 26 December 1951]). For the Europeans, more ecumenism was required, as they came from divided communities. To do this, the CBACC extended Christian unity to the Baptists by using their premises at the main venue for this endeavour (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 1 November 1951]). They also cooperated with the United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS) by giving to and sharing their properties with them on behalf of the local congregations. Bulawayo became the hub of the COCZ's missionary work. The minutes of 18 June 1955, referring to their relationship with the UCMS, state:

> The Bulawayo fellowship of Churches of Christ goes back over half a century. The hard work and self-sacrifice of a few people have resulted in the establishing of Colenbrander Ave. Church, an African Church in the Location and Coloured Church at Barham Green. Bulawayo is an important and rapidly growing centre in Southern Rhodesia, which has become part of the new and developing Central African Federation. The challenge and the opportunities of our situation are enormous; but our resources of men and money are wholly inadequate. If the ground already occupied is to be maintained, and the surrounding territory entered, we feel that substantial aid will be necessary from our brethren across the seas (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 18 June 1955]).

In the CBACC (1948-1965), a report of the first experience of conflict and division led by Mr Fay Short is reported. It is stated that the group came from the USA intending to go to South Africa, but briefly stayed over in Bulawayo. Tension arose between the groups due to some differences in scriptural interpretation. The argument was about the use of instruments and scriptural interpretation (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 15 April 1950]). The Americans were strict on musical instruments and other practices compared to the New Zealanders and Australasian believers (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 15 April 1950]). Although one group was outspokenly condemning division as a sin and pleaded 'to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 15 April 1950]), a division took place, as both groups realised that to cooperate with other sincere believers, does not imply to sacrifice one's beliefs, teachings and witness for the sake of unity. Short's withdrawal statement is attached in the minute book,

stating that they were abiding by their convictions in 'true Christian spirit' (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 12 March 1950]). Impliedly, the groups then started to operate in two different geographical areas (Queens Park and Colenbrander), due to fundamental differences on doctrine. The CBACC (1948-1965 [minutes of 12 March 1950]) puts this in perspective: 'To call such a division a purely geographical division is to deny the true facts: viz. that our differences are doctrinal in reality'. This marked the beginning of the COC that did not use instruments in their services, establishing itself in Mashonaland East under the Nhowe Mission. This is one of the reasons why there are several groups of the COCZ today.

Missionaries engaged in preaching missions, like the evening services held by Dr. Pruett in the Holiday Bible School, and a youth club which they started with the intention to merge it with Sunday school. According to the CBACC (1948-1965), '[t]he youth work has been re-organised under the title of Church youth Group and emphasis is being given to coordinating the group into the life of the Sunday school. It is hoped that through their contact with the Sunday school the young people will be led into the Church'. The minister (Pastor Simbi) also reported on his journey to Plumtree District at Danangombe (26-28 January 1964) and to Rowena (3 September 1964) (CBACC 1948-1965). School teachers, chiefs and young people were important for the meetings. They also worked on proper Church structures and doctrinal instructions. The minutes of the CBACC, on 27 August 1958 (CBACC 1948-1965), discuss how missionaries were assisting an African Church community at Luveve to construct a Church building.

The minutes also record how African leaders were influenced by other denominations on how to deal with disciplinary issues among their members. A story of a young boy and a girl is reported who fell into sin and the girl got pregnant. The two kids could not be readmitted into the Church unless they marry without regard to age and circumstances. Leaders argued that if they do not marry, they will still sleep together. Mansill, the Church secretary then wrote that it was wrong and unscriptural to deny people Church membership based on their (past) sin:

> The only reason given is that perhaps they'll do it again. Well, if they do it again it is their sin, but if we refuse Church membership to those sincerely desiring it, surely it is our sin. If they are very young, which is usual, and after being out of the Church a year, they are refused re-entrance, it is likely we will lose them for good. I maintain that we really have no right to refuse Church membership to anyone who

sincerely desires it. How does the Native Church's attitude fit in with the story of the prodigal son? (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 2 December 1961]).

This story raises questions on the mandate of the Church to the world, its ministry to members and its consciousness to continuity and discontinuity.

Ecumenical engagements were also discussed on the COCZ's fellowships with the Disciples and other COC groups (CABCC 1948-1965 [minutes of 8 July 1954]). Missionaries from various parts of the country stopped by in Bulawayo, like the Zambezi missionaries (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 6 March 1955]). The Church also engaged with the UCMS concerning their interrelationships with other Church groups. Hadfield, one of the missionaries, reportedly argued that he feels that 'we should be strong in our old attitude of cooperation with other groups' (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 3 April 1955]). A discussion on organising the Church properties 'under one common board of Trustees, and possibly common Deed of Trust' was also discussed, stating: 'This would simplify matters greatly from a legal perspective and would be a further bond between the inter-cooperating Churches' (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 31 May 1955]). The CBACC therefore invited the UCMS (also known as the Reef Churches) to assist in the Bulawayo work, as well as engaging on the question of transferring some of their properties to the name of the UCMS: 'It was finally decided that the officers should recommend that the Church request the UCMS to adopt Bulawayo as a Bona Fide mission field, and to facilitate this the Church considers the transfer of its Bulawayo properties to the society' (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 17 June 1955]). A report of the recommendations of the Church officers was added to the minutes of the Church (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 18 June 1955]). The UCMS was formed by the Disciples of the Church of Christ in South Africa, and the COCZ agreed to cooperate with the UCMS and to transfer some of its properties into the society's name (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 18 June 1955]). This led to the creation of the Properties Control Board to locally control the Bulawayo properties, which was to be vested in the UCMS. Three people would be appointed of which one had to be from the society. They had to propose a Joint Properties Control Board with the New Zealand Church of Christ Foreign Mission Union. Mutually they also agreed that properties would be re-transferred to local Churches when the society withdraws from Bulawayo (CBACC 1948-1965 [minutes of 18 June 1955; 10 July 1955]).

### 4.4.1 Challenges in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

Interviewees attested that the COCZ had, and has, challenges that need current and continuous engagement. Carnality and individual devotion to personal gains, material interests, Pentecostal fundamentalism, a lack of organisational structures and orthopraxis, doctrinal and regional divisions, patronage by elders and men, increasing secularisation, intergenerational distance, the practice of occultism and dirty Church politics were mentioned as some of the key impediments to the Church's life and growth (InV4 2018). These challenges interfere with suggestions for transformation as people have inclinations that they are not ready to part ways with. Interviewees also indicated as is shown below that a lack of leadership orthopraxis and pro-activity led to the challenges the COCZ is having today.

| Table 4.2: Fragmentation and stagnancy | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Fragmentation and Stagnancy in COCZ** | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| | Lack of orthopraxis | 6 |
| | Lack of leadership | 4 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

Interviewees further argued, 'Some are so attached to wealth and power that they resist any attempts to become organised and self-sustaining' (InV16 2018; InV7 2018); 'This has led to stagnancy' (InV23 2018); 'A lack of proactive leadership' (InV24 2018); and a 'fragmented approach to construction in Church projects' (InV6 2018). Interviewees bemoaned a lack of institutional capacity because of a psychological, emotional and intellectual capture by means of a missionary emphasis on autonomy and congregationalism (InV6 2018; InV22 2018). This has failed to emphasise responsibility, accountability and interdependence in Church business. An interviewee argued that, 'We depend on each other; but when the Church is predominantly lay, it kills the vision and mission of the organisation' (InV22 2018). Separation of clergy from lay people was therefore condemned as 'artificial leadership that led to reluctance on dialogue and theological depth' (InV22 2018). Frustration about this has led to hostility and divisions in the COCZ (Mafohla 2017).

The departure of missionaries left a gap where locals failed to link and delink with the past for purposes of continuity and discontinuity. It was also unfortunate that money, after the departure of the last white American missionary, did not continue to flow into the country as it used to be during their time. This affected Church membership figures, existing programmes, infrastructure development and worship services, especially on the level of music quality and doctrinal soundness, teaching and preaching quality and the benefits that could be attributed to the Church's historical links with great missionaries like Garfield Todd and John C. Pemberton (InV4 2018). The problem was identified as a lack of orthopraxis, which was variously subscribed to the pastoral training institute that insisted on an archaic, missionary and redundant pre-colonial curriculum (InV24 2018; InV4 2018; InV16 2018; InV2 2018). Another interviewee added:

> We are becoming more like the world rather than make the world to become more like us. We follow Pentecostal teachings and practices rather than the Bible. Mass praying is done by people who failed to receive answers for their own prayers. What people now do is occultism rather than worship. Do you remember the prophets of Baal [1 Ki 18] who were taunted by Elijah, saying '*Daidzirisai pamwe Mwari wenyu ari parwendo*' [Shout louder, maybe your god has taken errands]. We have also embraced worldly politics to include women in our Church structures. We have given women new rights. This is done by people with poor theology. What is wrong with what we used to know? Probably we have problems with our male ministers, so we want to try female ministers for a change. Who knows? (InV2 2018).

The interviewee very strongly criticised gender equality and women ordination. This is a view probably accepted by most male leaders of the COCZ.

Along with women, the youth also felt the pinch, not only of worldly politics but of the Church's political impasse (InV11 2018). Parents are children's lifelines, and practise patronage on their religious freedom. Leadership disagreements, therefore, do not only affect their Church attendance but also their spirituality, especially where children in primary school (9-15 years) continue to attend youth conferences with young adults (16-25 years) and late youths (26-35 years). An interviewee, a former youth president avers: 'Youths are asking for a change of curriculum to allow each of the groups [children, young adults and late youths] to have their own conferences' (InV11 2018). This was believed to address questions of relevance as well as to address issues of generational gaps. The patronage and paternalism practised by parents on younger children and young adults made youth leaders feel that rotating young adults' and children's conferences would rejuvenate and accommodate their needs as they would be allowed to attend local conferences and

therefore benefit from such gatherings. This was believed to result in youth involvement in religious activities, music and dances.

While interviewees mentioned that there was a strong theological teaching in the COCZ (InV4 2018; InV7 2018; InV16 2018; InV23 2018), they revealed that a tendency towards theory was bigger than one to practice. New members were not fully instructed on how to behave and how the Church operates. There was therefore a lack of synchrony in the doctrinal practice and the conformation of the order of services through written manuals. An interviewee stated:

> People are baptised into the Church but there is poor shepherding and grooming, yet our Church began and ran the education system in the country since the 1940s. We depend on verbal material ['sporadic information' – InV24 2018], yet missionaries used written down materials [like pamphlets] for evangelism. Apostolic and Zionist Churches beat us on property development, why? (InV16 2018).

The challenge probably relates to the lack of an ability to link and delink – a continuity and discontinuity with the past (InV4 2018). This possibly relates to poor ministerial formation as an interviewee states: 'Poor leadership qualities in our Churches may be a reflection of the competence or incompetence of our training institution [referring to Zimbabwe Christian College]' (InV24 2018). A Senior Pastor in the COCZ echoed similar sentiments and stated:

> Our shortcomings or setbacks began when we started training colleges [Bible and teacher training]. Bible training was reserved for those who could not qualify for teacher training [less bright students]. Teacher training was partly controlled by government, while Bible training was wholly controlled by the Church. White missionaries, with their interests and inclinations, began to divide between themselves by origin [New Zealander or American], with Americans strongly patronising Bible training and New Zealanders, secular education (InV10 2018).

Another interviewee also argued:

> COCZ missionaries failed to learn local languages compared to the Dutch missionaries, hence without the vernacular, they could not understand Africans. I struggle a lot on some teachings that do not appreciate the original languages of the Bible, Greek and Hebrew, and the cultures of those people. Anyway, as Eccl 1:8 says, 'Chimwe ne chimwe chine nguva yacho' [When the time of a thing has come of age no one can stop it], we hope to see renewal and revival in this age (InV10 2018).

### 4.4.2 The Church of Christ and the Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit was hailed as representing a practical walk with Jesus Christ by all interviewees with some arguing that 'the walk with the Holy Spirit is a mystical experience; no one can explain it' (InV7 2018; InV16 2018; InV4 2018). The following table indicates how interviewees reacted to the question.

| Table 4.3: Divine guidance in the COCZ | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| Work of the Holy Spirit in the COCZ | Ability to achieve Church mission | 4 |
| | God's leadership in Church | 5 |
| | Human evil and failure in Church | 1 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

These results indicate that all participants acknowledged the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. The Holy Spirit has been active in Church missions and Christian living, although some missionaries tried to deny the relevance of the Holy Spirit in Africa.

Interviewees understood the Holy Spirit as part of the Church's founding charism, which entailed identity- and mission-continuity in the COCZ. An interviewee mentioned that the Holy Spirit achieved what Ghandi said: 'Fearlessness is necessary for the development of other noble qualities' (InV7 2018). He also mentioned how the early Church engaged in Church missions in relationship to the COCZ's Somabhula project. Another interviewee (InV16 2018) stated: 'It is part of the work of God in our context', while an interviewee added: 'He is not given a proper place in the Church. People theologise and laugh at the works [Pentecostal definitions] of the Holy Spirit like prophecy and speaking in tongues' (InV23 2018). It seems as if most COCZ believers fail to link their baptismal gift to their faith in action. An interviewee argued: 'Our leaders also exorcise demons. For example, what did Mr Musendekwa, Pastor Kudakwashe and Elder Makadho [all from High Glen Church of Christ] do at Manyotshwa? Unfortunately, the previous generation was reactionary, and we need to develop a radical leadership that is proactive rather that reactive' (InV4 2018).

Another interviewee cited examples of exorcism where one of the first ministers in Zvishavane was threatened by a demon, saying: '*Kana murisemwi ibvai pano tinokufumurai'* [If it is you, go away before we expose you] (InV16 2018). The merit of the threat could not be ascertained, but it became clear that sometimes demons do things to confuse the congregation. However, in a different experience, Pastor Kondo, while serving at Sunningdale-Mbare Congregation, exorcised a maid at a member's house who was possessed of seven demon spirits including the prostitute spirit. The spirit was enhanced by a relative's clothes, which were burned after prayer, and the girl went away a free woman. During exorcism, the spirits were asked: '*Murikusvikirapapi'*? [What is your hiding place?], to which they stated that they come through the family's next-door neighbour. At prayer, the spirit begged the father of the house not to look at her as the spirit confessed that it survived by avoiding the father of the house. These are testimonies of the operation of the Holy Spirit among the COCZ families and congregations.

Some interviewees believe that the importance of the Holy Spirit is unquestioned, and that the Spirit actually is 'an active agent' (InV24 2018; InV5 2018; InV9 2018) with 'own tractions to give gifts as he [sic] sees fit – not given to another person by a prophet' (InV2 2018). COCZ members believed that their prayers were answered with the provision of the Somabhula conference centre (InV24 2018): 'He [sic] is part of the Trinitarian formula, which is a dimension of Christian spirituality, inspiration, strength and motivation for the shaping of people's values in the act of salvation' (InV13 2018). However, the same individuals had problems with the eroding of the unique individuality in a convert (InV13 2018), as the Holy Spirit was a gift to provide different entities of the same spirit into the life of an individual as stated by an interviewee that: 'At baptism, a new believer is endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, to allow them to carry out tasks unbaptised believers cannot do [baptismal vocation], given out in line with the heavenly hierarchy' (InV6 2018).

Some had reservations, for instance a senior pastor argued that 'the realm of the Spirit was not understood by missionaries because they lacked knowledge of local languages and the people's worldviews and concepts of time' (InV10 2018). According to him, missionaries failed to interpret scriptures to transform local communities, thereby dismissing the powerful forces behind Africans' ways of being and knowing (communal ontology and epistemology): 'For lack of

discernment, missionaries dismissed everything the people practised as heathen and pagan' (InV10 2018). He further stated:

> My personal concern today is with the probability and possibility of mixing worldly and Christian practices. Even in Egypt, sorcerers and magicians imitated Moses in turning their staffs into snakes. To show that God is God, their snakes were swallowed by Moses'; and from the fourth miracle (plague) up to the tenth, no magician or sorcerer succeeded. Some forces are active in the world today and more pronounced in some countries like Asia; but we need Jesus more to help us to deal with demons and remain saved, as in Matthew 7:21 (InV10 2018).

### 4.4.3 The Church of Christ's Faithfulness to its Founding Charism

Some interviewees agreed that the COCZ tries to remain faithful to the founding charism of the New Testament Church (InV23 2018), although others were not sure (InV5 2018). This has been cited as faithfulness to the congregational autonomy (InV6 2018). An interviewee (InV6 2018) was averse to hierarchy, arguing that Jesus and the apostles did not practise hierarchy. This is the reason why the RM principles in 1804 recommended autonomy as biblical principle of Church governance. This absolved its clergy from lay duties, such as solemnising marriages, because these are state functions rather than religious functions. The respondents noted that reformation and restoration are terms pregnant with meanings for change as they contain a ring of causation: 'Change ideally inspires new revelations, and I sense that the Holy Spirit is revealing new dimensions – the old and new part of ourselves' (InV7 2018). The COCZ can therefore only move forward if it returns to its founding charism with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (InV23 2018). As comfort kills vision, some of them praised God, because they believed that the split in the COCZ was God sent in order to expand the work of the Church by disagreeing (cf. InV6 2018). Examples of Paul and Barnabas, the Tower of Babel and others were cited as God was giving different missions to different people, which means if one is not working with you, it does not necessarily mean they were sent by the devil (cf. InV6 2018). Table 4.4 indicates how interviewees reacted to the Church's faithfulness to its founding charism.

| Table 4.4: Faithfulness in the COCZ | | |
|---|---|---|
| Faithfulness in the COCZ | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| | Faithfulness to its founding charism | 7 |
| | Lack of faithfulness to its founding charism | 1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Renewal in Church | 2 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

Results indicate that most participants (7) stated that the COCZ is faithful to its founding charism, while only one indicated that the COCZ is no longer faithful to it. Two interviewees acknowledged that renewal in the COCZ was taking place.

However, most interviewees felt that the emphasis on the restoration concept is out of focus, especially one vocal interviewee who claimed, 'I don't believe in origins [problem of origin symptoms] that make me miss a bigger picture – my faithfulness is to God…This misinformed our identity and mission, as emphasis is on what we are not, rather than what we are' (InV4 2018). Interviewees argued that the emphasis of the RM was meant to make the Church static by emphasising 1$^{st}$-century values at the expense of 1$^{st}$-century experiences. The interviewees therefore affirmed that the RM had to reform and adapt the principles of its founders, Stone and Campbell, stating that 'we need a new revelation of the RM that asserts a good foundation [bedrock] for Church life. Scriptures, I think, need to be understood in light of revelation rather than past interpretations by missionaries' (InV4 2018). Another interviewee added to this: 'We should be starting New Testament Churches in the mission field rather than be concerned about restoration. We actually have an interest in the past rather than the future – we are glorifying and idolising the past at the expense of the future' (InV16 2018). Nyoni concurred:

> The Bible is known theoretically and not practically in the COCZ. The New Testament should be our guide in forming new Churches in the postmodern world. The Early Church situation was faced at best of those believers, and we need a new vision for our times. Jews transitioned from Old Testament beliefs on sacrifices, circumcision and the laws to the freedom in Christ. It's 2000 years after Christ's death and we are in the secular society. How do we transition today, rather than emphasise on going back to the New Testament Church? Where is that Church found? Also, like here in Bulawayo, we have only 11 congregations; what should we be restoring in 11 Churches? (InV22 2018).

For this reason, some respondents indicated that the challenges through which the Church was going, were divinely appointed to weed off dead wood. An interviewee argued that challenges in the COCZ were not necessarily bad, as they were probably meant to weed off 'unwanted stuff' (InV2 2018). He agreed that weeding kills some potential plants and therefore involves removing

the roots of some plants and killing others in total. However, the worthiness of this cause is in the removal of weeds where 'unwanted leaders [are removed] in order to introduce a new crop of leaders who would work with some of the older leaders to produce a better blend of leadership for the future Church' (InV2 2018). Jirrie also supported the shaking as a repeat of the work of God in the past, stating that 'these are possibilities of repeat of the 1930s via current developments in the COCZ, and even a revisit of some theology in the country through the COCZ' (InV10 2018). This was possibly meant to correct some mistakes that the Church has made in the past, as an interviewee argued:

> The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe ails in that it teaches about what should be rather than what happens in Christians' daily walk with Jesus Christ…Our emphasis on the restoration movement, just like the early Church who froze the faith to death through the writing of the scriptures, [the RM] has been atrophying the faith, and we are reactivating the status and changes of the set values found in the old order (InV7 2018).

An interviewee added: 'That is why we copycat from the Pentecostal Churches' (InV24 2018), which is a sign that the COCZ does not have roots in its communities. An interviewee feels that the current Church has more non-Christians than Christians, yet the early Church had more Christians than non-Christians (InV2 2018). The origin of the COCZ attests that some missionaries were not called for the ministry, as they were good in teaching but not in practice. For this reason, '[t]oday, some pastors are job seekers, and they have been taking us further and further away from the faith. We really need our pastors to undergo [spiritual and vocational] screening to be accepted for training and engagement' (InV2 2018). This respondent was not comfortable with educational hierarchies created among pastors through higher education and further ministerial training. He felt that this created materialism, secularism and worldliness in the COCZ. He also mentioned that COCZ pastors, because of education, are comfortable about a debate on homosexuality. He cited one meeting in the Mabutweni Church of Christ, where this topic was discussed, and it was mentioned that homosexuality may be hormonal rather than waywardness. He also cited Bishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu who said: 'If your God does not accept gays and lesbians, I don't want to go to that heaven' (InV2 2018). Among other things, he blamed young pastors for changing biblical teachings to suit worldly teachings such as female leadership in the Church, yet the Bible teaches about male leadership. He argued that this was tantamount to introducing temple prostitution into the COCZ as female elders and deacons should, just like the men, only have one

spouse. The implication is that women who do not want to be Church leaders, can have several men. He elaborated: 'Wife of one husband invites prostitution into the Church because no one woman can successfully keep two men in one home – she has to see the other man (men) outside her matrimonial home' (InV2 2018).

Given these challenges, some respondents recommended that leaders of the Church should be professional in their work. A lack of professionalism occurred, because pastors were critically excluded from leading Churches. Nyoni argued: 'There is a need to be clear about Church leadership, Christian identity and mission frameworks. The leadership needs to be relevant to the Zimbabwean situation and to be theologically mandated in introspection to contemporary issues' (InV13 2018). Similarly, an interviewee argued that the COCZ is undergoing a transformation, but has a crisis of leadership, created by a narrow approach to leadership development: 'Pastors produced from the same pot, without adequate investment to get the quality needed by the contemporary society' (InV4 2018). A story was told of how one pastor working in a Harare Suburb, dismissed a woman for accusing an elder of adultery. The elder was a chartered accountant at a major firm and supported the Church financially. Unfortunately, failure to be bold with crisis situations led to a loss of both the disgruntled member and the adulterer.

### *4.4.4 The Church of Christ's Continuity in the Missionary Mandate*
The Somabhula enterprise has been associated with the continuity of the COCZ in its missionary mandate that was initiated by white missionaries. Some interviewees did not feel comfortable with calling Somabhula a holy site. For instance, an interviewee asked, "Who said it is a holy site?" (InV5 2018) and another interviewee related, 'No site is holy' (InV23 2018). While an interviewee remained adamant that Somabhula was like any other place where congregants meet for worship, an interviewee further stated that it is the presence of God in a place that makes that place holy (InV23 208). Interestingly, there was more general agreement among the rest of the interviewees that Somabhula was 'set apart', as an interviewee stated: 'The Somabhula conference centre was set apart for conferencing, worship and prayer' (InV6 2018); another argued that 'it was chosen by the Church as a place of beginning undisputed ownership' (InV7 2018), while another interviewee agreed that Somabhula 'is a sanctuary, shrine, altar. What we do when we meet there resembles *gomo rokunamatira* [place of worship], *nezvibairo* [and sacrifices]. We have also

separated Somabhula as our place for special meetings' (InV16 2018).  An interviewee added: 'It's like the Mecca of the COCZ, for we take pilgrimage there every year as we converge there for worship' (InV9 2018). An interviewee further argued: 'It breaks also away from the missionary dispensation to being a locally driven vision as directed by the Holy Spirit. It is a sign of local maturity in the Christian growth of the early foreign missionary approach' (InV7 2018). The following table indicates how interviewees reacted to the question.

| | *Table 4.5: Somabhula conference centre as a holy site* | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| Work of the Holy Spirit in the COCZ | | |
| | Holy site | 7 |
| | Not a holy site | 2 |
| | Just Church property | 1 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

The Somabhula conference centre has a contextual history to be appreciated: 'It's a concept that began in the early 1980s where debates, led by highly early educationist and visionary, former Gweru mayor, Mr Mupambadzire Manikidza Nyoni, expressed and highly exposed us to the desire for a national conference centre' (InV4 2018), while an interviewee added: 'It began as a noble vision for a national conferencing centre, to meet and know each other' (InV13 2018). Assumingly the idea was turned down by the American missionaries through their Lowveld proxies (InV19 2016). An interviewee continued: 'We were bused from Zimbabwe Christian College in 1988 to come and vote at conference against the idea of a conference centre because missionaries were saying, "Nyoni wants to form a denomination"' (InV13 2018). An interviewee confirmed: 'The vision of a national conference centre began in 1988 when we were youths' (InV2 2018). An interviewee presented it diplomatically, stating that 'leaders in the country at the moment could not connect with Mr Nyoni when the issue came up in the late 1980s until the 2000s when we held our conference at the AmFic Centre for the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, Africa' (InV4 2018). Gono added: 'It rose again as a new vision of the conference site was picked up by men in the men's fellowship' (InV2 2018). 'We were further informed that when the new crop of leaders tapped into history, the issue of costs for hiring conference centres came up' (InV4 2018). Most young leaders believed that Somabhula was built as 'Church property to reduce expenses –

conference expenses' (InV24 2018). In this historical context, the first men's national conference in 2007 advanced the idea and desire to own and build a conference centre for the COCZ.

The conference centre itself has its own history apart from the history of the Church. An interviewee stated that the issue was discussed in the review of the Karoi conference in Masvingo (2010), where the issue of property ownership emerged (InV4 2018). In 2011 there was a subsequent change of leaders at the Masvingo review meeting. One vision in a person cascaded into all people. Between the 1980s and 1990s, people dismissed the idea because the farm that Mr Nyoni offered was owned by Ngoni Shamrock Farm: 'Somabhula, however, did not belong to a person and was not paid for. It was state land with conditions in sync with our evangelistic tools' (InV4 2018). Most interviewees indicated that God has chosen Somabhula, because no human leader could pull it off to get land. In fact, some interviewees felt that Pastor Nyamutora, the leader who advanced the acquiring of Somabhula, was not as charismatic as some of the leaders were, and there were not many people involved in the process to boast the human effort (InV4 2018). An interviewee elaborated:

> Somabhula is set apart, and to understand this, one has to understand the history of the site. It was offered to the Gweru Church by the Gweru Rural District Council (GRDC) to develop the local community by building a boarding school. The Gweru-Kwekwe District then took it over and offered it to the Associated Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe comprising of the Bulawayo, Gweru-Kwekwe and Zvishavane Churches. I was the chairman of the association and a secretary of the national conference at the time. The new vision led to the surveying of various sites (cf. Masengwe & Chimhanda 2018) and Somabhula fitted very well into the COCZ's vision as it was given by the GRDC for free and was to have a boarding school, a place needed by all Churches in the area, then (InV2 2018).

However, the COCZ remained challenged by petty jealousies and selfish interests, power struggles and a lack of vision, as well a dependency on the Americans and an inability to independently design an organisational framework that succeeding generations of Christians would gladly and proudly adopt as a Christian heritage and a place of belongingness (InV13 2018). The COCZ did not attempt to debate on the subject because of fear and pride: 'We know it all, and we have values we cannot give up' (InV13 2018).

The new initiative, however, raised huge controversies between immediate former leaders and new leaders, because a rival centre was opened to compete with the formal one. Most leaders from the older generation became divided between the youthful leadership and the older generation of leaders. One elderly respondent (InV10 2018) confessed to have stopped attending either of the two conferences, because he knew how to 'act in every circumstance' (Pr 1:3). Unfortunately, fights and divisions are not healthy for new believers, causing Somabhula to become a profane rather than a holy place: 'Those who recently came to the Lord will make strong affiliations to one group or the other, and this will negatively affect their Christian walk' (InV10 2018). The respondent was referring to the unfriendliness of relations between members of the two conferences but added: 'Those born in the Church have no problems, but they need to be encouraged that the Lord is going to provide solutions' (InV10 2018). He indicated that there are cases where 'God allows things to reach a chaos so that he can make a dramatic visitation that will create major changes for the future. Any answer when people are in this situation is acceptable and treasured' (InV10 2018).

## Section 2

## Contextual Circumstances of the Church of Christ among the Shona Culture

### 4.5 The Church's Interaction with the Shona Culture

This section provides an overview of the COCZ's experiences in the Shona society, especially the opportunities and challenges it encountered. Interviewees indicated that the Shona Culture and Christianity are complementary, as their cultures are spiritual, although with a differing ethos, but sometimes akin to each other: 'The ATR is sometimes akin to Christian principles, as some cultural and traditional values have been taken directly from the African society and the Bible – or from spiritual values endowed upon all creation when God breathed his [sic] spirit upon all of his [sic] creation' (InV7 2018). There is thus a 'thin line of experiences, as one's past influences on the decisions they can make today' (InV16 2018). The ATR and Christianity are rather regarded to be harmonious religions, because culture defines 'who a person is [identity]' (InV16 2018), as well as the good to be continued and the bad to be discontinued in that culture. This includes eating habits, dressing, and greeting of elders. An interviewee argued that 'culture and tradition are part of our identity as a people' (InV5 2018), which was supported by another saying 'we should be

married with Christianity to bring a Christian identity' (InV9 2018). Therefore, 'blending the ATR with Christianity makes both religious traditions stronger than they were before the blending' (InV16 2018). Added to this, 'the COCZ's interaction with the Shona-Nguni cultures takes cognizance of the Bantu migration, which was composed of various ethnic groups, tribes or clans…These groups maintain a variety of language and cultural patterns that share similar religious beliefs in most parts of Southern Africa' (InV21 2018). Even among the Shona, there are various ethnic or clan groups:

> 'Shona' is a derogatory term for people who are good for hiding in Zimbabwe's great mountains and caves. The Karanga outnumber all other Shona groups and minority tribes in Zimbabwe, including the Ndebele, Tshonga, Shangani, and Nambiya, among many. Colonists disturbed Shona groups and other tribes who lived on mountains to move to towns for jobs, clothing, food and education, with devastating effects on their indigenous religions, especially music and associated traditional instruments they regarded as heathen (InV21 2018).

The following table indicates how interviewees reacted to the question of the African culture in the COCZ.

| *Table 4.6: Church in the African culture* | | |
|---|---|---|
| **African culture in the COCZ** | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| | African culture is akin to biblical principles | 5 |
| | God's leadership in the Church | 3 |
| | Christians do not understand the operation of culture | 2 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

The above table indicates that African culture and Christianity have a complex relationship, with African culture not going along with Christian teachings or practices. This complex relationships can be ascribed to and  the liberation struggle (Comaroff and Comaroff 2008).

An intervieee viewed the idea of the Bantu migration as the reason for the in/compatibility of Christianity with the ATR (InV6 2018). He argues that the Israelites were black, as opposed to the whites who were called Gentiles (Latin *gentilis*), then Greeks and Barbarians. The different African clans have inclinations to the Bible (InV6 2018). For this reason,

on customs, there is no separation between the Jewish and Shona culture even after long periods of separation. For instance, the Shona name for God is Mwari, which can be transliterated with 'where he is', which is present continuous. If it was God addressing himself to the people, the name would be 'I am'. God to Moses was 'I am', 'he/she is' and the meaning is, 'I am the one who is fulfilling his promises'. In Shona, *Ari kuzadzikisa mhiko dzake* [The one fulfilling his/her promises]. Besides the Bantus, many other races worship idols. The whites confused the African religion like the idea of *masvikiro* [mediums] and *hakata* [lots] for idolatry. Little did they know that the Shona culture was at a point of waiting for God to fulfil his promises through the coming of Jesus Christ (InV6 2018).

This is why one had a radical view of ATR, because the African culture was not understood in the context of the diversity and homogeneity of its people (InV7 2018). He argued that 'the African Church has its basic foundation in Christ', and that is 'to bring the African perspective into what the Church ought to be' (InV7 2018). Another male interviewee who is an elder reiterated a story where a radical divine visitation took place in India. He stated:

There is a story of an Indian magician who instructed trees to come and be implanted at his house. A preacher-missionary who went there was stunned by such powers and could not stand the challenge. He went back to the United States of America crying to God for such a challenge. While praying to God, he was told to remember: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added' (Mt 6:33). He went back to India and did as he was told, and he commanded all trees that were transplanted to dry up. He then also commanded that no other tree should be uprooted and transplanted again. The magician stopped everything he did and followed Jesus Christ (InV7 2018).

Thus the African culture and traditions such as respecting elders, obeying parents and love for humankind are seen as processes that are in line with the Christian faith (InV23 2018). An interviewee therefore averred that African spirituality showed that Christ was at work among Africans before the white missionaries came saying: 'The Shona people had forms of identification that were consistent with the biblical texts, because Christ is inert in any religion' (InV13 2018). His argument was that the Spirit of Christ is superior to all other spirits and transforms all cultures and spiritualities. He added, 'An encounter with the Shona demands one to listen with an open heart, because some of the traditional elements are without conflict to the Christian teachings' (InV13 2018).

Further, an interviewee argued that the ATR has the wisdom for dealing with people's problems (InV4 2018). However, the ATR and its leadership system were too informal and casual. This could be necessitated by the African world views and perceptions of the time. The respondent bemoaned the lack of mind shift among Christians that even on the pulpit, preachers wasted people's time making jokes.

> However, Christian doctrine and African culture have similar ideas concerning evil spirits. Among the Shona they say, *midzimu inopenderwa* [given operational limits], which in Christianity is casting out demons. When death occurs in a family, Shona people go for *manyaradzo*, which in Christianity is 'consolation' (InV4 2018).

Another iinterviewee supported arguing that

> the Jews worshipped a tribal God although we had differing levels of revelation and mediums of communication, as Africans remained oral, but Jews wrote down their experiences. Christianity came with an advanced level of cultural development, and used a foreign language, which hindered Africans from developing their own religious cultures, and at the same time there was a language barrier. Africans were rather forced to perpetuate Western Christianity at the detriment of their own religion (InV24 2018).

A church elder interviewed bemoaned the fact that the Church needs to understand its realms of operation, because although religions exist in concurrence, it is still people who manage the old system in light of the new: 'How did the early Church manage Judaism with Christianity? This defines how we can be effective in Christianity, as religion must bring solutions to people's problems rather than fears' (InV2 2018). He retold a study of one elderly pastor who used to say, '*Mukaridza ngoma, ma dhimoni akagara mumiti yose iyi anozouya pano*' [If you beat the drum, demons lurking in nearby bushes will attack us] (InV2 2018).

### 4.5.1 Understanding Unhu Concepts among the Bantu-Shona

From the first research tool, the *Unhu* (personhood) concepts and associated descriptions of *Munhu Chaiye* (real or genuine person) helped to identify the Bantu norms and values, constitutive elements of *Unhu* and descriptions of who *Munhu Chaiye* is. This was divided into three sub-themes which were presented with the theme in a diagrammatic form as in Figure 4.2 below:

- The ability to live according to agreed norms and values.

- *Munhu Chaiye* is a person who possesses *Unhu*.
- *Munhu Chaiye* is the masculine for decision maker.
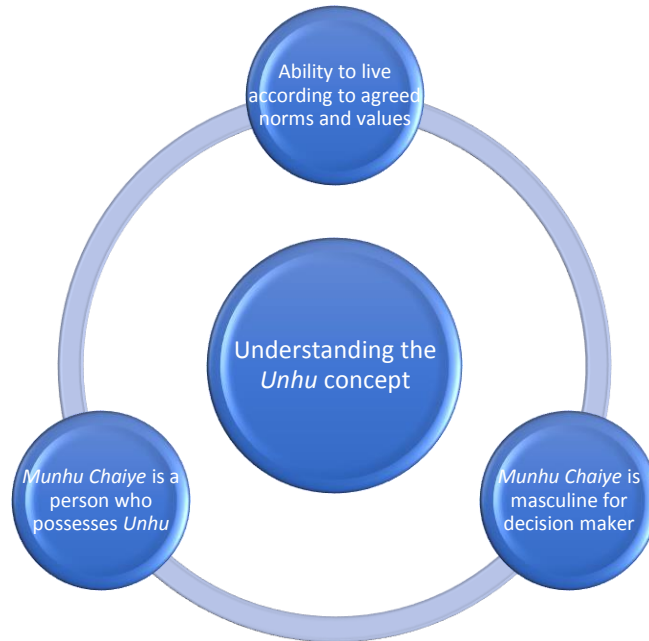


*Figure 4.2: Understanding the Unhu concept*

Interviewees indicated the following understanding of the *Unhu* concept:

| Table 4.7: Understanding the Unhu concept | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Code | Frequency |
| | | |
| | Conforms to community rapports | 9 |
| | Exercises responsibility within indigenous knowledge systems | 1 |
| | Possesses masculine qualities of decision making | 2 |
| | | |
| | Total | 12 |

(Note: the left-hand spanning column reads "Elaboration of sub-themes")

Respondents were almost unanimous in indicating that *Munhu Chaiye* is a person who conforms to community rapport. Responsibility is exercised within the contexts of indigenous knowledge and practices. However, decision making in this understanding of *Unhu* uses masculine qualities, disenfranchising women and children. An interviewee stated:

> *Munhu Chaiye* [a real person] is measured by how one relates with their own family; chieftainship (traditional leadership); community; religion (Church); environment, etc. It's not about what they eat or drink that defines one's personhood. Some sins are cleansed by the sacrament of baptism, but relationships

define one's religion, and also God is defined by how one relates to people. *Ndiye munhu wamunoti anopinda denga iyoyu* [This is a person people understand as befitting heaven]; *tsika dzake kana dzichipururudzirwa nechiKristu, munhu wose auya kukereke ane tsika dzaakatarisirwa kuva nadzo* [Behaviours and attitudes of this person are supported by Christianity, and every new believer has such norms and values to possess] (InV8 2018).

*Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* are understood within the contexts of sociality. A genuine person knows how to relate with the spirit world, others and the environment. When one becomes a Christian, their religion is lesser defined by laws and precepts other than by relationships. When Christianity came, such group values were elevated to interrogate Christianity. Thus,

*Munhu Chaiye* is a person who lives according to agreed norms and values of that grouping, clan or tribe. *Unhu* is a conformation to societal norms and values e.g. respect of elders, music of type of group, dances (practices) and rituals in different age groups and gender. *Munhu* must be conforming to set and agreed norms and values – written or unwritten (InV15 2018).

Others still argued that genuine personhood had to do with achievements: '*Munhu Chaiye* is when you meet the highest expectations and moral standards set by the people around you' (InV20 2018). Another interviewee added that, '*Unhu* refers to norms and values, which are the operating parameters of society. To be a *Munhu Chaiye* is to pay a close compliance or narrowness of deviation from such accepted basics. Basically, *Munhu Chaiye* is that compliance' (InV17 2018). A person can only be called a genuine person by having a good personality: '*Munhu Chaiye ane hunhu hwakanaka* [a genuine person has a good personhood]. *Chindiro chinopfumba kunobva chimwe* [in a reciprocal relationship, one is a person in relation to others] (InV12 2018). Therefore 'the definition of *Munhu Chaiye* depends on who is defining it. It is a contextual concept. In general, it refers to a person who has good social relations and can follow societal rules and regulations. *Munhu Chaiye* has dignity and respect for and from society' (InV14 2018). However, 'Culturally speaking, *Munhu Chaiye* is one who handles critical societal situations, upholds benevolent acts for people around them, and has good attitudes and behaviour towards their surroundings and objects' (InV18 2018). Conclusively, these interviewees indicated that the concepts of personhood and genuine personality are contextually relevant. It is understood in the context of how one must live with others, especially relating to the goodness of life for the whole community.

One female interviewee argued on the basis of the gender issue, specifically the patriarchal marginalisation of women (the issue of gender is thrashed in Chapter 5). She stated:

> *Munhu Chaiye murume* [a real person is a man] or anything that possesses qualities of masculinity. *Izvozvo hazvitaurwi kumudzimai kana mwana* [this qualification is not given to a woman or a child]. *Murume ndiye munhu chaiye nokuti anoita ma decisions* [a man is a real person because he makes decisions]. This means that women and children are not regarded as human beings, because they are not part of the decision making process. This is contrasted by Dr. Mtata who says, 'A child is a complete human being and not a partial human being' (InV3 2018).

This expression indicates a frustration with the doctrinal practices in the Church. Women are regarded as an appendage of the male members and do therefore not have names. Naming, which is reminiscent with decision making, is a qualification given to men in exclusion to women and children, as if they do not experience the world in the same way as men do. Another interviewee also emphasised the importance of the environment, which tends to be excluded:

> Our philosophy as Africans underpins a sense of responsibility. *Unhu* as an essentiality of being *Munhu Chaiye*, is taught to children before they become independent, by every member of the community. *Unhu* is based on indigenous knowledge systems that does not allow a wanton exploitation of environmental resources and other people. From an early age we were taught to respect (and preserve) the environment. *Wainzwa vakuru vachiti musatema miti mugomo rinoera* [you heard elders saying, 'Don't cut down trees on the mountains, it is sacred'], *musapisa masango, munomutsa mhondoro* [don't burn forests, you will anger lion spirits – ancestors], and *musaitira tsvina munzizi, munouraya mifuku yedu* [don't defecate or urinate in the river, because you contaminate our water sources]. Colonisers, who did not understand this communal life, caused environmental exploitation and thus failed *Unhu* among the people (InV21 2018).

The environment, as upheld by interviewees, needed to be protected because of its centrality in the human wellbeing. Taboos and myths were created to teach young people to treat life with respect. Children were taught to desist from a wanton destruction of forests and wild animals. The traditional protection of water sources and the buffer system and protection from the winds and the sun by plants was not understood by colonisers as they were influenced by capitalism. In the end, an intrusion of new values undermined the Shona-Nguni traditional values, among others.

Interviewees maintained to describe *Munhu Chaiye* in the traditional way, where the person is defined as having a good rapport with kith and kin, traditional leaders, ordinary community

members, local or traditional religion and rituals. Rituals give credence to the importance of the environment. The emphasis is therefore not on what a person eats or drinks, but how the person relates with others, God and the environment.

### 4.5.2 Unhu as Full Expression of Creation and Baptismal Dignity

A description of *Unhu* as full expression of creation and baptismal dignity was seen in the natural goodness given at birth, the sacredness given to human life and the centrality of religion for human relations, among others, as indicated in Table 4.3.
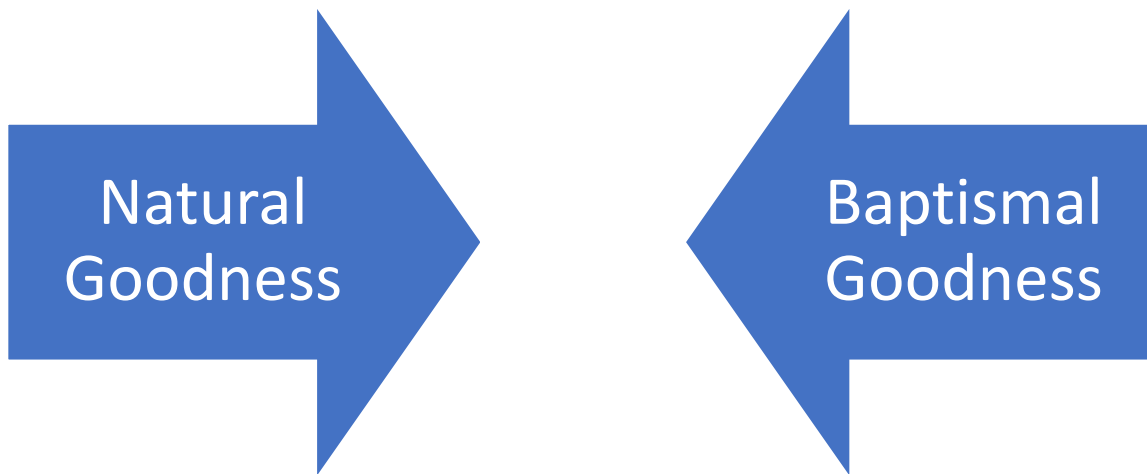


*Figure 4.3: Unhu converge natural and baptismal goodness*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ***Table 4.8: Unhu as natural and baptismal goodness*** | |
| | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| Natural and baptismal goodness | *Unhu* fully expressed through African philosophies and practices | 7 |
| | *Unhu* expanded by Christian baptismal faith | 6 |
| | *Unhu* not expressed among women and children | 2 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **15** |

Natural and baptismal goodness were identified by all interviewees as *Unhu* is regarded as fully expressing creation and baptismal dignity. Most of them highlighted their perspectives on human dignity in the words of the Church president who said:

> Bantu people already had God when the missionaries came. God was not brought by a white person. God gave me my *Unhu* at birth, not Christian baptism. However,

my *Unhu* relates to my baptism although my *Unhu* remains distinct from the missionary faith I accepted. Rather, baptism endorses and cleanses my *Unhu* (what is already in me). God was already in me through my traditions and cultures, my *Unhu* (InV8 2018).

Most interviewees positively identified African culture, religion and values as consistent with the Jewish-Christian religion. In fact, white missionaries are justifiably and unjustifiably blamed for misunderstanding the link of the ATR and the ATRC to their missionary cause. An elder teaching at a teachers' college argued that, '*Unhu* is centred on the virtues of preservation, elongation and fulfilment of human life, the Ten Commandments borrowed from the African view of the sacredness of life. *Usauraya* [do not kill] is elaborated in the *ngozi* [avenging spirit] system. This applies to theft, adultery, and false witness, etc.' (InV21 2018).

What was highly regarded as qualities of genuine personhood was measured by how one contributed to life preservation, elongation and fulfilment. Interviewees constantly linked their answers to the Bible, especially the Old Testament laws. Some interviewees averred:

> *Unhu* among the Bantu finds its full expression in the people's own traditional religion [ATR]. This religion, when you become a Christian, changes. Relational aspects are there. Respect of property etc. is the same. Beliefs change. When you become a Christian, you leave ancestral worship. Christianity says a person must be respected as a living being. In Christianity, they say you can't talk to God. At baptism, Jesus Christ is our ancestor (InV15 2018).

Some interviewees indicated that Christianity has affected their viewpoint of the ATRC. The importance of the ATRC has been left within the context of values and traditions, but not religion. Even though a 'full expression of *Unhu* is defined by the way people understand God, *Unhu* thrives on how people define God. At baptism, Christianity turns you to the worship of God in whose image you were made' (InV20 2018). When becoming a Christian, the influence of the Bible on how the ATRC is regarded, is seen as the only way people could worship God. The use of culture by God to prepare Africans for the full revelation in Christ as alluded to by Jecha (InV6 2018) is not upheld here. Instead, one liberal interviewee stated:

> *Mwari* in the ATR is not seen as a physical being. *Mwari* is a blueprint of the good, which is the best of what you can get in any given society. The good in any given society is a representation of the creatureliness which is extended through the covenant of baptism. The image represents the blueprint of the natural good that is

given an elevated divine cognisance through baptism (InV17 2018).

This view presents the best of what culture regards as a template to be followed by many. This response gravitates towards a Kantian view and ethical wellness. People want their actions to become universal laws, and that these universal laws become divine attributions for a human wellbeing. Unfortunately, the disregard for women and children in this elevation of the divine in human life is bemoaned as not yet fully experienced by women and children in the COCZ: 'A full expression of *Unhu* has not yet been expressed among women and children. I feel Galatians 3:27-28 is a fallacious text because it is failing to be fulfilled in our Church. The patriarchal systems need to stop otherising women and children' (InV3 2018). This frustration is understandable, because women and children are excluded from a number of social goods accorded to men. In fact, 'children don't qualify for baptism, but are expected to possess the natural dignity. In our Church, baptism must redeem a believer from sin and death. A believer dies and resurrects with Christ through baptism. Baptism gives a vast chance of newness to change a new believer' (InV12 2018).

Children are seen as possessing natural goodness and are expected, even before they become initiated into Christianity and the ATRC, to express this goodness in one way or the other. Thus 'A full *Unhu* expression [of a child] is seen in deeds such as greeting elders. *Mwana ane Unhu haakomi kana atumwa* [a good child does not refuse instructions from elders]. Creation dignity refers to the golden rules that apply to all cultures and religions' (InV14 2018). Another female interviewee who had just graduated from the Bible college concurred, stating tthat:

> Africans express their creation dignity by performing rain-making ceremonies and rituals. Africans also know medicinal and protective plants to use to preserve the image of God in human life. These life-enhancing activities are extended at baptism where a believer is given the Holy Spirit to provide solutions to some of these concerns (InV18 2018).

It is clear that the interviewees positively identified with the ATR as God's communication channel of the gospel through *Unhu* norms and values. Christian baptism expands the *Unhu* norms and values. However, these norms and values are not fully expressed in children and women. Seven interviewees indicated that the ATR is highly regarded as communicating the will of God as it values the preservation and fulfilment of the image of God in human life. Six interviewees

positively identified with the enhancement of natural goodness by baptism in the Christian faith. Only two bemoaned the lack of expression of *Unhu* among women and children.

### 4.5.3 Being Fully Human in the God-Human-Cosmos Relationship

Interviewees indicated that humans are at the centre of the God-human-cosmos relationship. Humans determine how God and nature can live in harmony. Humans have the consciousness that is required to maintain a life of harmony with the spirit-nature relationships. In this way, compromised relations between God and humans or humans and nature also affect human-human relations. In the end all relationships are affected.

In the following figure (Figure 4.4), the interrelationships between God, humans and nature (cosmos) are implied. The presentation shows the interpenetration of the relationships with equal impact.
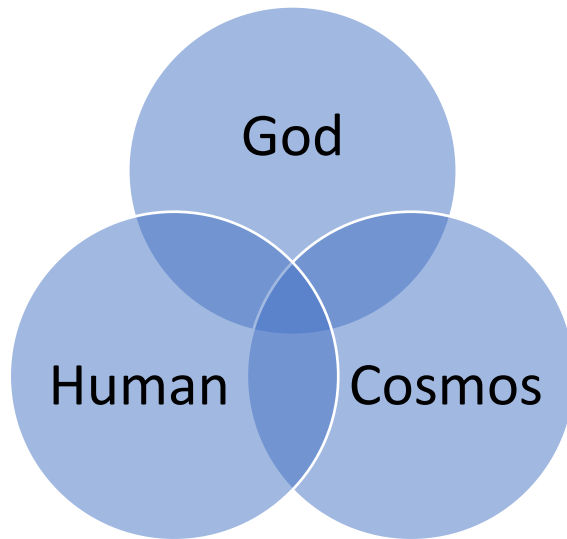


*Figure 4.4: Theanthropocosmic relationship*

The presentation of data on the fulfilment of full humanity in the God-human-cosmos relationship is captured in Table 4.9 below.

| | Table 4.9: Theantropocosmic relationship | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| God-human-cosmo | | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | | |

210

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Humans are like God and nature in the Creator-creature relations | 2 |
| | Humans relate to God and nature from where they came | 2 |
| | Humanity benefits from a harmonious living with God and nature | 5 |
| | Animals carry and interpret God's messages to humans | 1 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **10** |

Out of the tweny-four interviewees, ten interviewees who answered this question indicated that humans are like God, and are like nature, in the Creator-creature relationships. Humans, in this way, relate to God and to nature from where they come. Living in perfect harmony with spiritual and natural environments brings benefits to humanity. In fact, animals, in this harmonious relationship, carry and interpret God's messages to humans for implementation. This is stated in the following narratives:

> This is defined by our relationship with God and the environment. God is not like you until you do like God. You are not like creation until you do like creation. *Kukamanidzana kwedu noMusiki uye nezvimwe zvisikwa ndokuwirirana kwatinako* [our relationship is defined by our relationship with the Creator and other creatures]. *Tinoona Mwari pauri, namashamwaridzanirane aunoita navamwe – kukamanidzana navamwe – ndiye munhu ane tsika dzinopururudzirwa ne Chikristu – ndiye munhu akazara* [we see God inside a person, on how they relate with other people – this is a person with morals accepted by Christianity – a fully human person]. *Pane hunhu hwandinotarisirwa kuva nahwo* [there is a personhood I am expected to possess] (InV8 2018).

Jesus' teaching that one must love God with their heart, and their neighbour as themselves is fully understood as a cultural and religious norm. Relationships with God and others are a full expression of spirituality and religiosity. In other words, this relates to the divinisation of humanity and the humanisation of the divine. The process includes the part nature plays in social rituals and human exploits. Without thinking, an African Christian interprets nature as a sign of God's communication to their endeavour, and hence nature has to be treated with kindness. Ganyata added to this:

> To be able to understand the needs of nature in relationship to God's demands – nature can be unfavourable or favourable – if there are trees, you cut a few to build your shelter but preserve nature – live in harmony through taboos. Meeting animals on journeys, we interpret God's message to us on the end results of our journey e.g. monkeys and *hambakubvu* [pangolin]. There is a way birds fly to relate to rainfall.

This also deals with visions and dreams (InV21 2018).

Those who are not influenced by Christianity understand the relationship of nature and humans as regulated by ancestors. However, for those influenced by Christianity, the Bible takes precedence in interpreting the relationship. Gunguvo stated that to be fully human meant that 'man [sic] was given dominion over all creatures, animals – crippling and climbing – all under man [sic]. Man [sic] was given responsibility to look after them' (InV15 2018). He added: 'A relationship [with nature] is not exploitation. How do you look after environment and benefit from that…above all God gave us…harmony' (InV15 2018). It is only a person who is fully human who can desist from exploiting others and the environment. In this way,

> to be fully human is when you behave like man [sic]. Man [sic] behaves in the two realms of carnality and spirituality. A fully human person is changed to follow the image of God. In fact, you are a product of God and the environment. This determines your day-to-day needs as a carnal and spiritual person. Sigmund Freud talks about the id (self), ego (environment) and the superego (relation). A fully human person finds survival in an environment through a holistic relationship with that environment (InV20 2018).

The relationship of humanity with God and nature was well-presented by an elder who is also a businessmen saying: 'To be fully human in the God-human-cosmos relationship is when one is touring the religious, social and environmental path without deviation. To be fully human is to live as a perfect being – living according to the highest ideals of peace and justice' (InV17 2018). Touring the path without deviation is seen as being a perfect human being, bringing peace and justice in the God-human-cosmos relationships, which are called the highest ideals of being fully human. That is why another female pastor stated that: 'Being fully human means rights and responsibilities; choices and decisions are fully developed to cater for child rights and women, so that they can make decisions in Church' (InV3 2018). The ability to choose and decide in the Church thus can be viewed as experiencing the full development of one's human capacities, not always seen as fully developed in African women and children.

The emphasis for being fully human has been put on the ability to create and maintain harmonious relationships. A female theologian stated that: 'If I love another human being, my relationship with God is restored' (InV14 2018). This response was influenced by the reading of the Bible which teaches that love of God is fulfilled in love of a neighbour (Mt 15), and that one cannot love God

212

whom they have not seen without first loving a human being they have seen (1 Jn 4:4). Harmony therefore begins with human relationships, the reason why Sibane retorted: 'Relationships start with society. We cannot know and love God, without first knowing and loving our neighbours' (InV12 2018). To be fully human is to know and to have a close relationship with God. This can only happen through human submissiveness, repentance and acknowledgement of the superiority of God, and hence 'being fully human is to reflect a godly nature in human dealings' (InV18 2018). Most respondents quoted the parable of the Good Samaritan, as well as the question of who my neighbour is.

The interviewees indicated that humans relate to God and nature. Humans are products of both God and creation – formed from the soil of the ground, and that God breathed a breath of life into their nostrils (Gn 2:2). Human relations with God and creation are constituted by living harmoniously with spiritual and natural environments. Animals become messengers of God in service of humanity.

### 4.5.4 Bantu Elements of Unhu in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The COCZ accepts some Bantu elements of *Unhu*, in fact, some are incorporated into the mainstream practices of the Church, such as marriage and related rites of passage, death, burial and related bereavement rituals, as well as the respect for elders and all people (see Table 4.10 below).

| Table 4.10: Bantu elements of Unhu in the COCZ | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| | Rejection of other African practices | 6 |
| Rites and rituals in the COCZ | Rejection of ancestral worship | 4 |
| | Social responsibility is highly regarded | 3 |
| | Carnality and gender discrimination practiced not accepted | 2 |
| | Some cultural elements are incorporated into Christianity | 4 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **19** |

Missionaries and Church leaders who took over from the missionaries rejected the worship or veneration of ancestors and related these practices to those of sorcerers and diviners. This also

meant that some Bantu practices like sexually expressive dances and music, other marriage types like abduction, elopement and pregnancy out of wedlock were rejected. With the intrusion of carnality in Church leadership, women have been sidelined in all Church leadership positions, and nepotism has crept in, leading to the acceptance, rejection, modification and correction of Bantu elements of *Unhu* in the COCZ as presented in the table above. Interviewees have articulated good and bad elements of *Unhu* in the Bantu cosmology as succinctly presented by the Church president further stated:

> This practice needs elaboration and correction because many of our members struggle with ancestral worship. Some ceremonies and rituals indicate that I am a human being. If I have children who are going to venerate me after death, I am a person. Also, the child who venerates a dead parent is a person. At Church we say, 'no, such kinds of practices are not acceptable'. Christianity rejects the reality and existence of spiritual forces as mere superstition (InV8 2018).

Magwidi indicated that ancestral worship is a real challenge among African Christians, especially of the Shona origin. This is why most Africans struggle to become authentic Christians (Masengwe *et al*. 2012). However, an authentic African has to engage in ceremonies and rituals, inclusive of mothering and fathering children who will venerate dead parents. However, Christians were made to derogate ancestral veneration as demonic, as Christianity rejected spiritual forces as understood by Africans as mere superstition. However, there are some beliefs and practices that are accepted and encouraged by both Christianity and African culture as the president further explained:

> *Kudza baba namai vako* [honour your father and mother] must be observed, rather than to wait for the veneration of them as ancestors. 'Take care of them when they are still living, and do not worry about veneration'. *Nyaradzo ndiyo ingavonekwa sokupira kwatingaita tiri kuchechi* [consoling the bereaved rite may be construed as ancestral veneration at Church]. Provide for their needs. Marriage must be done well. If you can't have a wedding, go and pay *lobola* [bride prize, *roora* in Shona] and if possible, have a wedding (InV8 2018).

Magwidi criticised the practices in the current Church, especially the resilience of the African culture in Christian religion. An interviewee showed that there was resonance between the African cultural traditions and Jewish-Christian practices, especially in 'six of the Ten Commandments' (InV8 2018). The Shona culture concerns itself with human life, community wellbeing, social harmony and spiritual integrity. Key to these relations are the practices of marriage and bereavement. The payment of dowry (*lobola*) could be followed by a wedding. Even on

bereavement rituals, the Church appeases ancestors through consolation practices. Music is used for most of these practices, as an elder stated:

> Yes, musically, Africans sing energetically – sing and dance (expressive). Choir is Western…There is no soloist in African music – no separation between audience and performer. *Mhondoro dzinomwa muna Zambezi/Save Limpopo/Runde* [lions (representing medium spirits) drink in the Zambezi/Save/Limpopo/Runde rivers]. They act together (communalism), we sing together e.g. play drums without lessons – all education is informal! Our performance is not programmed (InV21 2018).

The phrase *Mhondoro dzinomwa muna Zambezi/Save/Limpopo/Runde* refers to some of the big rivers of Zimbabwe, in which great spirits like *Nyami Nyami* (in the Zambezi) reside. These are lion spirits, because they protect the country. The lion spirits are associated with natural features such as big waterways and mountains. The song is usually sung at functions of families and communities carrying out ATRC practices, especially of religious nature. Singing is said to be cooperative and songs or artefacts are communally owned. Ganyata spoke from a first-hand experience, stating: 'The African music [dances] expresses sexuality but in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe we don't do that; we depict our African sexuality. This is rejected by the modern-day Church. The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe rejected it for the sake of the weaker brother' (InV21 2018).

Sex and sexuality are not really discussed among Africans, especially the Shona. It has to be expressed. Expressions are done through song and dance – these practices are condemned by the Christian religion. Christianity, when it came, emphasised that drinking, adultery, smoking, witchcraft and idolatry are unforgivable sins. However, showing such Christian influences, an interviewee argued that there are some Bantu practices that were strategically rejected by separating children from parents during schooling at boarding schools:

> The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe as well as the principles it lived with came a long time ago, like evangelism and how to evangelise. They cultivated a good relationship with people and had strategies to penetrate people with their own practices and employed many strategies through schools and hospitals and to take care of the elderly. Then they preached and baptised people. They first penetrated the indigenous culture and then separated children from parents. When they leave boarding schools, they shunned their *chivanhu* e.g. *kureverera mombe sasekuru* [venerating a beast to take the name of an ancestor] and then killed and ate it. If we look at our background, we find those practices in Egypt. The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe went to slumber when it failed to create a continuity in leadership to

guard against idolatry (InV15 2018).

Shona religious practices, especially ancestral related practices, he further argued, are related to Egyptian practices mentioned in the Old Testament. Such practices involved the use of animals and humans for ritual purposes. That is why another pastor and academic stated that: 'Bantu standards define what should be worshipped. Some Bantu moral beliefs, norms and values are retained, questioned and modified in order to be compatible with biblical principles, for example marriage and dowry' (InV20 2018). He alleged that ancestors in the *Mwari* cult are viewed as mediators in the ancestral ladder that ends with God as the ultimate recipient of human veneration and worship.

An elder mentioned that 'the belief that a person must walk the straight line means no religious element is acceptable unless done to compare religions like the ATR's *midzimu* [ancestors], a good *shavi* [talent spirits] or a bad *shavi* [alien spirits], *ngozi* [avenging spirits] with the Holy Spirit in the Church' (InV17 2018). The spiritual world is clearly defined in relationship to how a human experiences life. In this hierarchy, ancestors in the ATR are comparable to the Holy Spirit in Christianity. Talent and alien spirits are also comparable to angels and devils in the Christian religion. Bhebhe (2013:52-56) reveals that the spiritual world comprises of the good spirits in 'the above world and the negative world as the underworld [which] seems to reflect a more of biblical Christian framework' (Banda & Masengwe 2018:1). Bhebhe (2016:83) reveals that there are three-tiers of the good spirits in the above world and in nature as well as the bad spirits in the underworld and water. He states:

> Naturally, Zimbabweans subscribe to a tripartite cosmos where at the apex of existence there is the spiritual world above (*kumusoro kudenga*), which is the abode of the Supreme Being, who is known by various local names such as Mwari (God), *Musikavanhu* (Creator of People), *Unkulunkulu* (the Creator God), and *Usomadhla* (the all-powerful one), among others. It is believed that this mighty deity possesses absolute power and that below the deity, there are ancestral spirits, *vari kumhepo* (the ones in the air) which act as mediators or links between God and humanity. In addition, human beings, animals, and plants live in the physical world (*panyika*) where they receive orders, and also rewards or punishments from the spirits above, depending on their actions. There is also an underworld (*pasi penyika*) believed to be the abode of a myriad of spirits, both good and bad. Such spirits can facilitate benefits from above or they can be manipulated to harm one's enemies. In other words, the spirits can be used by people either for good or bad purposes; and these include strange spirits (*mashave*) as well as spirits used for witchcraft and sorcery

purposes (Bhebhe 2016:83).

Evil spirits are feared and dreaded, even by African Christians (Banda & Masengwe 2018:1-10). This is part of how Africans are identified.

The question of full humanity for women in the COCZ is an issue being discussed in Chapter 5. One female pastor expressed her displeasure for gender inequality in the Church leadership and argued:

> The Bantu idea that 'I am because we are' is just being academic but not radical. It is not being lived out. Women cannot be trusted with leadership positions in the Church, including ordination to lead adults. The Church, however, trusts women with children – the Church of today and tomorrow. The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe adage, 'In matters of faith, unity, opinion, diversity and all things, love', is not being respected. Individual interests always come out. People with money and influence make decisions. In places like Masvingo, there are fights because of nepotism in the Church. There is no Bantuism as all leadership is masculine and they practise too much clientelism (InV3 2018).

On respect, an elder at Somabhula stated: '*Unhu hwechivanhu hurimo muvatema kunyanya kuremekedza vakuru, navanhu vose pasina rusarura* [African personhood is found in the culture of blacks, especially respect for elders, and other humans without segregation]' (InV12 2018). With reference to charity, he added: '*Taimbobetsera mapofu aiuya kuzokumbira mari pachechi, asi vakakanganisa rudo rwedu vachinodhakwa nemari yataivapa* [we used to help blind people, but we stopped when we discovered that they went and drank Church money]' (InV12 2018).

This was supported by others who stated:

> The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe accepts some Bantu elements as golden rules, especially the rites of passage e.g. *kusungira* [first pregnancy rituals], *kuroora* [marriage] *ne rooro* [and dowry]. Peter Kasenene talks about communality, vitality and holism. The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe has left some of these tenets because individuals want to make money (InV14 2018).

> Biblical principles [like the Ten Commandments] are easily incorporated into the *Unhu* concept! But *kupira midzimu* [ancestral worship] and *kuinda kun'anga – gata* [divination and idolatry] are rejected, as well as other Shona marriage practices like *musengabere* [abduction], *kutizira* [eloping], *kumitisa* [impregnating out of

wedlock] (InV18 2018).

This section has indicated that some Bantu elements of *Unhu* are accepted in the COCZ liturgy and theology, while others are rejected. No specific reason has been given, though, to state why such elements failed to be incorporated into Christianity, but one believes it is because of the fear of syncretism (Zvarevashe 1970:44-47; 1987:242-251; 2005). Gender disparity and nepotism in Church leadership have been cited as needing modification and correction if Bantu elements of *Unhu* can help the COCZ in its transformation.

### 4.5.5 Distinctive Marks of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

Participants indicated that the COCZ does not follow the direction of other Churches when observing the sacraments and rites. The COCZ really tries to go back to the basics as enshrined in the early Church teachings and practices shown in Figure 4.5 below.

COCZ …

going back to the early Church

Others …

incorporating changes in society
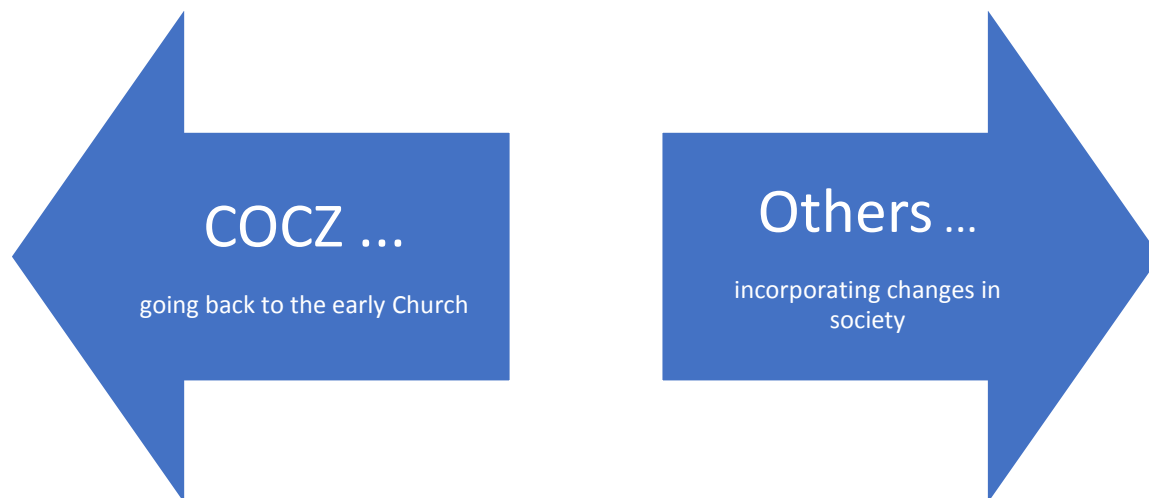
*Figure 4.5: Distinctive marks of the COCZ to other Churches*

The distinctive marks of the COCZ are not on a peculiarity of sacraments or rites, but on its literal interpretation of early Church practices. The COCZ boasts with an ability to connect with its origins, while it accuses other Churches of incorporating worldly developments. The elements interviewees cited, included a weekly observance of the Holy Communion, instant water baptism by immersion to adult believers and congregational autonomy. Other elements like prayer, fellowship and generous giving are practiced by many Churches, as indicated in Table 4.11 below.

| Table 4.11: Distinctive marks in the COCZ | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Code** | **Frequency** |
| | | |
| | Weekly observance of the Lord's Supper | 6 |
| | Water baptism by immersion | 6 |
| Rites and rituals in the COCZ | Weekly cheerful and generous giving | 4 |
| | Congregationalism | 3 |
| | Gender disparity | 3 |
| | Biblical interpretation and going back to the foundations | 2 |
| | The observance of consistent prayer | 2 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **26** |

the president indicated these distinctive marks in the following statements:

> We identify with the early Church on the Lord's Supper and baptism, but we are not sure of prayer, giving and fellowship although we have some semblance of it. We also have the practice of congregationalism, which is a matter of biblical interpretation. We refer to the geographical location of the Church meeting as autonomous [the congregation can do all its own activities without any kind of external interference]. The congregation is a geographical expression of the Church of Christ in following with the biblical examples of the Corinthian, Ephesian, Galatian or Thessalonian Church. Paul was not their Bishop, as he appointed local leaders to lead each congregation. This should be the same way we administer business. We still identify Pauline Churches as our role models. Unfortunately, our leadership style and administration practice [everyone doing their own things] affect our mode of missional activities. This is because the New Zealand and United States of American missionary boards regulated how activities were done in Africa while they were in their respective nations (InV8 2018).

The early Church observed weekly Holy Communion in house Churches, instant water baptism, prayer, fellowship and generous giving. It is from these meetings that the idea of congregationalism was developed. The president, however, bemoaned the negative interference of congregationalism on extra-congregational activities like mission work and social responsibility. This was further elaborated by another interviewee who stated: 'We have Holy Communion, water baptism, Congregationalism and a unique biblical interpretation method' (InV21 2018). Reference to a biblical interpretation in the COCZ relates to inductive reasoning, developed from the logical

framework in Baconian philosophy. The principle is, if A+B=C, therefore C-A=B.

An elder and conference secretary added:

> The COCZ uses different forms of evangelism through schools and hospitals, children's and old age people's homes, and training institutions. The COCZ also has governance issues, and today we are attempting to combine some good elements of Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Charismatic and democratic governance. With democratic governance, we are trying to use all of our resources in the Church (InV15 2018).

The construction of the Somabhula conference centre (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2018:1-11) is viewed as an evangelism strategy, as Gunguvo outlined that schools, homes and hospitals are used for evangelism. While the COCZ endeavoured so much to go back to its founding charism, developments in the history of the Church, especially American independentism and economic progress are traceable in the governance of the Church. According to a leader in the pastors' fraternity, 'its principles focus on the ideal Church, which has to do with its formation [in the 1st century]. As restoration movement churches, we are always striving, but we can't profess to have reached – an on-going thing; when we are lost, we come back again to the founding principle' (InV20 2018). He positively indicated that the founding charism was an important factor for the COCZ, and the Church was on its journey to become the Church of the 1st-century ideals. Some of the ideals include sacraments such as baptism and Holy Communion. Members of the COCZ believe that 'sacraments like the Lord's Supper and baptism are observed according to the letter, unlike other Churches that stagger about the observance of Communion over the year, and do not observe water baptism by immersion' (InV17 2018). Members of the COCZ are very proud about their ability to observe the biblical teachings according to the letter. According to an elder at Somabhula,

> every Sunday we take the Lord's Supper, while others do it monthly. We practise a weekly giving. The Catholic laity rarely get wine at communion, but we give wine to congregants. Not only the pastor preaches and gives sacraments – ministry is for everyone. Water baptism is by immersion, once and not three times as practised by the Zionists. We also pray for people at Somabhula for the infilling of the Holy Spirit (InV12 2018).

The COCZ has a very strong lay leadership programme that even allows commoners to preside over sacraments such as Holy Communion and baptism. With a very strong lay leadership

component, 'the Lord's Supper is regularly practised; baptism is by immersion and it is done for adults' (InV12 2018). However, the sensitivity of gender inequality is very high as Mudhosi challenged the researcher, saying: 'You also need to read the book, *Men on the pulpit and women in the pew*, to appreciate our biblical interpretation on gender inequality' (InV14 2018). This response was similar to another lady trainee in pastoral studies who said: 'We practise weekly Communion and baptism by immersion in our sacraments. Unfortunately our female partners are not allowed to lead our assemblies' (InV18 2018). The subject of gender is a very sensitive issue in the COCZ as, with increased pastoral training and further ministerial formation, the place of women in the Church is being questioned consistently and progressively. A female pastor intervieweed elaborated:

> The role of women in the Church is inferior to the role of men. They are given token roles so that they can assist in entertaining children while men do their own things; provide funding to support men's decisions – wanted for their finance. While their functions in weddings and funerals have been significant, their presence in Church is just a token, but they cannot make decisions. This contrasts with the situation of women in the early Church who were very active – and the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe fails on its maxim, 'We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent' (InV3 2018).

The pastor presented an elaborate summary of the problem of gender inequality, which challenges all members of the COCZ towards inclusivity and acceptability.

In all, interviewees indicated that there are distinctive marks in the COCZ – peculiarly on the practice of rites and sacraments. Returning to the early Church, the COCZ puts emphasis on rational empiricism – the reason why most practices follow the letter of the New Testament writings strictly. All elements discussed in this section are also practised by other Churches, but in different ways.

### 4.5.6 The Church of Christ's Contributions to the Christian Religion
The COCZ has contributed significantly to the Christian religion, as Table 4.12 indicates.

| | | | Table 4.12: Bantu elements of Unhu in the COCZ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accepted and rejecte | | | **Code** | | **Frequency** |
| | | | | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Social justice and political engagement | 3 |
| | Evangelism through action and social development | 3 |
| | Transformation of the RM principles by the COCZ | 3 |
| | Centrality of the scriptures | 1 |
| | Adulterated biblical principles | 1 |
| | | |
| | **Total** | **11** |

Interviewees have indicated that the COC has contributed to the wider Christian religion in terms of social justice and political engagement, social action and spiritual transformation. Unfortunately, the COCZ has failed to go beyond the ideals of the COC doctrines and teachings and is therefore struggling with its own internal transformation. While the Bible is held high, biblical principles tend to be adulterated with worldly ideals such as capitalism and socialism. One of the interviewees, an educationist and elder, argued: 'We have superseded other Churches on social justice. The Dadaya schemes that were started by Mrs [Grace] Todd impacted our primary education system as a nation during colonialism and we still emulate how Grace impacted the lives of women of her time' (InV16 2018).

The examples of missionaries have been cited on several occasions where they authenticated the relevance of the Church to the world. A student pastor responded to this effect: 'Politicians were attracted by COC values of social justice, education and health at Dadaya. In the current COCZ, mass prayer, musical instruments and social development in the building of Somabhula continue' (InV18 2018). This relevance was depicted by missionaries in the education sector, agriculture, politics and labour movements. The Church president elaborated: 'Missionaries were involved in the politics of the country, especially Garfield Todd and Hadfield. For this reason, Dadaya mission attracted most nationalists, and this took Mugabe and Ndabaningi to Dadaya' (InV8 2018). This has been viewed by academics in the Church as 'evangelism through action [such as the building of] schools, hospitals, orphanages, homes, etc. – projects to facilitate evangelism' (InV21 2018). A female theologian added: 'We have development through faith-based organisations e.g. hospitals, rather than Church protocol only' (InV14 2018). Similarly, the construction of Somabhula was viewed as a local response to the actions and activities of the missionaries. Gunguvo called it a voice of the local group to help the people of the Zimbabwean Macedonia (Somabhula) (InV15 2018). Sadly, actions did not awaken earlier members of the Church to their

Christian being, as members were merely parroting the missionary mandate without adequately reflecting on what God wants for the Africans in Zimbabwe to do in the COCZ. A pastor and academic in the pastors' leadership stated:

> Founding principles – we are thriving to meet them. People who came here had a different culture – the missionary culture had to be corrected. Missionaries failed to make the gospel relevant to the people they converted. *Vakatanga kuparidzirwa vaingoita zvechivanhu* [early Christian converts continued to practise the ATRC in their lives]. The missionary just gave us alms without teaching us to give – they adulterated our Christian principles (InV20 2018).

While the missionaries felt pity for the African poverty and misery, the Africans did not take an initiative to come out of their problems. According to Kakava, 'the COCZ is in a Church evolution [era of transition] – take responsibility – not an overnight thing [20-40 years]' (InV20 2018). The missionaries 'helped in literacy, health and clergy training, that is evangelism through action' (InV17 2018). In the same way, 'somabhula is a beacon that will radiate into this society with social development and community actions' (InV17 2018). This new development, the construction of a conference centre and constitution writing has been viewed positively by pastors, especially female pastors. One of them, stated:

> There has been an evolution in a number of areas such as music, prayer (mass), nationalisation and localisation. In Harare, and at conference, there is a significance of the place of children in the Church, and the involvement of women has improved in some activities. Women are not being given significant roles, but ministries are being created to incorporate them, for example the Benevolence Ministry (InV3 2018).

This development seems to borrow from other Churches as well as the continuing education of ministers in the denomination. The COCZ has thus contributed enormously to the centrality of the Bible in the ecumenical movement. Concerning the centrality of the Bible in the COCZ, Sibane stated: 'We value ecumenism, for example by restoring the Bible to the Christian Church. Some Christian Churches do not take principles from the Bible e.g. prophetic Churches' (InV12 2018).

The interviewees indicated that the COCZ is contributing significantly to the Christian religion. The Church's strong methodological approach using the Baconian philosophy of rational empiricism or interactive and inductive reasoning, now commonly the logical framework, emphasises the 'going back to the Bible' approach. Obviously, actions in the COCZ are influenced

by biblical instructions, examples and inferences, from their Trinitarian approach to biblical interpretation.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This Chapter has presented research findings in three sections. The background of the COCZ was firstly given, as well as the New Zealand and American missionary enterprises. The second section gave an overview of the context of the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity). The third section gave a detailed account of the research interviews on the contextualisation, inculturation and Africanisation in the COCZ. Research findings were presented as they emerged from the interviews without author bias interpretation. A verbatim replica was mostly used to aid in this. The data analysis began with the definition of the *Unhu* concept and *Munhu Chaiye*. Relationships have been singled out as representing good morals. These relationships are extended to the spiritual world and nature. When harmony is achieved, even the non-believers receive God's message through their culture and religion. Traditional religion bases itself on natural goodness and the Christian faith enhances it through Christian baptism. However, there are some unaccepted Bantu elements of *Unhu* present at the COCZ. This gives the COCZ some distinctive marks that separate it from other Christian groups. The distinction has been identified in the way that the Church interprets the Bible, using rational empiricism. In this way, even the COCZ is significantly contributing to the RM family of Churches as well as the entire Christian religion.

# Chapter 5

# Creative Dialogue for an Incarnational Experience in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

## 5 Background

The COCZ of post-independence has been characterised by carnality and individual devotion to personal gains, material interests, Pentecostal fundamentalism, a lack of organisational structures and orthopraxis, doctrinal and regional divisions, patronage by elders and men, increasing secularisation, intergenerational distance, the practice of occultism and dirty Church politics (Mafohla 2017). This resulted in proposals for the transformation of church structures (Sibanda 2016) and the resultant transformation of church leadership, theology and governance (Masengwe and Chimhanda 2019:1-11). This chapter discusses this experience in light of responses of the interviewees as well as the experiences of Christians in the COCZ between 1980 and 2014. This Chapter provides a creative dialogue in the COCZ today.

## 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 creates a dialogue on the incarnational experiences of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ). A critical analysis, as well as an interpretation and synthesis of research findings for identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) are done in this Chapter. What emerges should be an incarnational and existential experience. In other words, we are looking at a transformative experience of what Christ is doing in the COCZ which must be situated in the Church's cultural and practical touch. The experience has implications for local and international COC congregations. The COCZ came from New Zealand and its Zimbabwean experience contributes towards the traditional COC, in theory and practice, with a context-embedded newness in the country. This has implications for method and theory, as the gospel is given a new flesh, while Christ continues to work among the people. Results are not expected to dilute the original charism of the Church and to compromise the historical development of the international experiences of the Church. This has epistemological, pedagogical, ethical, ontological and pragmatic implications for fitting theory into practice in the COCZ.

**5.2 Thematic Analyses and Discussions of Research Findings**

*5.2.1 Identity*

*5.2.1.1 Dynamic Process*

Human beings are born with dignity and are enhanced by growth and maturity. Their identity and purpose undergo a dynamic process from birth and growth to death. For this to happen, rituals help to mark the transitions. Even though a baby is born with dignity and is fully human at birth, they are still developing to maturity. There are things that must develop to reveal the reality of a person. These elements are named *Unhu* among the Shona, with the descriptor, *Munhu Chaiye.* In this dynamic process, *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* represent one's threshold of being, which is achieved by following communally accepted and approved rites of passage. Even though one is born fully human, there are elements of liminality in the process of life that one has to overcome. With rituals, one graduates from just 'a being' to a 'communal being'. Communal beings have a purpose in life, and they accomplish a mission for society. Without initiation, a person in most black African communities cannot accomplish any mission in life, as rituals are carved out at various levels of human life to reveal one's full potential for any tasks at hand. *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* denote that one has gone through a dynamic process of acceptance in the community and can accomplish errands expected of them in life. This process makes someone a complete human being.

Respondents indicated that a child may not be referred to as a person because they have not walked their path of ritualisation, which is a historical and existential process (cf. InV12 2018; InV18 2018; InV3 2018). That is why some African tribes killed albinos and twins, for they were not seen as fully human. In some tribes, albinos are sacrificed for fortune making, because they are believed to be more spiritual than human. This process is dynamic as it develops and reveals the realities in a person. The element of genuineness and personhood in *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* is a call to more than just birth. The Christian understanding that a person is born in the image of God presupposes an acceptance of the full humanity of a child. However, creation dignity is adequate as a descriptive element for human dignity, but not a descriptor for human mission. The mission can only be accomplished when certain processes and rituals have been carried out.

As a baby is created in the image of God, and their creation dignity is inviolable, they are baptised in order to accomplish their Christian vocation. Baptism is a historical and existential process that

not only regards one's life as precious but demands that one is called to full maturity in Christ for the purposes of reconciling the person with their founding charism. The element of reconciliation is an attainment of the fullness of life (cf. Jn 10:10). According to Irenaeus, 'the glory of God is humanity fully alive' (cf. *Africae Munus* – Pope Benedict XVI 2011a). This glory relates to one's growth in self-understanding as they begin to live according to their faith, revealing the reality of their identity in Christ. Baptism is therefore a ritual that reconciles one with their Creator, and is a call to holiness, as the Creator is holy. The process of going through the ritual processes is defined and determined by the community of believers.

Being fully human is seen as a dynamic process, which reveals the historical and existential processes in the life of a person. This growth, where one accomplishes their mission in life and their faith in the Church, happens within a context. It brings about harmony in creation as relations of the spiritual, human and natural world are integrated. This will be treated later in the God-human-creation section. The element of existence should be emphasised, especially how relations lead to self-understanding. This is why St. Ignatius of Loyola (c. 23 October 1491 – 31 July 1556), the founder of the Roman Catholic Congregation of Jesus (Jesuits) has a populous statement ascribed to him which says: 'I see God in all things'. This might have been concluded after experiencing an untrained preacher preach with grace. It is stated that during the preaching: 'One fell senseless, another sometimes rolled about on the ground, another had been seen in the grip of convulsions or shuddering and sweating in anguish'. (Lacouture 1995:27; St. Ignatius of Loyola, 2012).

### 5.2.1.2 Gender Orientation

Respondents indicated that in the COCZ, a number of issues need to be resolved, especially the question of gender. An orientation towards women and children reiterates St. Augustine (*De Trinitate* 410-414) quoted as having said: 'Man alone can represent God, yes. Man and woman can represent God, yes. Woman alone can represent God, no'. Early church scholars decided not to give prominence to women, which was part of their culture and era n which they were living. The COCZ falls into an era of postmodernism where things are different. Their interpretation forgets the unique individuality of a woman, as their group orientation overrides the uniqueness of individuals. In this way, the argument that *Munhu Chaiye* is a man, and not a woman or a child

(InV3 2018), shows that the personality of the woman or child was not addressed in the COCZ. The leadership in the Church has followed traditional Bantu types of rulership to deprive these individuals from their rights. The love of the group was expressed beyond the love of the self as expressed in Jesus' command to love God and neighbour as one loves the self. Consensus seems to dominate the love of the group as individual characteristics matter less.

### 5.2.1.3 The Distinctiveness of Scripture

The Protestant principle, *Sola Scriptura*, has been adopted by the COCZ, emphasising the centrality of scripture in their reading and understanding of the Bible. *Sola Scriptura* assumes that scripture is used to interpret scripture. The COCZ has also adopted Baconianism in the interpretation of the Bible. While scripture interprets scripture, the COCZ understands it as an involving literal and rational understanding of the text. The text is interpreted by using rational empiricism, resulting in their emphasis on water baptism through immersion and a weekly observance of the Holy Communion in following the practices of the early Church. In the same way, infant baptism was outlawed in favour of adult baptism as they proposed that one needs to believe and confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ to be served with baptism. Respondents argued that the COCZ does not practise infant baptism but adult baptism. Baptism is not regarded as a mere ritualism that can be offered to a passive client, but as an active and rational exercise that is enacted upon a responsive recipient. Therefore, baptism is seen as an initiation of one into God's grace of salvation and inclusion into the worldwide family of Christians. Scriptures are invoked to support this position, using the stated method of hermeneutics that the Church has adopted namely rational empiricism.

Respondents also mentioned that a weekly Holy Communion is observed in the COCZ. It gives everybody the opportunity to remember the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and to remind Christians to witness his death and resurrection, as part of their Christian vocation. Those who are baptised, as it expands their Christian vocation, are the only ones to observe the Holy Communion. The Holy Communion is a public ritual done in a weekly communal meeting, because it is believed to transmit public graces. These weekly observances may be criticised for making this exercise a routine, which is a problem for the seriousness of the ritual to the community. What makes it more serious, is that the Church has decided that the lay people can administer the sacraments of baptism

228

and Holy Communion. The idea of sacramental grace is detached from the one who administers it to the host of the sacrament, who is Christ. Grace is poured out on the recipient because the sacrament is observed in Christ's honour. Obedience to Christ is not a summary of the administrator's life story, but the life story of Christ among his people. This, though, does not relate to the idea of transubstantiation as believed by the RCC, but it relates to the fact that Christ is alive, although there is no physical or real presence of Christ in the sacrament. Christ comes to sit together with the diners at the Holy Communion table, as a host. Transubstantiation is denied, because eating human flesh and drinking human blood compromises the sacredness of the ritual (human flesh is not eaten, and human blood is not drunk by other human beings unless such a cannibalistic wants to be labelled as a witch). The COCZ has challenges on the use of the laity, as not all of them participate with the fullness of dignity accorded to the sacraments.

The COCZ's system of governance has been condemned by some members of the Church as unchristian, capitalistic and individualistic (Masengwe *et al*. 2012). This autonomy, as the ideology is known, was developed from the modernist thinking of the self, where terms like 'automobile' and 'automatic rifle', among others, were developed. It reflects the ability of an organism or machine that resembles that organism to be self-sufficient, not needing any human aid. Individual congregations are believed to have the ability to be self-sufficient without needing any external aid. Many such congregations may be receiving foreign aid to pay the minister and a host of Church activities. However, autonomy in these congregations may also reveal that only one person determines what the congregation can do due to his position in society and his economic or political status. Autonomy is a very noble business-type principle that can be used for the growth of the Church; however, it has not been assessed to understand at what level Churches can be said to be autonomous. This principle has been adopted without assessing the context of its origin, as Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) refer to the Anglican and Methodist Churches in third-world countries, suggesting that such Churches in the areas of their jurisdictions need to be self-sufficient, not needing the European or American Churches. Autonomy here was not congregational but national, as they were guided by political boundaries. Masengwe in 'From Idealism to Realism' (forthcoming:3), argues

> 'The formation of the COCZ however followed a foreign rhetoric, mainly American autonomy, in tandem with the idea of capitalism, liberalism and private ownership. Similarly, autonomy, which is very American, here undermines

Christian participation, voluntarism, unity and patriotism, for it is less obligated to contribute towards the good of the common family through individual determination and self-interest'

American autonomy has been observed to be successful in America, but it has not been assessed as to why the USA Churches were able to perform as individual Churches (Masengwe, forthcoming 1-14). Some individual Churches have been found to run a budget that supersedes all the budgets of the COCZ congregations put together. Added to that, most of the elders in these Churches were Bible-school graduates with master's and doctoral degrees in theology. The society was far more enlightened than the Zimbabwean congregations. Therefore, when talking about congregational autonomy, one may ask where and how it is exercised.

It is true that some Church leaders have access to Western funding through their connections with missionary families or friends in the Diaspora. These leaders use local developments to source funding for themselves, even though in some instances Church activities are named in the process. Such leaders and their congregations are evading their responsibilities and accountability in the name of autonomy. They do not submit themselves or their dealings to any human authority, by claiming that they are autonomous. More often than not, the extremity of this kind of exercise of autonomy has been the exclusion of God from their congregational life. At a Church in Mutare, where the researcher worked as a minister for twelve years, the late elders, Mr David Mamvuto (died 2016) and Elias Rwaendepi Muchara (12 June 1935 – 8 February 2016) of the COCZ, used to tell a story about autonomy:

> In a Dutch Reformed Church in Apartheid South Africa, an [a black] African who worked in the Church grounds was not allowed to enter the Church building. The worker used to pray to God saying, 'My dear God, if only you could allow me to enter your house so that I can meet you, I will be very happy that day'. It happened that one day the person who always prepared Communion – a coloured – was sick and could not make it to Church. Seeing that the whites did not do menial tasks, the Church leader called the African worker to prepare Communion inside the Church sanctuary. The worker was very happy that God had allowed him to enter the sanctuary and meet him. On arrival home, he went into his prayer chamber to thank God saying, 'My dear God, I want to thank you very much for allowing me to meet you today'. In response God said, 'You are happy that you have entered their sanctuary, I have never entered their sanctuary. They are doing their own thing'.

The idea that he wanted to communicate was that apartheid in South Africa discriminated against black people. The Dutch Reformed Church as a state Church legitimised discrimination. It separated blacks and whites. It was autonomous from the black people. Unfortunately, its exercise of autonomy neglected the most important values of loving God and one's neighbour as the self. Similarly, autonomy can lead people to create love absorbers, transparency resistance and a legitimation of self-service. The observance that the Church is for outsiders rather than insiders, the creation of own spiritual standards that are exercised at the exclusion of God and the neighbour, problematises the ideology. As someone observed, the level of exclusion of both women and children in the Church begs for an answer. It is unfortunate that the inclusion of the laity on the key leadership levels of the Church has suffocated rather than solved the problem. Lay leaders have little theological, religious or biblical knowledge to legitimise their hold on power. With the high level of educated women in the country, inclusion of women and girls into the leadership of the Church erodes the significance being enjoyed by some of the Church leaders. In this way, as some lay missionaries have tended to do, the exclusion of women has guaranteed their (men's) control of the Church activities. To the extreme, lay missionaries taught that the Church is owned by elders and deacons at the exclusion of the minister, who is an employee of the congregation (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2019). This strikes the ego of men, who pride in ownership and control. Instead of helping the Church to grow, the selfish practice of governance leads to the death (rather than life) of the congregation.

The use of lay people in the Church has in some instances been helpful. Lay people understand how things are executed in the world. They mostly understand people's behaviour and character better than the Church ministers do. In that way, these lay leaders connect easily and well with non-believers. For this reason, most lay missions have successfully led to the growth and success of the Church. Lay missions in education, health and charity were used for getting proselytes in new communities. The mission stations have built schools and hospitals in various parts of the country, to provide secular skills and existential needs. Grace Todd even received accolades posthumously as the designer of the Primary School Education Curriculum in Southern Rhodesia until the end of colonialism in 1980 (Chigwedere 2002). Todd's handwritten notes at the Dadaya Mission introduced scheming and planning for children from Standard one to four, and the method of teaching was adopted by the then education system and has been adopted into the new teaching

systems of post-independent Zimbabwe. The introduction of the United College of Education as a joint effort by Churches in Zimbabwe helped to popularise Todd's approach to education. It is through schools that children become strong members and eventually leaders of the Church. The lay mission has therefore recruited many members through the schools.

The use of medical missions in a country with high levels of tropical diseases also earned the Church the honour of reducing the disease burden from the population, especially concerning malaria, bilharzia and diarrheal diseases. People came to the hospital and the Church to be given the white people's 'magic' against diseases. The American medical missions at the Mashoko Mission and Chidamoyo assisted many people who ordinarily should have died from tropical diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea. These institutions should have been used for catechising members but, as some members mourn (Masengwe, *et al.* 2012), have failed to root Church members into the basic values of the COCZ. The focus of Churches, while most missions were lay-led, was on the development of people for their natural and existential survival, without giving an ultimate emphasis to their spiritual intimacy with the Lord. This, though, has led the Church to experience distinctiveness in its life and journey with the Lord.

### 5.2.1.4 Localisation

The return of the missionaries to their sending countries left the COCZ with a number of challenges. These missionaries were externally funded, and activities in the country were executed by foreign money. When Zimbabwe entered a period of political independence and economic indigenisation as well as a localisation of leadership, the Western funds ceased. This plunged many Churches into a crisis. Some Churches have lost their ministers and others engaged in previously condemned practices such as inclusion of women in Church leadership and preaching, as well as Pentecostalism. At the beginning of the third millennium, the Churches questioned a number of things. This has prompted some Church leaders to consider building a national Church constitution – a conference centre – and to engage in further ministerial formation (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2018). Members at various levels of Church leadership became equipped for ministry by these developments. However, the same developments threatened another part of the Church, as the Church became divided between those who supported transformation and those who denied it. Those who supported transformation argued that they were overburdened by the new changes in

the country, and that they did not receive any foreign funding for their Church activities, while those who received foreign funding were accused of failing to care for others and the future of the Church. These differences led to the break between the two groups, being led by the younger generation, arguing for togetherness, cooperativeness, hospitality, responsibility, accountability and unity. The older generation, on the other hand, argued for doctrinal consistency, tradition and continuity. While both groups adhered to legitimate concerns, such positions did not consider the ordinary Christians who have joined the Church recently. These positions, though noble, failed to use African approaches to resolving conflicts and also assisting the local communities. The idea of having a legal document and a Church centre, demanded by the current world systems, sounded very noble. The constitution and conference centre construction were meant to help the local communities and to engage in preaching in those communities. However, the Church could have both the younger generation's demands and the older generation's reservations and transform and continue the life of the Church to achieve more.

Some leaders were also receiving foreign funding that they administered individually and personally without involving any member of the Church. On the other hand, other ministers did not benefit from either foreign funding or proceeds of lay missions. This contrasted with the Jewish culture, where a rich farmer would leave corners of the field for the poor, widows and orphans to glean. Similarly, among the Shona, *Zunde ramambo* (the King's seed-bank), was meant for the poor, widows and orphans. The denial of collective efforts was interpreted as a perpetuation of the paradox of dependence, as one minister stated that there are leaders, 'crying to suck from the American mother's breast' (Mabika 2013), yet they are old enough to mother and father their own children. Dependence can be condemned for compromising and killing *Unhu* in the Church. As was stated by respondents above, *Munhu Chaiye* is regarded as generosity, reciprocity, respect of elders and others' property, mutuality and benevolence. For this to happen in Church, the culture of the African people had to be interpreted and incorporated into the liturgies of the Church. This study has used cultural hermeneutics, Africanisation, inculturation and incarnation to understand the process of localisation in the COCZ (Masengwe & Chimhanda 2018).

Localisation is, however, challenged as a lack of maturity in decision-making, as masculinity is displayed in a patriarchal form and in some form of macho culture. This lack of spiritual maturity

interferes with the fulfilment of nature in conserving, preserving and elongating its impact in human relationships. Pope John Paul II spoke about the interconnectedness of humans and nature, which respondents have also indicated as key to the human ecology (cf. InV182018). In fact, the environment is understood as human ecology and that human sins are reflected on the ecology.

### 5.2.2 Communal Ontology and Epistemology

Journeying in faith, the COCZ raises the significance of sacraments such as baptism and Communion as part of the Church's way of life. Rituals are exercised in a communal context. They celebrate life and therefore celebrate the human existence. In the ATR, knowledge is expressed in a communal fashion. This elevates existence to death, because happiness is only shared among the living. The significance of rituals like baptism is therefore an elevation of natural over divine goodness. In one's journey of faith, living and knowing are communal goods, celebrated and embraced by all and for all. Similarly, this is expressed in music and dancing, and in Africa no one owns a song, as everybody could dance and start a song (InV21 2018). Thus, most of the education for singing and dancing is done informally.

However, the value of the communality fails to address the key elements of age, gender and disability. In the Bantu cosmology, marginalisation of women, children and the differentially abled suffer from the society's patriarchal mindset. This means that the society under concern needs to undergo a process of regeneration. In the forests, the Bantu taboo system did not allow people to pick more than they needed. This was used to protect plants and animals from wanton killing. Among the Shona, hunting laws denied hunters the freedom to kill nursing game or pregnant animals (Masengwe 2011). During certain periods of the year, certain game was not hunted, especially females. Even when fetching firewood, it was not allowed to cut down live trees. Firewood would be picked from dried wood. This mindset was enshrined in the taboo system, which was meant to preserve all life (InV12 2018). This system, as well as *ngozi* (avenging spirits) used to repay for the killing of humans, played a critical role of enhancing human life. The idea of preserving human life was achieved through the taboo system, which also preserved, conserved and elongated the life of nature.

### 5.2.3 Theophany and Theosophy – Use Nature to Extend Human Life

Nature has from time immemorial played a part in human life. The idea of a burning bush was cited by respondents as a sign that God speaks to humanity through nature (InV182018). This can be cited as a significant experience in this study (InV21 2018). In the Shona cosmology it relates to superstition where the divine engages humans in positive and negative ways. All these engagements take place through nature as the medium, which is used to extend or terminate life. The term '*mushonga*' (medicine, magic, drugs) is a neuter form, and can be translated with 'curative drugs' or 'poisonous chemicals'. Many Shona children grow up with the awareness of *chifumuro* (witchcraft exposition medicines). It comes from protective plants, and respondents spoke very highly about the use of protective medicines from nature to preserve, conserve and extendhuman life (InV12 2018; InV18 2018). It is also understood that some African men acquire magic to lock their wives against sexual immorality. This kind of medicine is gender sensitive, as it locks the woman but not the man. The idea, however, was to reduce the incidences of genetic mixtures, where children in the family could be acquired from someone other than the father of the children.

Divine experience and wisdom, which is fully attained at baptism, can be seen and experienced in a child who greets elders and obeys instructions. It reveals the qualities of *Munhu Chaiye* which is experienced fully after baptism. In the Church, the presence of God and wisdom is expected in every child who has been baptised, as divine light and divine illumination. It overtakes and fulfils natural goodness and wisdom. Natural goodness is called *Unhu* (personhood). In this way, the experience of baptism cleanses one of past blemishes, and by so doing, one experiences the divine empowerment and enablement. The Shona rainmaking ceremonies, which were cosmological realities of celebration and commemoration of the divine involvement in human livelihoods, was also practised through the *chisi* (holy day). During a *chisi*, no member of the family was supposed to work in the fields, as ancestors were believed to be busy chasing away the pests, moisturising the plants and fertilising the soil (Masengwe 2011). For Christians, this happens after someone has received the divine light and illumination through baptism, as the Holy Spirit enters a new believer to empower and enable them with the presence and wisdom of the divine. Such people are befitting of achieving more.

### 5.2.4 Similitude – God-Human-Nature Relationships (Anthropocosmic Reality)

The creation story presents an interesting aspect of the Creator and creation, where the Creator is presented as a fascinating designer of objects after his own image. The creation of human beings, therefore, is presented as an extension of the image of the Creator. The same is true for all of nature. However, the problem is humanity, who wants to become more of the image of the divine at the expense of humanity's similitude with nature. If nature is an extension of God, then it is created in the same way – in the image of God. This, therefore, presents a problem. In whose image is nature and humanity created? If it is in God's image, is humanity and nature then equal to God? Should nature still serve the purposes of humanity? For instance, if nature is in the image of God, whose purposes should nature then serve first? God mandated humanity to subdue the earth, but not to abuse it. Unfortunately, human wantonness abuse rather than nourish all of God's creation.

The idea of humanity being created in the image of God presupposes that humanity, like nature, reveals God. In this sense, personhood and Godhood are terms that go together. Respondents indicated that personhood is a virtue that one can possess and *tsika dzinopururudzirwa ndidzo dzinonzi neChikristu munhu anopinda denga* [Persons with morals and behaviours accepted by Christianity enter heaven] (InV8 2018). There is a similitude of characteristics between God and humans. The relatedness of God to humanity represents the harmony and reconciliation that can be attained when there is a good relationship with creation. The emphasis on harmony emanates from the reality that humanity is a product of the Creator who personally created them, hence the need to live in harmony with nature. Living a holistic life presupposes that one is 'touring the religious, social and environmental path without deviation' (InV17 2018). Harmony is achieved when humanity becomes fully developed to be able to balance their rights and responsibilities. This is what Sibane said: 'You are not mature if you can't love your neighbour as you love yourself' (InV12 2018). The idea of harmony is the same as reconciliation, constituting a peaceful coexistence between the spiritual, human and created worlds. This implies that humanity should be restored to the Creator, and therefore repents and submits to God to be seen as holy (InV18 2018). In all, God is the creator, and the cosmos and humantity are an extension of God, and the cosmos is subdued to humanity (Gn 1:28). Even in this extension, humanity does not share the sae characteristics with God; hence humanity has some characteristics of God and not all of them.

God in the Genesis story has advanced the idea that humanity was created in the image and likeness of God, and at incarnation, Jesus Christ God became human in order to the image of God in humanity. Humanity should therefore be like the creation and the creation has to be like humanity to deserve human treatment. The Bantu have an elaborate system of totems, where the animal kingdom is merged into the human community and acquires human characteristics to deserve human protection from wanton killing and consumption (Masengwe 2011). In this way, preservation, conservation and elongation of nature restore and reconcile nature and humanity to God in a harmonious relatedness.

### 5.2.5 Rejected Practices

#### 5.2.5.1 Ancestorhood and Veneration of the Dead

Since the 1960s, the RCC has incorporated the African concept of ancestorhood and ancestral veneration into their Church liturgy along with the full exercise of the idea of the family. In the RCC, the tradition of the saints gives recognition to the dead Christians who are expected to perform miracles in their dead state. Ancestors in the African context perform a number of miracles for the immediate family; hence the similarity with the RCC saintification (reverence/veneration of their saints) and Bantu practice of ancestorhood. Many African parents give value to remembrance by their children. In the interviews, it was stated that a father may ask his children, 'Who is going to venerate me when I die?' (InV8 2018). This view is common among the Shona. In the COCZ, however, emphasis is given to care for the living, with the instruction, 'Do not wait to take care of parents when dead' (InV15 2018). In the Church, the practice of consoling the bereaved and the associated rituals has been pointed out as a Christian practice of veneration. Death is a process that people commemorate to remember the contributions of one's *Unhu* and to celebrate the successes of that endeavour. This takes place as one of the rites of passage. However, this practice was condemned as public decorum or idolatrous actions by Christianity, together with other African practices that were viewed as disrespect to the human body. The Shona people venerate ancestors through a beast, and later on kill and eat a representative of one's father and ancestor (InV15 2018).

### 5.2.5.2 Sex and Sexuality

Christians in the COCZ have regarded sex and sexuality as sinful even though the Bible never pointed at sex and sexuality as sinful, but when exercised outside marriage. In the COCZ, sex is seen as the devil's idea to tempt people from their integrity. Ganyata mentioned that Africans express sex and sexuality in their music and dances (InV21 2018). This is because Africans are expressive in their activities. The COCZ condemned sex and sexuality in Africa, because missionaries felt that nakedness and the practice of polygamy was prompted by sexual expositions during ceremonies. While this may be true to some extent, negating sex and sexuality did not eradicate the evils of uncommitted sexual intercourse. Sex is a private affair. Even missionaries and their families were often implicated in permissive sex. Some also divorced and remarried several times without taking care of their former wives. African men rather, married several wives, and kept providing for the emotional and material needs of their wives. Among the Bantu, once a wife, one remains a wife and this means sex and sexuality brings vitality, freedom and happiness in the lives of people. The Church, however, condemned the behaviour of people without helping them to engage positively with the act and practice of sex and sexuality. For this reason, many Christian marriages have been weak and unstable as a denial of the goodness of sex and sexuality has led to prostitution and casual sex.

### 5.2.5.3 Cultural Intrusion

The missionaries penetrated indigenous cultures by separating children from their parents during boarding days. The children who attended boarding schools were taught the Western culture, and many of them were sent overseas to acquire further studies. Their views and cultures differed with those of their parents. The unfortunate thing is that children were taught to condemn their parents' beliefs as idolatry. This has also gone beyond religious practices to economic, political and social changes. The introduction of capitalism as opposed to communalism has also affronted communalism and has introduced and nurtured nepotism, corruption, clientelism and tribalism. The sense of community could not be practised, although it continued to be verbalised in the Church. Instead of practising charity, respect, honesty and welfare, moneymaking became central in the lives of members. It has been attested among a particular group of the Shona of Masvingo that instead of the son-in-law to bring the bride prize, parents have charged a child prize. The bride prize happens when the son-in-law appreciates the parents for the wife he gets, rather than the

parents tagging a prize for their daughter. This marks the depth of corruption in the cultural practices of the indigenous communities among the Shona people.

## 5.3 Discussion of Research Implications for the Study

This Chapter discusses the implications of the methodology on theory and practice. The discussion verifies the methodological and theoretical underpinnings for the study and explores, explains and concludes how identity and mission changes have implications for theory and practice in Systematic Theology.

## 5.4 Authenticity of the Method and Theory for the Study

The COCZ provides a good case study for a transformation project as proposed in Chapter 4 of this study. The dimensions of transformation were identified by ethnographical studies. Chapter 4 identified that the COCZ has a rational, theological, biblical and spiritual dimension of individual and ecclesiological transformation. The concepts of *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* have been explored to symbolically condense the religious and spiritual collections of the COCZ's incarnational experience.

Going through the interviews, the COCZ has provided amble evidence of processes of discovery to new perspectives of a Christian engagement with the local community. The engagement can lead to a shared ecclesial understanding as Bantu culture and religion, where the ATRC is accommodated by the Christian religion. It is clear that the Church needs local communities, more than local communities need the Church. This provides evidence for dispersing assumptions on the essentiality of the ATRC as a foundation for Christian evangelisation. However, evidence and an acceptance of the ATRC in Christian confessions were clearly supported by the interviewees, although little methodological and theoretical applicability of the ATRC to Christianity was defined, due to the previous unreflected interaction of the two religious entities.

The identification of the key elements of Christian transformation in the study gives evidence to cultural issues between the Bantu with their ATRC and Caucasians with their various pagan backgrounds. The study has been able to assess the Africanness in the COCZ, especially the Shona-Nguni cosmology. Majawa (2016:7) quotes Kalilombe's idea of 'undressing the old self', as the

incarnation of the gospel takes greater regard of the missionary redemptive activity in Zimbabwe. White Christian missionaries focused on revelation and salvation, while the ATRC provides a foundation upon which the mission of the Church becomes locally possible. This affects how mission can succeed or fail in an African context.

Figure 4.1 illustrated the thematic components of the study, in which a significant part described the relationship between the ATRC and Christianity. The idea that the ATRC and Christianity are religious mates, validated by the empirical study, is confirmed by the incarnational experiences of the COCZ's interviewees. This reiterates and integrates the methodological and theoretical complexity of the COCZ playing field in the Zimbabwean context. It also supports the view that the Christian enterprise is dimensionally supported by specific elements of the ATRC rites and rituals. This forms a holistic picture of the study frame.

The early missionaries can be regarded as people of their time, as African initiation rites and African cultural practices failed to be fully incorporated into the doctrines of the Christian Church. This can alternatively be explained as either the result of irrelevant methodological and theoretical frameworks of the ATRC to contribute to genuine Christian worship, or the failure of the Christian Church to incorporate the concepts of a complete incarnation of the gospel into the African culture. This did not help in indigenising missionary work in the African context. The claim that African Christians remained double conscious (Masengwe *et al*. 2012), reveals the lack of inculturation, incarnation and contextualisation of the gospel.

The COCZ has attempted to build a new theology on the nature, background and objectives of the RM. The new movement has built on the culture and theology of the COCZ with the view to shared vision and values of the central doctrines of the Christian Church. This study has used ethnography to address the transformational understanding of the Bantu cultural values in the COCZ changes. This approach has promised benefits to the COCZ's transformation project. The study has used various interview and observation panels to create an understanding of how the COCZ identity and mission can be transformed for effective evangelisation. *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* are important concepts for understanding the essentiality of the ATRC and Bantu culture on genuine Christian success. The COCZ can interact with these ATRC aspects to enrich its orthodox

teachings among the Bantu people. *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* are such facets of African ethics, culture and identity concerned with anthropological, cosmological and theological (spiritual) enablement that this study cannot ignore.

As the COCZ omissions of personhood and genuineness remain unattended to, it can be suggested that its theology and mission continues to lack communal ontology and epistemology. As Christian identity is genuinely affixed on the *imago Dei/Christi*, the Church is, as its members are, called to live for others. The idea of the body of Christ (Christocentric view) reveals that the COCZ identity and mission owe much to Bantu cosmology and mythology (Tonon 2018:121). This leads us to talk about the interaction of the Bible, theology and the human community. If the COCZ demonstrates an interactive and empirical engagement with its people, the transformation project can become a success as it is translated into a greater Christian enthusiasm for mission and identity that the COCZ embraces in its elements of continuity and diversity.

It also needs to be said that methodologically, the data collection, verification, analysis, interpretation and discussion focused on Bantu ethnographies. The COCZ, however, applied the Western culture upon the African people without realising the contribution of the rich religious, cultural, spiritual, political and anthropological diversity that could be provided by the ATRC. This study has emphasised the identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) without deviating from the racial and cultural background of the Bantu Christian adherents. The interviewees suggested that identity and mission in the early Church and throughout history are forming the backbone of the COCZ's purpose for existence. In this way, the study questions as to whether the COCZ's conceptions can be adapted, corrected, rejected or transformed to produce a genuinely Christian theology of mission and identity that continues to be relevant to the signs of the times. Determinants of identity and mission, which seem not to be prominent, such as gender, ethnicity, age and social status, act as criticism on how COCZ members attain or fail to attain their creation and baptismal dignity – this needs further examination.

Worldly influences have shown an instrumentality in diverse themes addressed by this study. The COCZ's inclusion of Bantu cosmology and spirituality has been hailed as a process that can create a dignified and human Christian experience for the Shona-Nguni adherents, irrespective of ethnic,

racial, gender, age or social class. *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* are elements that can be explored beyond the African culture as elements of personhood. Ethics and genuineness reveal a cultural awareness and not just the goal of life.

This thesis can be criticised for a lack of genuine gender participation, for all the interviewees seemed to respond with attributions of masculinity rather than femininity. The study also lacks a balance in the leadership portfolio of the COCZ to raise a consciousness to the need for gender sensitivity. This suffocates identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) as the problem of gender equality and equity cannot be understood mainly from male respondents alone. In this way, some interviewees suggested the need for gender diversity in the COCZ leadership. This fundamentally transforms the way in which the COCZ can use individuating questions (Can someone pray for us? Who can preach for us? Who can read a scripture for us?) in a more diversely understood way. Without that, the questions imply that the reader of the text, the preacher and the person who prays, remain male.

This study discovered many such elements that the COCZ needs to closely explore if transformation of the Church, identity and mission can be genuine and effective. This Chapter discusses thematic areas, identity, community, theophany/theosophy, similitude and ancestorhood.

## 5.5 Implications of the Study for Theory and Practice
### *5.5.1 Implications for Theory Development*
The interviews provided ethnographical data on identity and mission in the COCZ. This makes the COCZ a benchmark for a transformation initiative that validates parts of the theory for religious transformation. It makes the framework a valid contribution for the study of Christian transformation. Transformation in a diverse context, therefore, becomes the useful broader theory of identity- and mission-continuity in a Christian Church.

The COCZ as a single case study may not be able to provide the theoretical generalisation required to sustain the transformation initiative in the study. It can be stated that there is a need for further empirical study of the broader framework of the transformation of Christian identity and Christian mission to validate this theory. This study has used benchmark initiatives of structured storytelling

(narrative theory) to identify and test the concept of transformation. External validity was achieved with the use of literature and adjustment of theory using *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* concepts to include Bantu cosmology and spirituality.

The research could also be done through longitudinal studies to include experiences of Christian Churches in other countries. Empirical testing of cultural spheres done by both local and foreign researchers can validate the depth and breadth of a conceptual understanding of transformation in the current Christian Church. In fact, it universalises and contextualises the dimensions of Christian transformation in the African-Western conceptualisations of reality. This is because constituent parts of transformation may not hold together the realties found in both African and Western cultures. The African society is premised on shame, while the Western emphasis is on a loss of face (Hofstede 1997). At this stage, without longitudinal studies, indications are superficial and tentative until they are tested by using empirical research.

The assumption that the Christian Church did not consider the ATR in its indigenisation, localisation and inculturation processes can be used to problematise transformation, as there were only weak signs of cross-fertilisation. The study is interpretive and descriptive, using a short-term case study of the ethnographies. It can be suggested that a diversity of Christian confessions could help us in our predictions of the link between African and Western cultures on identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) in the COCZ. A firm establishment of the link between cultures could inspire our views on transformation as a theory to integrate African and Western cultures into a mainstream study on transformation of Christian Churches in new communities.

On the pattern of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity), the transformation of the Christian Church becomes promising. An examination of this concept in the early Church, the RE, new Christian foundations in the USA, the New Zealand missionary thrust and the contemporary society, provides a feasible plan for individual change. This has been explored in the context of contemporary literature on diversity in the Christian Church. Perceiving the Church as continually having the problem of cultural integration, has appeared preferable to the idea of uniformity for all adherents of the Christian Church. From the constructivist approach to transformation, it appears that cultural integration in the COCZ is a valuable perspective to use in identity diversification and

mission execution. Cultural integration creates a shared reality of the perspective of transformation being experienced in the COCZ.

This study links perspectives of diversity, encountered in pursuing the identity of the individual and the community among the Bantu of Zimbabwe, with contemporary world views. This link does not only inspire advances in identity but integrate elements of continuity and diversity in mission as well. The constructivist perspective of identity has been regarded as useful for this study, given the transiency of reality in the modern and postmodern society. Social constructionist theories, ignored in contemporary thought, especially in theological and biblical research, need to be rectified. Research in the social constructionist theory can better contribute to the agency of individuals and communities engaged in theological reflections. While the COCZ may not perfectly validate propositions made on identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity), inferences made in the study can help us to understand the contributions of social changes to theological transformation. In fact, the question can be asked as to whether the selected respondents truly represent the views of the entire congregation of the COCZ. A question can also be asked as to the involvement of the vision bearer, and how others co-constructed the realities. In this way, further studies on how leaders and followers construct identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) can help to clarify social constructionist conceptions in the COCZ.

The study has forcefully presented the concept of transformation as a constituent element of engaging change in a diverse society. Identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity) as implied in this study, is closely linked to the domain of change management. Diversity in this case implies age, gender, ethnic, tribal and class differences, which present assumptions and perceptions of how identity and mission must be carried out in the COCZ. Transformation focuses on changing these assumptions and perceptions in our approach to a transforming Church. The findings in the study show similarities of the COCZ's approaches to the elements of the cultural hermeneutics approach of Kanyoro (2001). In this way, further research on the link between transformation and cultural hermeneutics could be explored to examine the extent of these notions.

Finally, the author would like to suggest a theory for transformation in the COCZ. The study has engaged a useful conceptual and theoretical framework for identity and mission in a diverse

society. The study can further define transformation as a state of change encountered in time, events, personalities and place. In a diversity of groupings, times, ages, personalities and events, it can be argued that there are no identical perspectives of identity or mission. The study has explored the concepts without limiting them, meaning that the conceptions of identity and mission could be applicable to any Church in the country and world. Identity and mission can therefore be reduced from the Church to individuals. The study has presented a general theory of Christian transformation, which can further be tested and verified by further studies.

### 5.5.2 Implications for Practice

This thesis has given a useful concept of the continuity of identity and mission in diversity. The views expressed here, can direct practitioners in their planning for change in the future. Group members are key element agencies of the process. In this way, thinking about change informs us how strategies are designed. Change initiators, therefore, are required to translate change guidelines, being developed in this framework, into practical actions. This transforms the framework into a practical tool for change on identity and mission in line with the group. It is guided by objectives and particular activities to be achieved. Objectives can be directly obtained from personal or communal elements of the study, with the bid to assist individuals and group members to understand how categories of identity and mission are constructed or re-constructed in time, space and community.

The idea of the history of the Church, from its formation, reformation, restoration and transformation in a contemporary society, involves invention, copying and adaptation. The elements of *Unhu* and *Munhu Chaiye* explored in the study, were iterative, but focused upon a particular group of the Bantu, namely the Shona. This individuated the experiences and therefore has categorised elements of identity and mission to a set group which would require de-categorisation of the experiences by inclusion of the Nguni-groups and dividing them accordingly. Although participants were engaged from Matabeleland, people who participated were largely of the Shona sub-groups. This may validate or fail to validate how identity and mission are constructed and reconstructed through the different ethnic and language groups.

The researcher engaged respondents in terms of their experiences with both change and continuity. While the study contributed to participants' individual change in their points of view on the relationship of the Church and society, established positions were also presented. The positions indicate that experience has taught members to act and behave in order to impact growth and progress in the COCZ. In this way, identity and mission may practically be designed to evaluate how continuity initiatives incorporate diversity. The element of change and cross-fertilisation cannot be denied, but it can be suggested that adaptation depends on the dominant culture. As some of the children who are now leaders of the Church were separated from their parents, acquired education, they have become detached from their traditional cultures. Their practices can therefore not reflect an amalgamation or conflation of cultures, as their teachers' cultures have been the dominant experiences in their lives.

Furthermore, human beings incorporate rationality, existentiality, emotionality and spirituality. The Church should not regard emotionality just as an element of sex or sexuality, and existentiality as a needs-satisfaction element for spirituality and rationality. If one denies these particular senses and tastes in human experiences, they also deny the core-characteristics of being human. These elements create the basis for mutual understanding, which incites passion and commitment in any organisation. The Church that incorporates the entirety of human capacities in its transformation receives very positive feedback on its identity- and mission-continuity. It makes group members agents of transformation through their interactions and experiences. Engaging in transformation has shown that one engages in a rough ride, and that those who decide to engage in transforming religious institutions and attitudes should be prepared to meet a demanding process. This can happen if leaders have the full support of the majority of their followers, despite the fact that some leaders and privileged individuals are reluctant to accept the new position of discomfort posed by the changes. Judging by the responses in the interviews and the observations in how the Churches engage in the new changes, one can conclude that the COCZ's identity- and mission-continuity transformation process has been a worthwhile exercise in light of the diversity the Church finds itself in.

The concepts used in this study suggest that challenges to the changes in identity- and mission-continuity in the contemporary COCZ have assimilated ethical and legal problematic elements.

The top-level governing board, the NC, has limited the participation of the clergy, women and children, which has affected how transformations in the new laws bring genuine or problematic changes. Although the laws have helped to separate the past from the present, the changes have not in any way considered the views presented by the respondents. The constitution of the COCZ does not have a contextual theology, as most of its religious, theological and biblical language reflects the imported views of the Church of New Zealand and the American missionaries. In terms of practice, the inclusion of children, youth and women in the leadership and governance of the Church remains a dicey issue that has implications for both its theory and practice.

Finally, the study may lack an adequate external validity, as its presented transformation conceptions may not be applicable for diverse Christian groupings. The applicability of the idea of change for a variety of groups in the real religious context, however, can be a valuable contribution derived from this study. Identity- and mission-continuity has theoretical and practical implications for the life of any denomination, religion and organisation, as time, participants and circumstances continue to have an effect on the lives of individual organisations.

## 5.6 Mission in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

The basic elements of mission in the COCZ are found in what God did through Jesus Christ as revealed in the scriptures and experienced by the early Christians. This raises the question of the numerality and multiplicity of missions. Due to diversities of contexts, mission can only happen in context. It is up to the self-critical and conscious awareness of the converts and their imaginations, to apply a theology and gospel that addresses questions in their own contexts. From this experience, the COCZ context generates unfamiliar and uncomfortable theologies that compromise a contextual missiology. Cowrie and Ross ((2016:9)) state:

> Andrew was among the first who made me aware of what nonsense
> that is, and who inspired me to see theology and mission through
> other people's eyes, to listen and learn more attentively, and, to
> appreciate the kaleidoscopic richness of insights that God grants
> within the body of Christ through biblical faithful study embedded
> in, but transforming, any cultural context.

The current COCZ has an evangelical mandate to announce the goodness of Christ to all people in the context of sin, suffering, injustice and disorder in the world. Christians love and serve Christ

in the cause. Mission reflects and integrates evangelism that commits to serve the world. This is ordered and driven by all of God's revealed truth in the historical proclamation and the incorporation of humanity in Christ. Mission is done to serve the world as evangelism and sociopolitical involvement are equally our Christian duty – therefore both of them are necessary expressions of our Christian doctrine. Obedience to Christ is when humanity's love for God is fulfilled through the love of the neighbour. The *Lausanne Covenant* (Lausanne Movement 2004:§ 5) states: 'The salvation we proclaim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead'. The *Micah Declaration on Integral Mission* (Lausanne Movement 2004) also relates:

> Integral mission is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission, our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God, which sends us to serve the world. If we ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world.

In this way, mission addresses every form of brokenness – sin, evil and the human heart. Mission that addresses brokenness engages the Bible with human life.

## 5.7 Conclusion

The study has introduced new perspectives of identity and mission in the life of the COCZ, with overarching implications for individuals and groups. Social constructivist theories of identity and mission have helped us to gain a new perspective of transformation in a contemporary Christian organisation. A conceptual framework of identity- and mission-continuity can therefore be developed in light of the various diversities encountered by the Church – historical, personal, institutional, political, religious, social, economic, environmental and continental, among others. Transformation utilises and accommodates diversities in an empirically verified benchmark of continuity that incorporates the founding charism, RE, new foundations in the USA, New Zealand missionary thrusts and contemporary experiences of the members of the COCZ. This has provided the study with evidence for diversity valuation that structures and guides the practitioner on how change should happen in a diverse group in Zimbabwe. This demands a conscious effort, as transformation pushes people out of their comfort zones, and therefore demands the COCZ to rediscover and acknowledge the humanness in its structures and operations. Zimbabwe, with its

multiplicity of cultures, religions, classes, ages, genders, races, ethnicities and histories, requires a conceptual engagement of the diversities and divisions in the COCZ towards a new repertoire of change and continuity.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions – Summaries and Recommendations

### 6 Introduction

This thesis, in explorng the COCZ, has followed four stages of the founding charism of the Church founded by Jesus Christ, through the early Church, reformation evangelism, missionary enterprise and contemporary expressions of the faith. This was consistent with the four objectives of the study, namely 1.) stating the contemporary understanding of the COCZ's Christian identity and mission from its founding charism; 2.) assessing the local expressions of the Shona people to promote the fulfilment of the COCZ's founding charism and missionary mandate; 3.) evaluating how African values and spirituality (on evangelisation, incarnation and inculturation) contribute to the ecumenical understanding in the COCZ; and 4.) suggesting how the founding charism and missionary mandate in the contemporary society continue to restore and transform the COCZ's continuity in diversity. The study has investigated the reasons for the formation of the Church of Christ in the midst of other Churches. The same applies to why missionaries of the Church came to Zimbabwe where there were other denominations. The discussion landed itself into questioning the issue of continuity and discontinuity, similarity and dissimilarity, as well as difference and diversity in the COCZ's message. In the end, a creative synthesis is done to redirect the discussion to what the COCZ is supposed to do, as opposed to what it is doing.

### 6.1 Main Findings and Conclusions

Chapter 1 introduced the research, and discussed various aspects of the study. Chapter 2 discussed the literature to conceptualise the study within the discipline of Systematic Theology. Literature has shown that the Church founded by Jesus Christ has significantly been affected by the contexts in which it lived. This Chapter globalised and contextualised the study in the interests of identity- and mission-continuity (in diversity). Historical epochs of the Church and the COCZ were introduced and discussed to situate the COCZ within the context of the study.

The third Chapter discussed the methods and methodologies that were used to engage in the study. While the qualitative method was used extensively, the quantitative method was used to a lesser extent, using *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* for the verbatim method on data analysis. This provided a

roadmap for the study. Ethical considerations were adhered to concerning the age of interviewees who were above 18 years of age, and their informed consent was sought for their participation in the study. All conversations were held in the English language, although interviewees were given liberty to turn into the vernacular in their responses, and some indeed turned to the vernacular. While participants were thought to lack knowledge in some aspects of study, the researcher was surprised to find out that most respondents were well informed about the subject under study.

Chapter 4 presented, interpreted and analysed the data. Interviewees were recorded verbatim, with 24 of them being officially asked to respond to questions in this study. There are other quotations that were recorded during conferences as speakers gave their reflections, some of which were recorded verbatim during services although a few were quoted verbatim from memory, especially the late Elder, David Mamvuto and Elias Rwaendepi Muchara. The analysis used *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)*, as well as explanations and interpretations of the responses of the interviewees.

Chapter 5 discussed the responses of the interviewees through a creative synthesis of the literature and methodology. The context has been regarded as important for influencing identity and mission, as diversity and change has brought intense tension and conflict, inclusive of violence and splits (Mafohla 2017). The study discovered that continuity and discontinuity were clearly experienced by the Church that entered the Zimbabwean scene during the colonial era and throughout its history there. It was admitted so that the human hand influenced the COCZ's identity and mission in both positive and negative ways, especially on its continuity and discontinuity with its founding charism.

The Chapter further presented how the Church can strategise on how to pursue identity and mission in contemporary Zimbabwe, especially by emphasising the COCZ activities at the Somabhula Conference Centre, the training of Church ministers and the laity, and by introducing new ways of theologising. Building on the experiences and recommendations of the missionaries, the COCZ's success story hinges on its work strategy at the conference centre, where it is building a boarding school and introduces new ways of theologising. New developments seem to agree with members' aspirations and desires, and most members seem to believe that new changes are addressing their needs. For identity- and mission-continuity in the COCZ to succeed in the context of the current

diversity, initiatives to cultivate a new culture of institutionalisation and theology has to be done in view of the Church's long-term and immediate past. This must always consider the Church's founding charism in Christ, the reformation, the restoration, the missionary enterprise and the contemporary society. This is achievable if all Christians in the Church feel accepted and accommodated in decision-making and in the filling of key secision-making Church positions.

Chapter 6 concludes, recommends and suggests areas for further study.

## 6.2 Modeling Theology in an African Context

The study has discovered that Africa has its own peculiarities but the church has to also go along with the demands of current global changes. The church has been regarded as a change agent in the process of social transformation. The church gives initiatives for social change. In the African context, the challenges that were discussed in the preceding chapters cannot be addressed by evangelism and religious practices but by engagement in social, economic and religious activities, to address the issues women are dealing with. The activities can be structures, institutions, laws or people. Missionaries introduced mission stations for the carrying out of their mission and for the renewal of the society. While this worked during their time, today, Christian mission relates to transformation and change of social, political and economic structures. As McNeal (2009:xiii) points out, to change these structures, the church needs to undergo three shifts, namely:

(1.) Transform from internal to external in its mission and ministry focus,

(2) Change from engaging programmes to people in its core activities and,

(3) Refocus from church-based to kingdom-based leadership agenda.

'Mission- and Identity-Continuity (in Diversity)' in the COCZ thus needs to be done in such a way that it takes regard of women's issues, the environment and other public life challenges. This demands that the church undergoes transformation and change in order to accommodate issius of its missional and ministry demands. This study focused on the transformation of the COCZ (Masengwe and Chimhanda 2019) especially on the area of gender empowerment (Masengwe, Chimhanda and Hove 2018), and hence the COCZ needs to follow a certain path or model of transformation in order to achieve what it has to achieve today.

'Mission- and Identity-Continuity (in Diversity)' requires the COCZ to face its own dark corners before it engages with the wider networks of its society.  While the church has and is instrumental for establishing society, it has not done the best at transforming itself without use of manipulation, conflict and even violence upon its subjects.  So the church, firstly, has its own theology to transform, then with a transformed theology, it has, secondly, to teach the world on the same path of transformation it has travelled.  Fortunately, the church has a long history to learn from.  In this history, the church has acquired attitudes, teachings and doctrines that have been passed on from generation to generation.  However as a church in Africa, there is need for a creation of new nodes of teaching, doctrine and attitude in the life of the church.  Continuity in Diversity implies that there are important elements that will continue to be passed on from generation to generation, but there are new elements that can be (and were) generated in the process.

In South Africa, to deal with Apartheid, the Church underwent a moment of 'Kairos' in order to reflect on its faith and to engage the state in undoing the ideologies that had been created by the Dutch Reformed Church.  Apartheid as a political position was strong as long as the church did not confront its own dark corners and closets.  The COCZ thus has closets and dark corners to interrogate on its journey into the few. Past traditions help control or redirect on how the COCZ engages its identity and mission for the future, with some non-negotiable positions maintained as well as by introducing new changes into the life and work of the church in society.    This also informs how the COCZ's social gospel should help address the challenges it has in church and in society.

## 6.3 Recommendations for Continuity in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

In light of the above, this study concludes with recommendations. Recommendations are given to the COCZ as an institution, and also to individual congregations, to the NC and RCs, the NEC and regional committees, the national fellowship executives and regional fellowship committees and religious training institutions. Recommendations encourage stakeholders to pursue the ideals of the founding charism of the Church founded by Jesus Christ on its identity and mission. It is hoped that the COCZ will reflect what Christ intended to found, which was inaugurated by the apostles on the day of Pentecost, renewed by reformation evangelism and the RM, and advanced by the missionary enterprise. This study recommends the following:

1. On national, regional and congregational level, the COCZ needs to comply with its own regulations in governing all its operations. It needs to be mindful of its purpose for existence, and hence cultivate a culture and behaviour that empowers its institutions and members for broader evangelistic and discipleship programmes. The education of the laity and clergy should help in advancing the culture of Church growth, good management and skilful administration. The COCZ is obligated to God and the world alike, and therefore its failure to spread the word of God and to convert sinners demand its accountability, including its failure to grow and groom its members. In all, the COCZ is expected to uphold the Church constitution, and where necessary, amend it for the greater good of its life and membership. It was discovered that the COCZ experiences are connected to Christians everywhere on the face of the earth, hence it needs to be integrated into its regional connections beyond race and colour boundaries. It therefore needs to relate with other Churches and denominations in order to fully carry out the mandate of Christ to the world.

2. The NC is the highest decision-making body of the COCZ, whose leadership is expected to be reflected on its legal-practical, tactical and technical, strategic and textual expertise of the Church's diversity in order to comprehensively address the needs of its diverse membership. Women's challenges, it must ensure, need to be addressed. Children and young adults should be shaped into a form, from which they will never depart. The NC needs to exercise passion and rationality in its dealings, as its decisions have a long-lasting impact on the contemporary and future Church. The NC provides models for the RCs on how they can maintain and advance the COCZ identity and mission. The RCs are expected to implement the decisions of the NC at regional levels and to best inform the NC in its decision-making processes.

3. The NEC has the mandate to seek and enforce the voice of God in their call. They are therefore expected to possess the leadership role in steering the Church towards the destiny Christ created for it. They are not encouraged to seek and satisfy their own immediate whims and insecurities, but a continuance with Christ's intentions on this institution or discontinuance with human creations that impede the progress of the Church. The NEC that operates through regional committees and congregational executives has a wider base to consult before it makes decisions.

4. The national fellowship executives are responsible for addressing the needs of their constituencies. Fellowship executives at national, regional and congregational levels have specific gender, age and professional responsibilities for growing and maturing their members towards fulfilling the identity and missional needs of the COCZ. Fellowship committees are therefore urged to approach their challenges with bravery and relevance concerning information on things they should do in the lives of their members. The Church should not be a barrier for women and children ministries, wherein it can extend the identity and mission of the COCZ.

5. The religious training institutions need to develop a philosophy or theory and practice that institutionalises the identity and mission of the COCZ. It needs to have a drive to establish a culture of maintenance and growth of the COCZ's tradition through evangelism and discipleship strategies, methods and tactics it imparts upon its clergy and laity. This philosophy must be institutionalised for children, teens, young adults and adults, and must encourage every member of the Church to undertake a life of studying the Bible through the institution's correspondence department.

## 6.4 Recommendations for Further Study

This thesis has not done a comprehensive research on the COCZ's history of missions, Church position on identity and the inclusion of women in Church leadership and organisational structures. The study has rather focused on inculturation of the gospel into an African setting; and can safely say that it has laid a foundation for further theological introspection on the life, history, and theology of the COCZ. Further studies may find it easier to delve into the history of the COCZ; using this study as their basis to carry out a detailed study of the history of the Church, its governance processes, the substance of its teachings and doctrines; and hermeneutical methods, and its enagement in public life issues, among others.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The study has discussed the experiences of 'Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in Diversity)' of the COCZ. It traced the discussion back to the founding of the Church, and the charism associated with the founding and formation of the Church, to early Church history, the RE, the missionary enterprise and the contemporary experiences of the Church in Zimbabwe. The study has dealt with

the research question and sub-questions, using interviews, literature studies and ACHA. *Atlas.ti 8 (SPSS, Nvivo 8)* was used to assist in the process of data analysis, presentation, interpretation and discussion.

# Bibliography

**Publications**

2009. *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.* Stanford University Press

Adler, ES. & Clark, B. 2011. *An invitation to social research: How it's done*. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Africa Synod of Bishops. 2009. *Synod of Bishops, II Special Assembly for Africa. 2009 Message.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications-Africa.

Agamben, G., 2011. *The kingdom and the glory: For a theological genealogy of economy and government*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Agbakoba, J.C. 2005. An Evaluation of Okere's Conception of the Place of African Values, pp. 230-238. *African Philosophy and the Hermeneutics of Culture: Essays in Honour of Theophilus Okere,* J.O. Oguejiofor and G.I. Onah Eds. Munster: Studies in African Philosophy.

Ahern, KJ. (Ed.). 2013. *Visions of Hope: Emerging Theologians and the Future of the Church*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Ahlstrom, SE. 1972. *A Religious History of the American People.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Aichele, G. & Phillips, GA. 1995a. Exploring the issue of biblical inter-textuality within comparative literature and cultural criticism circles: Introduction. *Semeia* Vol. 69-70, pp. 7-18.

Aichele, G. & Phillips, GA. 1995b. *Inter-textuality and the Bible*. Atlanta: Scholar Press.

Aikenhead, G.S. 2003, August. Review of research on humanistic perspectives in science curricula. In 4th Conference of the European Science Education Research Association (ESERA), Research and the Quality of Science Education. Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands (august 19-23).

Akpan, C.O. 2009. The Hermeneutic Approach to African Philosophy, pp. 76-81. *From Footmark to Landmarks on African Philosophy*, A.F. Uduigwomen, Ed., Lagos: O.O.P limited

Allen C.L. & Hughes, R.T. 1988. *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of the Churches of Christ*. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press.

Allen, C.L. 1986. Baconianism and the Bible in the Disciples of Christ: James S. Lamar and The Organon of Scripture. *Church History*, Vol. *55,* Iss. No. 1, pp. 65-80.

Anderson J.B. 1988. *A Vatican II Pneumatology of the Paschal Mystery: The Historical-doctrinal Genesis of Ad Gentes I, 2-5*. Vol. 84. Rome: Gregorian Biblical Bookshop.

Anderson, B.W. 1989. *The Books of the Bible: The Old Testament*. Vol. 1. New York Macmillan Pub Co.

Anderson, R.S. 2009. *An emergent theology for emerging churches.* London: InterVarsity Press.

Andrews, T. 2012. What is social constructionism? *Grounded Theory Review* Vol. 11, Issue 1, pp. 39-46.

Aquinas, T. 1702. *Summa theologica*. Benzinger Brothers.

Arnold C.E. 1992. *Ephesians: Power and magic—The concept of power in Ephesians in the light of its historical setting*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Asouzu, I.I. 2007. *Ibu Aru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy*. Munster: LIT VERLAG

Augustine, A. 1972. *Concerning the city of God against the Pagans*. Trans. by Bettenson, H. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Augustine, S. 2008. *The city of God*. Hendrickson Publishers.

Avery, R.K. and Marsh, D. 2002. *Soaring Where Christ Has Led*. CSS Publishing.

Awolalu, J.O. 1976. What is African Traditional Religion? *Studies in Comparative Religion* Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp. 1-10. URL: www.studiesincomparativereligion.com

Babbie, E., 2017. Basics of social research Boston. *MA: Cengage Learning*.

Badiou, A., 2002. *Ethics: An essay on the understanding of evil*. London: Verso.

Banda, C. & Masengwe, G. 2018. Overcoming fear? A search for an empowering theological response to the fear of witchcraft among urban Zimbabwean Christians. *Verbum et Ecclesia Vol.* 39, Issue 1, pp. 1-10.

Bass, D.B. 2004. *Strength for the Journey: A Pilgrimage of Faith in Community.* New York Place: Jossey-Bass.

Bass, D.B. 2006. *Christianity for the rest of us: How the neighborhood Church is transforming the faith.* New York: Harper One.

Bass, D.B. 2009. *A People's History of Christianity.* New York: Harper One.

Bass, D.B. 2012. *Christianity after religion: The end of Church and the birth of a new spiritual awakening*. New York: Harper One.

Bebbington, D.W. 1995. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s.* London: Routledge.

Bebbington, D.W. 2005. *The dominance of evangelicalism: The age of Spurgeon and Moody.* Leicester: IVP.

Beck, U. 2007. *World Risk Society.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp

Behemuka, J. 1989. The Hidden Treasure in African Traditional Religion, pp. 1-16. In Mugambi J.N.K. & Magesa, L. (Eds.) *Jesus in African Traditional Religion.* Nairobi: Initiatives Publications.

Bell, C. 1992. *Ritual theory, ritual practice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bell, C. 2006. Paradigms behind (and before) the modern concept of religion. *History and Theory Vol.* 45, Issue 4, pp. 27-46.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. 1991. *The social construction of reality.* London: Penguin Books.

Berkouwer, G.C. 1975. *Holy Scripture.* New York: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Bernard, H.R. 2017. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Berry, C.R. 2003. *The Unauthorized Guide to Choosing a Church.* Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

Berryhill, C.M. 1988. Alexander Campbell's natural rhetoric of evangelism. *Restoration Quarterly* Vol. 30, Issue 3, pp. 111-124.

Bhebhe, M. 2013. *An African Culture of Multiple Religiosity: The Perspective of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.* Saarbruecken: Lambert Academic Publishing.

Bhebhe, M. 2016. Religio-Culture, Fear, and Zimbabwe's Leadership Perceptions. *Perichoresis* Vol. 14, Issue 1, pp. 75-100.

Bickman, L. 2008. Designing a Qualitative Study. In Bickman, L. & Rog, DJ. (Eds.) *The SAGE handbook of Applied Social Research Methods.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Bickman, L. and Rog, D.J. eds., 2008. *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods.* Kondon: Sage publications.

Bielo, J.S. 2008. On the Failure of 'Meaning': bible reading in the anthropology of Christianity. *Culture and Religion*, Vol. *9*, Iss. No. 1, pp. 1-21.

Blaikie, A. 1993. *Illegitimacy, sex and society: Northeast Scotland, 1750-1900.* Clarendon Press.

Blunt, A.W.F. 1929. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark.* Clarendon Press.

Boff, L. 2012. *Church, charisma and power: Liberation theology and the institutional Church.* London: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. 2007. *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and practice.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bogdewic, S.P. 1999. Participant Observation, pp. 33-43. In Crabtree, BF. & Miller, WL. (Eds.) *Doing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bonhoeffer, D. 1953. *Letters and papers from prison*. London: SCM Press.

Bosch, D.J. 1991. *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*. Vol. 16. New York: Orbis Books.

Boswell, T. and Dixon, W.J., 1993. Marx's theory of rebellion: A cross-national analysis of class exploitation, economic development, and violent revolt. *American sociological review*, pp. 681-702.

Bourdillon, M.F.C. 1986. *The Shona peoples: An ethnography of the contemporary Shona, with special reference to their religion*. Vol. 1. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Bourdillon, M.F.C. 1993. *Where are the ancestors? Changing culture in Zimbabwe.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Bowen, B.D. 1978. Knowledge, the Existence of God, and Faith: John Locke's Influence on Alexander Campbell's Theology. PhD Dissertation in Philosophy of Religion. Michigan State University, Michigan.

Bozeman, T.D. 1988a. *To Live Ancient Lives.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Bozeman, TD. 1988b. Alexander Campbell, Child of the Puritans, pp. 3-18? In J.M. Seale, *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial, 1788-1988.* Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

Bradshaw, P.F. 2018. The Search for the Origins of Christian Liturgy: Some Methodological Reflections. *Studia Liturgica* Vol 17, Iss. No. 1-4, pp. 26-34.

Bratt, J.D. 1998. The Reorientation of American Protestantism, 1835–1845. *Church History*, Vol. *67*, Iss. No. 1, pp. 52-82.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2013. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.

Brewer, J.D. 2000. *Ethnography*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Brewin, K. 2004. *The complex Christ: Signs of emergence in the urban church*. London: SPCK.

Brewin, K. 2013. *After Magic: Moves Beyond Super-nature from Batman to Shakespeare*. Self-published

Bromiley, GW. (Ed.) 1963. *Zwingli and Bullinger.* Philadelphia: Westminster.

Brown, C. (Ed.) 1979. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Brusco, E. 2009. Progressive Pentecostalism? *Anthropology and Humanism* Vol. 34, Issue 1, pp. 117-118.

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. 2015. *Business research methods* (4rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. 2012. *Social Research Methods,* 4th edition, Oxford: OUP

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2003. *Synthesizing Research: A guide for Literature Reviews* (3rd edn). Sage: Thousand Oaks

Brynard, P. and Hanekom, S.X. 2006. *Introduction to research in management-related fields*. Van Schaik.

Burke, S. 2006. *The Heretic's Guide to Eternity.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Burningham, K. & Cooper, G. 1999. Being Constructive: Social constructionism and the environment. *Sociology* Vol. 33, Issue 2, pp. 297-316.

Burr, V. 1995. *An Introduction to Social Constructivism*. London: Routledge.

Burr, V. 2015. *Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.

C.G. 2000. Ethics and politics in qualitative research, 133-155. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds. ) *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

C.N.A. (Catholic News Agency). 2018. Renew religious life by returning to founding charisms, Cardinal Rode tells orders. Viewed on 11 November 2018, from https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/renew_religious_life_by_returning_to_founding _charisms_cardinal_rode_tells_orders

Calvin, J. 1960. *Institutes of the Christian religion*. JT. McNeill, JT. (Ed.) Trans. by Battles, FL. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Calvin, J. and Uyl, A. 2016. *Institutes of the Christian religion*. Edited by A. Uyl. Lulu.com.

Calvin, J., 2002. *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will (Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought): A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius*. London: Baker Books

Campbell, A. 1850. Schools and Colleges - No. 2. *Millennial Harbinger*, Vol. 3, Iss. No. 7, pp.169-174.

Campbell, A. 1995. Foundation of Christian Union. *Restoration Quarterly Vol.* 37, Issue 1, pp. 1-26.

Caputo, J.D. 1987. *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project.* Indiana: Indiana University Press

Carslake, G. 2014. *DNA of Churches of Christ*. Nashville: Xlibris Corporation.

Carson, D.A. 2005. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Carson, D.A., 2005. *Becoming conversant with the emerging church: Understanding a movement and its implications*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J. & Neville, A.J. 2014. The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum* Vol. 41, Iss. No. 5, pp. 545-547.

Cartwright, C.S. 1987. *People of the Chalice.* St. Louis: Chalice Press.

Casey, M.W. & Foster, D.A. 2002. The Renaissance of Stone-Campbell Studies: An assessment and New Directions. In Casey, MW. & Foster, DA. (Eds.) *The Stone-Campbell movement: An international religious tradition*, 1-67. Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press.

Casey, M.W. 1998. *The battle over hermeneutics in the Stone-Campbell movement, 1800-1870,* Vol. 67. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Casey, M.W. 2001a. The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith. *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 67, Iss. No. 3, pp. 681-

Casey, MW. 2001b. From British Ciceronianism to American Baconianism: Alexander Campbell as a case study of a shift in rhetorical theory. *Southern Communication Journal* Vol. 66, Issue 2, pp. 151-166.

Casey, MW. 2004. 'Come let us reason together': The heritage of the Churches of Christ as a source for rhetorical invention. A special Issue on religious and theological traditions as sources of rhetorical invention. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* Vol. 7, Issue 4, pp. 487-498.

Caulley, D.N. 2007. Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods. *Qualitative Research Journal* Vol. *7, Issue 2*, pp. 106-108.

CBACC (ColenBrander Avenue Church of Christ). 1948-1965. *Minute Book [1948-1965]*. Bulawayo: ColenBrander Avenue Church of Christ.

Chalke, S. and Mann, A., 2004. *The lost message of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan

Chalke, S., 2009. *Intelligent church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Chigwedere, A. 13 January 2002. *Speech at Grace Todd's funeral at Dadaya Church.* London: TPPC

Chimhanda, F. 2013. Women and the Roman Catholic Church with special focus on Zimbabwe. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Vol. *39*, Issue 1, pp. 1-10.

Chimhanda, F.H. 2011a. *An Incarnational Christology set in the Context of Narratives of Shona Women in Present Day Zimbabwe*. PhD thesis, UNISA, Pretoria.

Chimhanda, F.H. 2011b. *Christ the Ancestor: Shona Christianity and the Roots for Feminist Liberative Praxis*. Saarbruchen: Verlag Dr Muller.

Chimhanda, F.H. 2013. Relevance of theology in relation to spirituality: An African Bantu perspective. *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa Vol.* 112, Issue 1, pp. 1-17.

Chimhanda, F.H. 2014. African Theology of Land: A Shona Perspective. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* Vol. 148, pp. 33-47.

Chitando, E. 2004. 'The Good Wife': A phenomenological re-reading of Proverbs 31:10-31 in the context of HIV/Aids in Zimbabwe. *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa* Vol. 86, Issue 1, pp. 151-159.

Chitando, E. 2010. Sub-Saharan Africa, pp. 114-137. In *Religious Studies*. Routledge.

Christians, C.G. 2000. Ethics and politics in qualitative research, 133-155. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

COCZ (Church of Christ in Zimbabwe). 2015. *The Constitution of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.* Somabhula: Somabhula Conference Centre.

COCZ Strategic Plan. 2015-2018. Evangelism Programme. Church of Christ in Zimbabwe 2015-2018 Strategic Plan. Gweru: Somabhula

Cooper, T.W. 2017. Emerging, Emergent, Emergence: Boundary Maintenance, Definition Construction, and Legitimation Strategies in the Establishment of a Post-Evangelical Subculture. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol. 56, Issue 2, pp. 398-417.

Corrie, J. and Ross, C. eds. 2016. *Mission in context: explorations inspired by J. Andrew Kirk*. London and New York: Routledge.

Craib, I. 1997. Social Constructionism as a Social Psychosis. *Sociology* Vol. 31, Issue 1, pp. 1-15.

Creswell, J.W. 2009. Mapping the field of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* Vol. 3, Issue 2, pp.95-108.

Creswell, J.W. 2014. *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. 2017. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage publications. Cowrie and Ross

Critchley, S. 2012. *The faith of the faithless: Experiments in political theology*. London and New York: Verso Books.

Cromley, R.G. and Campbell, G.M. 1992. Integrating quantitative and qualitative aspects of digital line simplification. *The Cartographic Journal*, Vol. *29*, Issue 1, pp. 25-30.

Dahlbom, B. 1992. The idea that reality is socially constructed. In Software development and reality construction (pp. 101-126). Berlin, Heidelberg: New York: Springer.

Daneel, M.L. 1970. *The God of the Matopo Hills: An essay on the Mwari cult in Rhodesia*. The Netherlands: Mouton & Co.

Davidson, S. 1843. *Sacred Hermeneutics Developed and Applied, Including a History of Biblical Interpretation from the Earliest of the Fathers to the Reformation.* Edinburgh: Thomas Clark.

Davies, O., Janz, P. & Sedmak, C. 2007. *Transformation theology: Church in the world*. New York: T. & T. Clark.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Derrida, J. 1986. *Antinomies of philosophy.* Paris: Osiris.

Derrida, J. 1997. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. Trans. by Dooley, M. & Hughes, M. London: Routledge.

Derrida, J. 2002. *Ethics, institutions, and the right to philosophy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Derrida, J. 2011. Living on border lines, 103-191. *Parages*. New York: Stanford University Press.

Dilthey, W. 1883. *Introduction to the human Sciences*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Dooley, D. & Gullickson, T. 1995. Social research methods. *Psyccritiques* Vol. 40, Issue 10, p. 1016.

Drury, J. 1989. *Critics of the Bible 1724-1873*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edwards, J. 1830. *The works of President Edwards in Ten Volumes, Vol. IV*. New York: Carvill

Eliade, M. and Adams, C.J. ed., 1987. *The encyclopedia of religion* (Vol. 16, pp. 277-8). New York: Macmillan.

Ervin, HM. 1985. What is the Kingdom of God? Sermons on the Holy Spirit 2. Viewed on 11 November 2018, from http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/ervin_hs_sermons/2

Escobar, S. 2011. Book Review: Escaping the Fire: How an Ixil Mayan Pastor Led His People Out of a Holocaust during the Guatemalan Civil War. *Missiology: An International Revie*w Vol. 39, Issue 3, pp. 412-413

Ezeogu, E.M. 1998. Bible and culture in African Christianity. *International Review of Mission* Vol. 87, Iss. No. 344, pp. 1-25.

Farrow, DB. 2004. *Ascension and Ecclesia*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Fayemi, AK. 2016. Hermeneutics in African Philosophy. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* Vol. 5, Iss. No. 2, pp. 1-18.

Ferguson, E. 1996. *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Ferguson, E. 2014. *The early Church at work and worship: Ministry, Ordination, Covenant, and Canon*. 2 Vols. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co.

Ferguson, T.S., 2014. Mathematical statistics: A decision theoretic approach (Vol. 1). New York: Academic press.

Fiedler, K. 1995. Post-classical missions and Churches in Africa – Identity and challenge to missioiogical research. *Missionalia Vol.* 23, Iss. No. 1, pp. 92-107.

Fine, M., Weis, L., Weseen, S. & Wong, L. 2000. For whom? Qualitative research, representations, and social responsibilities. In Denzin, NK. & Lincoln, YS. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Vol. 2, 107-131. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fiorenza, S.E. 1982. The Church's Religious Identity and Its Social and Political Mission. *Theological Studies* Vol. 43, Iss. No. 2, pp. 197-225.

Foster, D.A. & Dunnavant, A.L. 2004. *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Foster, D.A. and Dunnavant, A.L. 2004. *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, ISBN 0-8028-3898-7, ISBN 978-0-8028-3898-8, 854 pages

Frei, H.W. 1993. *Theology and narrative: Selected essays*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press

Freire, P. 1970. *Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Continuum.*

Freston, P. 2001. *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Froehlich, K. 1984. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Gadamer, H.G. 1975. *Truth and Method*. Trans. by Burden, G. & Cumming, J. New York: Seabury.

Gadamer, H.G. 2007. *The Gadamer reader: A bouquet of the later writings*. Northwestern University Press.

Gallagher, SD. 2011. Book Review: Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues. *Missiology: An International Revie*w Vol. 39, Issue 3, pp. 411-412

Garrett, L. 1983. *The Stone-Campbell Movement.* Joplin: College Press.

Geertz, C. 1973. *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. 1981. *A contemporary critique of historical materialism* (Vol. 1). University of California Press.

Gilbert, J.K., 1995. Studies and fields: Directions of research in science education.Londn: Taylor and Francis

Gill, RM. 2012a. *Theology in a Social Context: Sociological Theology*. Vol. 1. Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Gill, RM. 2012b. *Theology shaped by society*. Vol. 2. Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Gill, RM. 2013. *Society shaped by theology*. Vol. 3. Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Gillett, DK. 1993. *Trust and Obey: Explorations in Evangelical Spirituality.* London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

Giltner, JH. 1988. *Moses Stuart, The Father of Biblical Science in America.* Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Gnanadason, A., Kanyoro, M.R. and McSpadden, L.A. eds., 2009. *Women, violence and nonviolent change.* Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Golab, A. 2007. Who likes the Idea of the Universal Salvation and who believes that it may come true? *Polish Journal of Social Science* Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 43-53.

Goto, N. 1994. A Great Central Mission: The Legacy of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. *Methodist History,* Volume 33, Issue 1, pp. 14-25

Grant R.M. & Tracey, D. 1894. A *Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible.* 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Grenz, S.J., 2000. *Theology for the Community of God.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Grossoehme, D.H. 2011. Research as a chaplaincy intervention. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* Vol. 17, Issue 3-4, pp. 97-99.

Grossoehme, D.H. 2014. Overview of qualitative research. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* Vol. 20, Issue 3, pp. 109-122.

Grubbs, D.A. 2009. *The Partridge Principle: A Memoir of Life in Zimbabwe.* Cincinnati: Cincinnati Christian University Press.

Grudem, W.A., 2004. *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine.* Leicester, England/Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1989. *Fourth generation evaluation.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Guest, M. 2015. The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* Vol 30, Issue 3, pp. 544-546

Guo, K., Yolles, M., Fink, G. and Iles, P., 2016. *The changing organization: Agency theory in a cross-Cultural context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Habermas, J. 2008. Notes on post-secular society. *New Perspectives Quarterly* Vol. *25*, Issue 4, pp. 17-29.

Haddon, AL. 1956. *Firm biblical foundations: New Zealand Christian* xi.2. Glen Leith: New Zealand Associated Churches of Christ.

Hallen, B. 2002. *A Short History of African Philosophy*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. Paperback.

Hallen, B. 2003. Not a House Divided. *Journal on African Philosophy*, Vol. 2. Retrieved from http//www.journalofafricanphilosophy.org/hallen/htm on 22/12/2010

Hamilton, D. 2002. Traditions, preferences, and postures in applied qualitative research. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 60-69. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. 2007. *Ethnography: Principals in practice*. London: Routledge.

Hancock, B. 1998. *An introduction to qualitative research*. Nottingham: Trent Focus Group.

Harper, S.B. 1995. Ironies of indigenization: Some cultural repercussions of mission in South India. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* Vol. 19, Issue 1, pp. 13-20.

Harrell, DE. Jr. 1966. *Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American society to 1866.* Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

Hasel, G.F. 1994. *Hermeneutical Issues Relating to the Ordination of Women: Methodological Reflections on Key Passages*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderban

Hawley, M.E. 1976. *Redigging the Wells: Seeking Undenominational Christianity*. Abilene: Quality Publications.

Heidegger, M. 1982. *On the way to Language*. Harper: San Francisco.

Heidegger, M. 1996. *Being and time: A translation of Sein und Zeit*. New York: SUNY press.

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Hesse, M., 1980. The explanatory function of metaphor, pp.111-124. *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science*, Indiana: Indiana University Press

Hill, SS., Lippy, CH & Wilson, CR. 2005. *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South.* Place: Mercer University Press.

Hoffman, L.A., 1979. Jewish ordination on the eve of Christianity. *Studia Liturgica Rotterdam*, Vol. 13, Iss. No. 2-3-4, pp. 11-41.

Hofstede, G.H. 1997. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind.* London: McGraw Hill.

Holiday, A. 1997. Practices, Powers and the Populace of Kant's Kingdom of Ends. *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, Vol. 90, pp. 48-64.

Holladay, C.R. 1985. Hermeneutics. *Harper's Bible Dictionary.* San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Holliday, A. 2000. Culture as constraint or resource: essentialist versus non-essentialist views. *Iatefl Language and Cultural Studies SIG Newsletter.* Iss. No. 18 pp. 38-40

Holloway, G. & Foster, D.A. 2001. *Renewing God's People.* Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press.

Holloway, I. 2005. *Qualitative research in health care*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hovey, A. n.d. *Barnas Sears, A Christian Educator, His Making and Work.* New York: Silver, Burdett.

Huberman, A.M. & Miles, M.B. 1994. Data management and analysis methods, In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research*, 428-444. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Huffman, T.N. & Murimbika, M. 2003. Shona ethnography and Iron Age burials. *Journal of African Archaeology* Vol. 1, Issue 2, pp. 237-246.

Hughes, A.J.B. 1956. Kin, caste and nation among the Rhodesian Ndebele. *The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers* no. XXI. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Hughes, D.M. 1999. Refugees and squatters: Immigration and the politics of territory on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border" *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 25, Issue 4, pp. 533-552.

Hughes, RT. 1996. *Reviving the ancient faith: The story of the Churches of Christ in America.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Hunt, A. 1997. *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery: A Development in Recent Catholic Theology*. Vol. 5. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Hutchinson, M. 2010. Chapter Twelve. The Latter Rain Movement And The Phenomenon Of Global Return, pp. 265-283. In *Winds from the North*. New York: Brill.

Ikwuagwu, OA. 2006. *Initiation in African Traditional Religion: A systematic symbolic analysis, with special reference to aspects of Igbo Religion in Nigeria.* Doctoral Thesis, Universität Würzburg, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät

Ilo, S.C., 2012. The Second African Synod and the Challenges of Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace in Africa's Social Context: A Missional Theological Praxis for Transformation—Part 2. *Missiology*, Vol. 40, Issue 3, pp. 249-260.

Imo, C. 2008. Evangelicals, Muslims and democracy: With particular reference to the declaration of Sharia in Northern Nigeria, pp. 37-66. In T. O. Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Inwood, Michael. 1998. Hermeneutics. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Vol. 4, Pp. 384–389.

Isherwood, L. 2004. The embodiment of feminist liberation theology: The spiralling of incarnation. *Feminist Theology* Vol. 12, Issue 2, pp. 140-156.

Jack, J. 2017. *An Exploratory study to the challenges being encountered by single women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe: A study of the challenge of single women to the life of the Church*. Bachelor of theology and Religious Studies Dissertation, Midlands State University, Gweru.

Jacobs, C., 2001, Deliver us from the evil, Regal/Gospel Light, Ventura, CA

Jacobs, J.L., 1991. Gender and power in new religious movements: A feminist discourse on the scientific study of religion. *Religion*, Vol. *21*, Issue 4, pp. 345-356.

Janz, B. 2015. Hermeneutics and Intercultural Understanding, pp. 474-485. *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, Jeff Malpas & Hans-Helmuth Gander, Eds. New York: Routledge

Janz, BB. (Ed.) 2017. *Place, space and hermeneutics.* Vol. 5. Orlando: Springer.

Jenkins, P. 2002. The next Christianity. *The Atlantic Monthly Vol.* 290, Issue 3, pp. 53-68.

Jenkins, P. 2011. *The next Christendom: The coming of global Christianity.* Place: Oxford University Press.

Jirrie, E. 1972. *How to uproot Church problems*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Jordaan, E. 2006. Inadequately self-critical: Rwanda's self-assessment for the African peer review mechanism. *African Affairs*, Vol. 105, Issue 420, pp. 333-351.

Josselson, R. 2004. The hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion. *Narrative inquiry* Vol. 14, Issue 1, pp. 1-28.

Kaiser, WC. Jr. & Silva, M. 2009. *Introduction to Biblical hermeneutics: The search for meaning*. New York: Zondervan.

Kakkori, L.2009. Hermeneutics and Phenomenology Problems When Applying Hermeneutic Phenomenological Method in Educational Qualitative Research. *Paideusis* Vol. 18, No. 2, Pp. 19-27.

Kalilombe, P.A. 1999. Doing Theology at the Grassroots: A Challenge for Professional Theologians, pp.167-195. *Doing Theology at the Grassroots: Theological Essays from Malawi.* Edited by P.A. Kalilombe: *Gweru: Mambo*.

Kalilombe, PA. 1981. The Salvific Value of African Religion. *Mission Trends Vol.* 5, pp. 50-68.

Kanaris, J. 1998. The "ins and outs" of Religious Love: Bernard Lonergan's Pragmatics. Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses. Vol. 27, No. 3. pp. 295- 310.

Kanyoro, M.R.A. 2001. Cultural Hermeneutics: An African Contribution, pp. 101-113. In M.W. Dube, (ed.) *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature

Kanyoro, R.A. 2002. *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics an African Perspective.* London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press

Kasper, W. 1999. On the theology and practice of the episcopal ministry. *In a new kind of church being: Reality Challenges Transformations, Commemorative for J. Homeyer. Ed. W. Schreer* , pp. 32-48.

Keeran, D. 2017. Thirty-three principles for understanding scripture. *Researchgate.Net* https://philpapers.org/export.html?__format=txt&eId=DANTPF&formatName=plain%20text

Keeran, D. 2018. Thirty-nine principles for understanding scripture. *Academia Edu* https://philpapers.org/export.html?__format=txt&eId=KEETPF-3&formatName=plain%20text

Kershner, F.D. 1965. *The Restoration Handbook Series 1.* Texas: Bible Book Store Press

Kilmmel, W.G. 1972. *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems.* Trans. by McLean Gilmour, S. & Howard, CK. Nashville: Abingdon.

Kimball, D. 2003. *The emerging church: Vintage Christianity for new generations.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan

King, F.J. 2012. Book Review: Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, & Timothy C. Tennent. 2010. Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. *Mission Studies Vol.* 29, Issue 1, pp. 95-145.

Kingsbury, L.L. 1954. The Philosophical Influences Bearing on Alexander Campbell and the Beginnings of the Disciples of Christ Movement. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Kottak, C.P. and Kottak, C.P. 2013. *Mirror for humanity: A concise introduction to cultural anthropology.* McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages.

Kuckertz, H. 1981. *Ancestor religion in Southern Africa. Proceedings of a seminar on ancestor belief.* Cacadu, Transkei: Lumko Missiological Institute.

Kumar, R., Sachan, A. & Mukherjee, A. 2017. Qualitative approach to determine user experience of e-government services. *Computers in Human Behavior* Vol. 71, pp. 299-306.

Kuper, H., Hughes, A.J.B. & Van Velsen, J. 1955. *The Shona and Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia.* London: Routledge.

Kuper, H., Hughes, A.J.B. & Van Velsen, J. 2017. *The Shona and Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia: Southern Africa.* Part 4. London: Taylor & Francis.

Kuyper, A. [1880] 1998. Sphere Sovereignty, pp. 461-480. In Bratt, JD. (Ed.) *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Kuyper, A., 1998. *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader*. New York: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Kwast, L.E. 1971. *The discipling of West Cameroon: A study of Baptist growth*. New York: Eerdmans.

Lacan, J., 2013. *The ethics of psychoanalysis 1959-1960: The seminar of Jacques Lacan*. New York: Routledge.

Lane, D. 1992. The challenge of inculturation. *Living Light Vol.* 29, pp. 3-21.

Lausanne Movement, 2004. Holistic Mission (LOP 33). Viewed on 6 December 2017, from http://www.lausanne.org/content/holistic-mission-lop-33

Lecky, W.E.D. 1910. *History of the rise and influence of the spirit of rationalism in Europe*. Vol. 2. London: Watts & Co.

Ledbetter, S., 2001. Vocation and Our Understanding of God. *Modern Believing*, Vol. *4*, pp. 38-49.

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical research: planning and design.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. 2015. Practical Research: Planning and Design (11th edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education Publications

Lemert, C.C., 2015. *Postmodernism is not what you think*. New York: Routledge.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G., 1985. *Effective evaluation.* New York: Jassey-Bass.

Lindbeck, G.A., 1984. *The nature of doctrine: Religion and theology in a postliberal age*. London: Westminster John Knox Press.

Loetscher, LA. 1983. *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism: Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton Theological Seminary*. Westport: Greenwood.

Loisy, A. 1929. *L'Évangile et l'Église.* 5th ed. Paris: Émile Nourry.

Lonergan, B. 1971 Method in Theology. London: Darton, Longman & Todd

Lonergan, B.J.F. 1997. Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan Vol. 2: Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas. Frederick E. Crowe y Robert M. Doran (Eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Lonergan, B.J.F. 1999. Insight: Estudio sobre la comprensión humana. (Trad. F. Quijano). Salamanca: Sígueme; México: Universidad Iberoamericana.

Lorch, D. 1995. Pope Calls for End to Killings in Rwanda. *The New York Times* 20 September 1995. Retrieved 9 November 2018.

Lusby, J.L. 1990. *Historical Survey of Central African Mission, Zimbabwe.* Kentucky Christian College Press

Luzbetak, L.J. 1988. *The Church and cultures: New perspectives in Missiological anthropology.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

MacDonald, M.L. 2003. *The Chant of Life: Liturgical Studies Four*. Vol. 4. Place: Church Publishing, Inc.

Machingura, F. & Nyakuhwa, P. 2015. Sexism: a hermetical interrogation of Galatians 3:28 and women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Pan African Studies* Vol. 8, Issue 2, pp. 92-114.

Madu, R. 1996. *African Symbols, Proverbs and Myth: The Hermeneutics of Destiny*. New York: Peter Lang.

Mafohla, S. 2017. *Clergy-Laity Relations: An investigation into power relations between the clergy and laity in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ).* Bachelor of Theology and Religious Studies dissertation, Midlands State University, Gweru.

Magesa, L. 2014. *African religion: The moral traditions of abundant life*. London: Orbis Books.

Magirosa, M. 2014. Early missionaries destroyed African values. *The Patriot*. Viewed on 20 February 2014, from https://www.thepatriot.co.zw/old_posts/early-missionaries-destroyed-african-values/

Magosvongwe, R. 2016. Shona philosophy of Unhu/Hunhu and its onomastics in selected fictional narratives. *Journal of the African Literature Association*, Vol. *10*, Issue 2, pp.158-175.

Magwidi, E. 2015-2020. *Leadership Succession in Church and Mission: A comparative study of the succession processes between the Dadaya and Mashoko Missions from 1956-2015.* University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, Department of Church History, PhD Candidate research topic.

Maier, C. 2002. Group diversity and performance: Consideration of Japanese context. Unpublished Research Paper. Doctoral seminar on Management in Asia, St. Gallen, University of Gallen, Japan.

Maier, C.S., 1977. The politics of productivity: foundations of American international economic policy after World War II. *International Organization*, Vol. *31*, Issue 4, pp. 607-633.

Majawa, C. 2016. 50 years of Ad Gentes in Africa: Ad Gentes: 50 Years and Beyond. *Tangaza Journal of Theology & Mission* Vol. 153, Issue 2, pp. 1-34.

Makaryk, IR. & Sumner, WG. 1993. *Encyclopedia of contemporary literary theory: Approaches, scholars, terms*. Vol. 22. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Makoni, S., Brutt-Griffler, J. & Mashiri, P. 2007. The use of 'indigenous' and urban vernaculars in Zimbabwe. *Language in Society* Vol. 36, Issue 1, pp. 25-49.

Malterud, K. 2001. Qualitative research: Standards, challenges, and guidelines. *The Lancet* Vol. 358, Issue 9280, pp. 483-488.

Manley, M 1995. Soil and Blood: Shona traditional Religion in late 20th Century Zimbabwe. Pretoria: UNISA (unpublished MTh dissertation).

Mansini, G., 1988. Quasi-Formal Causality and 'Change in the Other': A Note on Karl Rahner's Christology. *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, Vol. *52*, Issue 2, pp. 293-306.

Manyonganise, M. 2010. From 'safety' zones to public spaces: Women's participation in sport in Zimbabwe, pp. 13-26. In Shebu, J. (Ed.) *Gender, Sport and Development in Africa: Cross-cultural Perspectives on Patterns of Representations and Marginalisation*. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Manyonganise, M. 2016. The Church, national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: A womanist perspective on Churches in Manicaland (CiM). PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Maposa, R.S., Sibanda, F. and Makahamadze, T. November 2011. African Theology and identity: Reflections on Zion Christian Church experiences and responses to the Zimbabwean crisis, 2000–2010. *Missionalia,* Vol. 39, Issue 3, pp. 248 – 267

Mapuranga, TP. 2013. AICs as a gendered space in Harare, Zimbabwe: Revisiting the role and place of women. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* Vol. 39, Issue 2, pp. 303-317.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. 1999. Recording, Managing, and Analyzing Data, 147-165. In C. Marshall and G.B. Rossman (Eds.) *Designing qualitative research*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Marshall, M.N. 1996. Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice* Vol. 13, Issue 6, pp. 522-525.

Marti, G. & Ganiel, G. 2014. *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Masengwe, G. (*forthcoming*). From idealism to realism: the journey of the church at the crossroads towards a common heritage. *ALTERNATION*: *Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of the Arts and Humanities in Southern Africa* Vol. 17, issue 1/2 (2019).

Masengwe, G. 2011. *Land reform and the theology of development: The Zimbabwean fast track land reform (FTLR) program and environmental ethics.* Bramberg: Lambert Academic Publishers, ISBN: 978-3-8443-2418-1

Masengwe, G. and Chimhanda, F.H. 2019. Towards an authentic transformation of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. *HTS Theologie Studies/Theological Studies,* Vol. 75, Issue 1, a4776, pp. 1-11, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i1.4776.

Masengwe, G., Chimhanda, F.H. and Hove, R. 2019. "Women, marginality and the Bible: Sexism in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe", pp. 273-284. BIAS 22: *Bible in Africa Studies.* Bramberg University Press

Masengwe, G., Machingura, F. & Magwidi, E. 2012. An excavation on Church governance: The question of autonomy in the light of the disempowered African Church Converts in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ). *Journal of Research in Peace, Gender and Development* 2(9):185-194.

Maxwell, D. 1998. Delivered from the spirit of poverty?' Pentecostalism, prosperity and modernity in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28(3):350-373.

Maxwell, D. 2006. *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement.* Oxford: James Currey.

Maxwell, JA. 2008. Designing a qualitative study. In Bickman, L. & Rog, DJ. (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. Vol. 2, 214-253. Grand Rapids: Sage publications.

May, H. 1976. *The Enlightenment in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mayer, I. 2015. Qualitative research with a focus on qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Sales, Retailing & Marketing*, Vol. *4*, Issue 9, pp. 53-67.

Mbiti, JS. 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy.* London: Heinemann.

McAlister, LG. & Tucker, WE. 1975. *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).* St. Louis: Chalice Press.

McKnight, S., 2007. Five streams of the emerging church. *Christianity Today*, Vol. *51*, Issue 2, pp.34-39.

McLaren, B.D., 2004. A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional. *Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished CHRISTIAN.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

McLoughlin, W.G. 2013. *Revivals, awakening and reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McQueen, R.A. and Knussen, C. 2013. *Introduction to research methods and statistics in psychology: a practical guide for the undergraduate researcher.* Harlow: Pearson.

McQuilkin, J.R., 1980. Limits of cultural interpretation. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. *23, Issue* 2, pp.113-24.

Merriam, SB. 2009. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Mickelsen, AB. 1979. *Interpreting the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Milbank, J. 1990. *Theology and Social Theory*. London: Blackwell.

Milbank, J., Pickstock, C. and Ward, G. (eds.) 1999. *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*. New York: Routledge

Miles, MB. & Huberman, AM. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Miller, DE. & Yamamori, T. 2007. *Global Pentecostalism: The new face of Christian social engagement.* Hat Creek: University of California Press.

Miller, DE. 1997. *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the new millennium*. California: University of California Press.

Mish, FC. (Ed.) 1993. *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. 10th ed. Springfield: Merriam-Webster.

Moody, KS. 2015. *Radical Theology and Emerging Christianity: Deconstruction, Materialism and Religious Practices*. London & New York: Routledge.

Muhammad, FJ., Muhammad, AK., Aijax, A., Syeda, TF. & Haider, K. 2011. Paradigms and characteristics of a good qualitative research. *World Applied Sciences Journal* 12(11):2082-2087.

Mukanangana, F., Moyo, S., Zvoushe, A. & Rusinga, O. 2014. Gender based violence and its effects on women's reproductive Health: The case of Hatcliffe, Harare, Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Reproductive Health* Vol. 18, Issue 1, pp. 110-122.

Mukonyora, I. 1993. *Rewriting the Bible*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Mukonyora, I. 2008. Foundations for Democracy in Zimbabwean Evangelical Christianity, pp. 131-160. *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press

Murphy, E., Dingwall, R., Greatbatch, D., Parker, S. & Watson, P. 1998. Qualitative Research Methods in Health Technology Assessment: A Review of the Literature. *Health Technology Assessment* Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 1-274.

Murray, I.H. 1994. *Revival and revivalism: The making and marring of American evangelicalism 1750-1858*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.

Muzondidya, J. & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. 2007. 'Echoing silences': Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* Vol. 7, Issue 2, pp. 275-297.

Naidoo, M. 2016. Liberative Black Theology: A case study of race in theological education. *Acta Theologica* Vol. 36, Issue pp. 157-177.

Nancy, JL. 2008. *Dis-enclosure: The deconstruction of Christianity*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Naumes, W. & Naumes, M.J. 2014. *The art and craft of case writing*. London: Routledge.

Nehamas, A., 1987. GLAS-DERRIDA, J. New Republic Inc 1220 12th Str.

Neuman, W.L. 2013. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. New York: Pearson Education.

Niebuhr, HR. 1951. *Christ and culture.* New York: Harper.

Njoku, F. 2005. The Originality of African Philosophy, pp. 98-110. *African Philosophy and the Hermeneutics of Culture: Essays in Honour of Theophilus Okere*, J.O. Oguejiofor and G.I. Onah Eds. P, Munster: Studies in African Philosophy.

Noll, MA. 2005. *The rise of evangelicalism: The age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys.* Vol. 1. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Noll, MA. 2007. The Logic of Evangelicalism and the Challenges of Philanthropy (lecture). Indianapolis: The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Noll, MA. 2009. *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith.* Vol. 14. Downers Grove: IVP.

Noordmans, O. 1934. *Herschepping: Beknopte Dogmatische Handleiding voor Godsdienstige Toespraken en Besprekingen*. Utrecht & Amsterdam: J van Boekhoven.

Nutt, Z. 2018. *The Birth of Chidamoyo Hospital: The Culmination of Commitments.* Karoi: Chidamoyo Hospital

Nyamiti, C. 1973. *The Scope of Africa Theology*. Kampala: Gaba Publications.

Oborji, F.A. 2008 "The Mission ad gentes of the African Churches." In *Omnis Terra* Vol. 336, Issue 37, pp. 155-164

Oborji, FA. 2001. Towards African Model and New Language of Mission. *African Ecclesiastical Review* Vol. 43, Issue 3 pp. 109-133.

Oborji, FA. 2006. *Concepts of Mission: The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology*. Maryknoll: Orbis books.

Oborji, FA. 2008. The Mission *ad gentes* of the African Churches. *Omnis Terra Vol.* 336*, Issue* 37, pp. 155-164.

Oborji, FA. 2012. Catholic Mission and Evangelization of Africa. Viewed on 11 November 2018, from http://www.foborji.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/OBORJI-Catholic-Mission-in-Africa-January-2012.pdf

Oguejiofor, J.O. 2009. ―Negritude as Hermeneutics: A Reinterpretation of Léopold Sédar Senghor's Philosophy. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 83, Iss. No. 1, pp. 79-94

Öhman, A. 2005. Qualitative methodology for rehabilitation research. *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine* Vol. 37, pp. 273-280.

Okere, T. [African Philosophy: A Historico-Hermeneutical Investigation of the Conditions of its Possibility]. 1983. University Press of America: Lanham. Paperback.

Okere, T. 2004. Philosophy and Intercultural Dialogue. Retrieved from http://www.urbaniana.edu/news2004/12_03_04.htm on 11/10/2010.

Okolo, O. 1991. Tradition and Destiny: Horizons of an African Philosophical Hermeneutics, 201-210. In Serequeberhan, T. (Ed.) *The hermeneutics of African Philosophy: Horizon and Discourse*. New York: Routledge.

Oladipo, CE. 2006. *The will to rise: Theological and African themes in African Christianity and the renewal of faith and identity.* New York: Peter Lang.

Olbricht, T.H. 2004. Churches of Christ. *Restoration Quarterly*, Vol. 37, Issue No. 1, pp. 1-39

Olbricht, TH. 1968. The Rationalism of the Restoration. *Restoration Quarterly* Vol. 11, pp. 77-88.

Olbricht, TH. 1995. Hermeneutics in the Churches of Christ. *Restoration Quarterly* Vol. 37, Issue 1, pp. 1-26.

O'leary, Z., 2004. *The essential guide to doing research*. Sage.

Oliphant, J.O. 1938. The American Missionary Spirit, 1828–1835. *Church History*, Vol. *7*, Iss. No. 2, pp.125-137.

Oluwole, SB. 1997a. Culture, gender, and development theories in Africa. *Africa Development/Afrique et Développement* Vol. 22, Issue 1, pp. 95-121.

Oluwole, SB. 1997b. Culture, Nationalism and Philosophy, 32-42. In Kimmerle, H. & Wimmer, FM. (Eds.) *Philosophy and Democracy in Intercultural Perspective*. Amsterdam: Studies in Intercultural Philosophy.

Oluwole, SB. 1998. African philosophy as illustrated in Ifá corpus. *African Philosophy* Vol. 11, Issue 2, pp. 151-159.

Oluwole, SB. 1999a. *Philosophy and Oral Tradition*. Lagos: Ark Publications.

Oluwole, SB. 1999b. *The Africanness of a Philosophy*. Lagos: Ark Publications.

Oluwole, SB. 2001. The Search for African Cultural Identity. In Oluwole, SB. (Ed.) *Authenticity in African Thought*. Ikeja: Ark Publications.

Oluwole, SB. 2016. *Socrates and Orunmila: Two Patrons of Classical Philosophy*. Ikeja: Ark Publications.

Oppong, SH. 2013. The problem of sampling in qualitative research. *Asian Journal of Management Sciences and Education Vol.* 2, Issue 2, pp. 202-210.

Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L. & Wynaden, D. 2001. Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* Vol. 33, Issue 1, pp. 93-96.

Osborne, GR. 1991. *The hermeneutical spiral: A comprehensive introduction to biblical interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Otto, C., Strauss, S. & Tennent, T. 2010. *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Owolabi, K.A., 2001. The Quest for Method in African Philosophy: A Defense of The Hermeneutic–Narrative Approach, pp. 147-163. In *The Philosophical Forum* (Vol. 32, No. 2). Boston, USA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Inc

Palmer, R.E. 1969. *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Patterson, E., 2015. First Steps toward a Pentecostal Political Theology, pp. 211-226. In *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Latin America and Latino Communities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Patton, M.Q. 1980. *Qualitative evaluation methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Patton, M.Q. 2002. Designing qualitative studies. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* Vol. 3, pp. 230-246.

Patton, M.Q., 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods.* Thousand Oaks. Cal.: Sage Publications.

Perri 6, Bellamy, C. 2012. *Principles of Methodology: Research design in social science*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Petter, J.F.R. 2009. *The Role of the Restoration Hermeneutic in the Fractures of the Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century* (Dissertation for a Master of Theology Degree). McMMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

Phiri, I.A., 2008. President Frederick Chiluba and Zambia: Evangelicals and Democracy in a 'Christian Nation', pp. 95-130. *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press

Phiri, IA. 2003. President Frederick JT Chiluba of Zambia: The Christian nation and democracy. *Journal of Religion in Africa Vol.* 33, Issue 4, pp. 401-428.

Pickstock, C. 1998. *After Writing: The Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Pobee, JS. 1979. *Toward an African theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Pobee, JS. 1992. *Skenosis: Christian Faith in an African Context*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Pontet, M. 1945. *L'exégèse de S. Augustin, Prédicateur*. Open Library Book. Aubier. URL: https://openlibrary.org/publishers/Aubier

Pope Benedict XVI. 2011a. *Africae Munus: 2$^{nd}$ African Synod.* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Pope Benedict XVI. 2011b. *Post-synodal Exhortation, Africae Munus*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Pope Francis. 2018. *Gaudete et Lactate Exultate*. Viewed on 11 November 2018, from https://opusdei.org/en/article/apostolic-exhortation-gaudete-et-exsultate/

Pope John Paul II. 1995. *Ecclesia in Africa. Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana;* *www.vatican.va/archive*.

Pope John Paul II. 1995. *Ecclesia in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic exhortation on the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Viewed on 6 December 2018, from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paulii/es/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-inafricahtml

Pope John Paul II. 25 March 1995. *Evangelium Vitae - Gospel of life. Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. *www.vatican.va/archive*.

Pope John XXIII. 1961. Pope speaks of unity and the Council. *The Criterion*. Archdiocese of Indianapolis. 7 July 1961. https://www.archindy.org/criterion/files/1961/pdfs/19610707.pdf

Pope John XXIII. 1963. *Pacem in Terris – Peace on Earth*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

Pope Paul VI. 1975. *Evangelii Nuntiandi: Apostolic Exhortation of his Holiness Pope Paul VI to the Episcopate, to the Clergy and to all the faithful of the entire world.* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Pope Paul VI. 1975. *Evangelisation of the modern world: Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi.* London: Truth Society.

Posselt, FW. 1935. *Fact and fiction: A short account of the natives of Southern Rhodesia*. Salisbury: University of Rhodesia.

Potter, GR. 1984. *Zwingli.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Punch, KF. 2013. *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage.

Punt, J. 1999. Reading the Bible in Africa: Accounting for some trends. *Scriptura* Vol. 71, pp. 313-329.

Punt, J. 2003. Postcolonial biblical criticism in South Africa: Some mind and road mapping. *Neotestamentica* Vol. 37, Issue 1, pp. 59-85.

Punt, J. 2005. Queer theory, Postcolonial theory, and biblical interpretation: A preliminary exploration of some intersections. Paper read at the International meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Singapore.

Punt, J. 2006. Using the Bible in post-apartheid South Africa: Its influence and impact amidst the gay debate. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 62(3):885-907.

Punt, J., 2004. Current Debates On Biblical Hermeneutics in South Africa and the Postcolonial Matrix1. *Religion and Theology*, Vol. *11*, Issue 2, pp.139-160.

Punt, J., 2006. Why not postcolonial biblical criticism in (South) Africa: stating the obvious or looking for the impossible?. *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa*, Vol. *91*, Issue 1, pp. 63-82.

Quinlan, C., Babin, B.J., Carr, J.C., Griffin, M. and Zikmund, W.G. 2015. *Business research methods*, First edition, Hampshire, UK: South-Western, Cengage Learning.

Rahner, K. 1966. *Theological Investigations. Vol. V, Later Writings*. Baltimore: Helicon.

Rahner, K. 1978. *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity.* New York: Seabury Press.

Rahner, K. 1988. An interview with Karl Rahner on the State of Catholic Theology Today. Inner Explorations, Part II, Theology and Morality, Chapter 6. Viewed on 6 November 2018, from http://www.innerexplorations.com/chtheomortext/kr.htm

Ramos, FL. 2012. *Identity, Ritual, and Power in Colonial Puebla.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Ramsay, N.J., 2005. Teaching effectively in racially and culturally diverse classrooms. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, Vol. *8*, Issue 1, pp.18-23.

Randall I. 2010. Recovering Evangelical Spirituality. *European Journal of Theology* Vol. 19, Issue 1, pp. 33-44.

Randall, M.W. 1983. *The Great Awakenings and the Restoration Movement: A Study of the 1790-1860 History of the Awakenings and Their Impact Upon the Formation and Early*

*Development and Growth of the Christian Churches-churches of Christ*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company.

Ranger, R. 2016. Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa. *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* Vol. 19, Issue 4, pp. 265-267. URL: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/026537880201900407

Ranger, T.O. 1967. *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7: A study in African Resistance*. London: Heinemann.

Ranger, T.O. 1968. The nineteenth century in Southern Rhodesia, pp. 112-153. In Ranger, TO. (Ed.) *Aspects of Central African History*. London: Heinemann.

Ranger, T.O. 2002. Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa. *Transformation* Vol. 19, Issue 4, pp. 265-267.

Ranger, T.O. 2003. Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa: A Continental Comparison. *Journal of Religion in Africa* Vol. 33. Issue 1, pp. 112-117.

Ranger, TO. I983. Tradition and travesty: Chiefs and the administration in the Makoni District, Zimbabwe I960-1980. In Peel, JD. & Ranger, TO. (Eds.) *Past and Present in Zimbabwe*, 20-41. Manchester: Manchester University Press,

Ratsara, P., 2014. *Towards a Seventh-Day Adventist theology of ordination an analysis of general conference decision on women's ordination (1881-present)*.PhD in Systematic Theology, UNISA, Pretoria

Reese, R. & Walker, W. 2001. *A Survey of Work in Southern Africa 100 years of African Missions: Essays in Honour of Wendell Broom.* Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press.

Rhodes, R. 2005. *The Complete Guide to Christian Denomination.* New York: Harvest House Publishers.

Ricoeur, P. 1970. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. Trans. by Savage, D. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1981. *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and InterpretationI.* Ed. & Trans. by Thompson, JB. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 2008. *From Text to Action*. London: Continuum.

Ricoeur, P., 1981. *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action and interpretation*. Cambridge university press.

Risk, JL. 2013. Building a new life: A chaplain's theory based case study of chronic illness. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy* Vol. 19, Issue 3, pp. 81-98.

Riss, R., 1982. The Latter Rain Movement of 1948. *Pneuma*, 4(1), pp.32-45.

Riss, R.M., 1987. *Latter Rain: The Latter Rain Movement of 1948 and the mid-twentieth century evangelical awakening*. Grand Rapids, MI: Honeycomb Visual Productions.

Riss, R.M., 2002. *Latter Rain Movement. The New International Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

Robertson, D.S. 1990. The information revolution. Communication research, 17(2), pp.235-254.

Rogers, M. 2012. Contextualizing theories and practices of bricolage research. *The Qualitative Report* 17(7):1-17.

Rollins, P. 2006. *How (not) to speak of God*. Brewster: Paraclete Press.

Rollins, P. 2011a. The worldly theology of emerging Christianity. In Corcoran, K. (Ed.) *Church in the Present Tense: A Candid Look at What's Emerging*, 23-36. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press.

Rollins, P. 2011b. *Insurrection: To believe is human to doubt, divine*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Rollins, P. 2013. *The idolatry of God: Breaking our addiction to certainty and satisfaction*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Rollins, P. 2015a. *The divine magician: The disappearance of religion and the discovery of faith*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Rollins, P. 2015b. *The Magician: The disappearance of Religion and the Discovery of Faith*. New York: Howard Books.

Rothuizen, G.T., 1962. *Primus usus legis: studie over het burgerlijk gebruik van de wet* (Doctoral dissertation, Kok).

Rubin, A. and Babbie, E.R. 2016. *Empowerment series: Research methods for social work*. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Ruether, R.R. 1983. *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a feminist theology. Boston, MA*: Beacon Press

Russell, LM. .2004 Cultural hermeneutics: a postcolonial look at mission. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion. Vol.* 20, Iss. No. 1, pp. 23-40.

Safrai, S. and Stern, M. 1974. The Jewish Diaspora (pp. 117-183). In *The Jewish People in the First Century, Volume 1*. New York: Brill.

Samuel, V. & Sugden, C. (eds.) 1999. *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*. Irvine, CA: Regnum.

Samuel, V. 1999. Mission as transformation, pp, 227-235. In V. Samuel & C. Sugden (eds.), *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*. Irvine, CA: Regnum.

Sanneh, L. 2008. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. 2$^{nd}$ ed. American Society of Missiology Series, no. 42. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Sanneh, L. 2015. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. Revised and Expanded. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2016. *Research methods for business students*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Savage, M.J. 1950. *'Achievement': Fifty years of missionary witness in Southern Rhodesia.* Haddon of Glen Leith, Dunedin: An ecumenical Pilgrimage

Savage, M.J. 1980. *Forward into freedom: Continuing the story of missionary endeavor in Zimbabwe and Vanuatu*. Perth, Western Australia: Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand (ACCNZ) Publications

Schaff, P. (Ed.), 1885. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3: *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Schmitt, N. & Klimoski, RJ. 1991. *Research Methods in Human Resources Management*. Cincinnati: South-Western Pub.

Schreiner, S.E. November 1, **1989**, Educating the Congregation. *The Christian Century*, pp. 985-987.

Schüssler Fiorenza, E. 1982. The Church's Religious Identity and Its Social and Political Mission. *Theological Studies* Vol. 43, Issue 2, pp. 197-225.

Schwandt, TA. 1994. Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* Vol. 1, pp. 118-137.

Schwandt, TA. 1997. Evaluation as practical hermeneutics. *Evaluation* Vol. 3, Issue 1, pp. 69-83.

Schwandt, TA. 2003. Back to the rough ground!: Beyond theory to practice in evaluation. *Evaluation* Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp. 353-364.

Scott, BGM. 2014. *Apostles Today – Making Sense of Contemporary Charismatic Apostolates: A Historical and Theological Appraisal*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press.

Scott, W. 1836. *The Gospel Restored.* Cincinnati: Ormsby H. Donogh.

Sengers, E. 2012. The Concept of 'Church' in Sociology and Global Society: Genealogy of a word and transformation of a position. *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* Vol. 121, Issue 1, pp. 55-70.

Serequeberhan, T. 1994. The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy: Horizon and Discourse. New York: New Routledge

Shaw, M. 1996. *The kingdom of God in Africa: A short history of African Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Shelly, R. 1984. *I Just Want to Be a Christian, 20th Century Christian.* Nashville, TN: 20th Century Christian.

Sibanda, F. and Masaka, D. 2010. Marriage of convenience: Theological and philosophical reflections on Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity (GNU). *Unpublished study material*.

Sibanda, T. 2016. An Investigation into the Significance of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe's National Administrative Operational Structure (NAOS) from 2015-2018. Diploma in Church Administration and Management (DSCAM), Ecumenical Resources Training Centre (ERTC), Harare, ZCC Headquarters, Kentucky Hotel.

Sink, M. 2004. Restoring Our Ancient Constitutional Faith. *U. Colo. L. Rev.*, Vol. *75*, p. 921-961

Spierling, K.E., 2017. *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536–1564*. London: Routledge.

Sproul, RC. 2014. *Can I Trust the Bible?* Viewed on 10 September 2018, from https://www.christianbook.com/

St. Augustine, *Confessiones* 12.11.11, 12.15.18

Stake, R.E., Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., 1994. *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, RE 1994. Case studies, pp. 236-247. In NK Denzin & YS Lincoln (Eds.*), Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stamoolis, J.J. 2001. *Eastern Orthodox mission theology today* (Vol. 10). Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Steedman, P. 2000. On the relations between seeing, interpreting and knowing, 53-62. In Steier, F. (Ed.) *Research and Reflexivity*. London: Sage.

Steinmetz, D.C., 1980. The superiority of pre-critical exegesis. *Theology Today*, Vol. *37*, Issue 1, pp. 27-38.Steinmetz, DC. 1980. The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis. *Theology Today* 36(issue):27-38.

Stephens, W.P. 1986. *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sugirtharajah, R.S. 1999. Thinking about vernacular hermeneutics sitting in a metropolitan study, pp. 92-115. *Vernacular hermeneutics*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press

Sullivan, A.T., 1988. *Palestinian universities under occupation*(Vol. 11, No. 2). American University in Cairo Press.

Sutterlüty, F., 2016. The Role of Religious Ideas: Christian Interpretations of Social Inequalities. *Critical Sociology*, Vol. *42*, Issue 1, pp. 33-48. Sutterluty, F. 2016. The Role of Religious Ideas: Christian Interpretations of Social Inequalities. *Critical Sociology* number(issue):pages.

Sweet, L. 2009. *So beautiful: Divine design for life and the church*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

Swinton, J. & Mowat, H. 2006. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. London: SCM Press.

Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa. 1994. *Message*. In *L'Osservatore Romano* (Special English edition, 11 May 1994). Roma:  Place: Publisher.

Tate, W.R. 2012. *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: An Essential Guide to Methods, Terms, and Concepts.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Tawney, R.H. 1972. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Tawney, R.H. and Winter, J.M. 1979. *The American Labour Movement, and Other Essays: The American Labour Movement and Other Essays*. Branch Line.

Taylor, M.C. 1987. *Erring: A postmodern a/theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tembo, B.R. 2017. *An analysis of the role of Christian women's groups in advocating for gender sensitivity with special reference to women in the Bulawayo Churches of Christ.* Harare: Zimbabwe Christian College.

Ter Hofstede, A.H. and Verhoef, T.F., 1997. On the feasibility of situational method engineering. *Information Systems*, Vol. *22*, Issue 6-7, pp. 401-422.

Terre Blanche, M.J. & Durrheim, K. 1999. *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

The Holy See. 1995. *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* New York: Doubleday.

Thorpe, C. and Jacobson, B., 2013. Life politics, nature and the state: Giddens' Sociological Theory and the Politics of Climate Change. *The British journal of sociology*, Vol. 64, Iss. No. 1, pp. 99-122.

Tiessen, T.L., 1993. *Irenaeus on the Salvation of the Unevangelized.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.

Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R. & Vetter, E. 2000. *Methods of text and discourse analysis: In search of meaning*. Lancaster: Sage.

Todd, J.G. 2007. *Through the darkness: A life in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Zebra.

Togarasei, L. 2016. Rethinking Christian Identity: African Reflections from Pauline Writings. *Perichoresis*, Vol. *14*, Issue 1, pp.101-114.

Tolstoy, L.N. 1869. *War and Peace.* Trans. by L. Maude, & A. Maude, New York: eBook Path.

Tolstoy, L.N. 1894. '*The Kingdom of God is within you*': *Christianity not as a mystic religion but as a new theory of life.* Trans. by Garnett, C. New York: Golden Grey eBooks.

Tomko, J. 1994. The situation of the Church in Africa and Madagascar – Some aspects and observations, 17-21. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 April 1994, 17-21. Viewed on 16 November 2018, from http://www.osservatoreromano.va/en

Tomlinson, D. 2008. *Re-Enchanting Christianity: Faith in an emerging culture*. Norwich: Canterbury Press/Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.

Tong, A., Sainsbury, P. & Craig, J. 2007. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research: A 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* Vol. 19, Issue 6, pp. 349-357.

Tongco, M.D.C. 2007. Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* Vol. 5, pp. 147-158.

Tonon, L.M.M. 2018. Sisyphus and the Time Trainer, 121-134. In Rubio, K. (Org.) *Sport and Myth*, 121-134. Sao Paolo: Laços.

Tracy, S.J. 2010. Qualitative quality: Eight 'big-tent' criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry* Vol. 16(issue):, pp. 837-851.

Tsakiris, A. n.d. Spencer Burke's Controversial, Long-Term View of Christianity, Skeptiki. Viewed on 25 November 2018, from https://skeptiko.com/spencer-burke-s-long-term-view-of-christianity/

Tucker, W.E. & McAllister, L.G. 1975. *Journey in Faith.* St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication.

Underwood, T., 1986. analysis of competition by field experiments. *Community ecology: pattern and process/edited by Jiro Kikkawa, Derek J. Anderson*.http://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=US201302063346

Uzukwu E.E. 1997. *Worship as Body Language – Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation.* Minnesota: The Liturgical Press Pueblo Book.

Uzukwu, E.E. 1997. *Worship as Body Language – Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press Pueblo Book.

Van der Merwe, R. 2016. Broken wholeness: A critical analysis of Henri JM Nouwen's spirituality of vulnerability and its possible value for the current discourse on health and wholeness. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* Vol. 2, Issue (2, ):pp. 589-606.

Van Maanen, J. 1998. *Qualitative studies of organizations* (Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Van Niekerk, E. 2006. The Church as golden calf in history and the meandering processes of the commonwealth of God. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae Vol.* 32, Iss. No. 3, pp. 315-405.

Van Ruler, A.A. 1952. *Bijzonder en Algemeen Ambt*. Nijkerk: GF Callenbach.

Van Van Niekerk, E. 2006. *The church as golden calf in history and the meandering processes of the commonwealth of God,* pp. 1-64. Department of Systematic Theology and Theological Ethics, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa. http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/4429/Van%20Niekerk.pdf?sequence=1

Van Wyk, M.M., Taole, M.J. & Nkonyane, V.A. 2015. Using a Community Engagement Project to Prepare Economics Education Students for Culturally Diverse Learning Environments. *International Journal of Educational Sciences* Vol. 9, Iss. No. 3, pp. 395-406.

Vanhoozer, K.J. (Ed.) 2003. *The Cambridge companion to postmodern theology*. Cambridge Place: Cambridge University Press.

Vatican, II. 1965. *Ad Gentes: Decree on the mission activity of the Church [AG]*. Roma: Vatican. Reviewed 12 February 2016.

Verkamp. B.J. 1973. The Zwinglians and Adiaphorism. *Church History* Vol. 12, Iss. No. 4, pp. 486-504.

Verstraelen, F.J. 1999. From Tambaram to Harare with Rev. Thompson Samkange. *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, Vol. 27, Iss. No. 1, pp.3-9.

Vessey, D. 2009. Gadamer and the Fusion of Horizons. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* Vol. 17, Iss. No. 4, pp. 531-542.

Vessey, D., 2000. Gadamer and the body across dialogical contexts. *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 44 (Supplement), pp.70-76.

Villa-Vicencio, C. 1992. *A theology of reconstruction: Nation-building and human rights* (Vol. 1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Von Harnack, A. 1908. *The mission and expansion of Christianity in the first three centuries* (Vol. 1). London: Williams and Norgate.

Wahlen, C., 2013. *Intrinsic religiosity, spirituality, life-satisfaction and worries, what is the relationship between them?*. BA (Hons) in Psychology. Dublin Business School

Walhout, D. 1986. The nature and function of art. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. *26, Iss. No.* 1, pp. 16-25.

Walls, A.F. 2015. *Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith.* New York: Orbis Books.

Wanamaker, C.A. 1997. Jesus the Ancestor: Reading the story of Jesus from African Christian context. *Scriptura* Vol. 63, Iss. No. 3, pp. 281-298.

Watson, R. 2007. *Cogito, ergo sum: The life of Rene Descartes*. Boston: David R. Godine Publisher

Webb, H.E. 2003. *In search of Christian unity: A history of the Restoration Movement*. Rev ed. Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press.

Weber, M. 2013. The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. New York: Routledge.

Wells, D. 1994. *God in the Wasteland*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Wenger, N.S., Korenman, S.G., Berk, R. and Liu, H., 1999. Reporting unethical research behavior. *Evaluation Review*, Vol. 23, Iss. No. 5, pp. 553-570.

Wertz, F.J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L.M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R. and McSpadden, E. 2011. *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory,*

*Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry.* New York/London: The Guillford Press

West, E. 1963. *The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Vol. 2). New York: Religious Book Service

West, G.O. 1999. *The academy of the poor: Towards a dialogical reading of the Bible* (Vol. 2). New York: Burns & Oates.

West, RF. 1948. *Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wiegel, G. 1998. John Paul II and the Priority of Culture. *First Things* Vol. 79(issue):, pp. 24-25.

Williams, R.R. 2012. *Tragedy, recognition, and the death of God: studies in Hegel and Nietzsche*. Oxford: OUP

Williams, T. 2006. Biblical Interpretation. *Cambridge Companion to Augustine.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Willmer, H. 2016. Mission as Transformation: A theology of the whole gospel. *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* Vol. 18, Issue 3, pp. 194-196.

Willmer, H., 2001. Mission as Transformation: A theology of the whole gospel. *Transformation*, Vol. *18*, Issue 3, pp. 194-196.

Wilson, D.S. 2007. Evolutionary social constructivism. In Gottschall, J. & Wilson, DS. (Eds.) *The Literary Animal: evolution and the nature of narrative*, 20-37. New York: Northwestern University Press.

Wolcott, H.F. 1994. *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wong Cheong Sau, N. 2001. Karl Rahner's concept of the 'Anonymous Christian'. An inclusivist view of religions. Viewed on 10 December 2018, from http://www.ttc.edu.sg/csca/CS/2001-Apr/Norman%20Wong.pdf

World Population Review. 2019. Zimbabwe Population 2019, viewed on 25 February 2019, from http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/zimbabwe-population/

Wright, N.T. 2005. *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture*. New York: Harper Collins

Yaconelli, M. 2003. *Stories of Emergence: Moving from Absolute to Authentic. El Cajon, CA: emergent/YS*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan

Yin, R, K. 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. 2013a. Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation* Vol. 19, Iss. No. 3, pp. 321-332.

Yin, R.K. 2013b. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Grand Rapids: Sage.

Zhao, Q., Kumar, A. and Xu, J., 2005, October. Joint data streaming and sampling techniques for detection of super sources and destinations. In *Proceedings of the 5th ACM SIGCOMM conference on Internet Measurement* (pp. 7-7). USENIX Association.

Zimbabwe. 2016. International Religious Freedom Report, 2016. Viewed on 25 February 2019, from https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268956.pdf

Žižek, S., 2012. *Less than nothing: Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism*. London: Verso Books

Žižek, S., 2014. *Absolute recoil: Towards a new foundation of dialectical materialism*. London: Verso Trade

Zvarevashe, I.M. 1970. Shona religion. In Kileff, C. & Kileff, P. (Eds.) *Shona Customs: Essays by African Writers*, 44-47. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Zvarevashe, I.M. 1987. The problem of ancestors and inculturation. *African Ecclesial Review* Vol. 29, Iss. No. 4, pp. 242-251.

Zvarevashe, I.M. 2005. *Authentic inculturation and reconciliation: A Catholic perspective*. Lusaka: Mission Press.

Zvobgo, C.J. 1996. *A history of Christian missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*. Mambo Press

**Interviewees**

Admire Rukodzi Pastor. Glendale Church of Christ, Harare. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Alec Sandu. Pastor. Binga Churches of Christ, Victoria Falls. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Anthony Bandera. National Pastors' Fellowship President, Gweru. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 14 August 2018 [InV1].

Ben Gono. Elder, Mabutweni Church of Christ, Bulawayo. Interview. House, Northend, Bulawayo. 17 August 2018 [InV2].

Brian Banzi. Pastor. Southlea Park, Harare. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Chipo Katsande. National Pastors' Fellowship Treasurer, Harare. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 17 August 2018 [InV3].

Christopher Makuvaza. Elder, Chairperson of the National Men's Fellowship, Inner City Church of Christ, Harare. Interview. Workplace, Harare. 23 May 2018 [InV4].

Christopher Mudenda. Elder. Binga Churches of Christ, Victoria Falls. Report send via Whatsapp SMS. 28 August 2018.

Clifford Chateya. Pastor. Masvingo Churches of Christ, Masvingo. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Davison Garauzive. Elder, Warren Park Church of Christ, Harare. Completed questionnaire. Harare. 24th May 2018 [InV5]

Doward Jecha. Elder, Njube Church of Christ, Bulawayo. Interview. ZOU Library, Bulawayo. 14 June 2018 [InV6].

Eddie Makarudze. Former Chairperson, National Men's Fellowship, Harare Christian Church, Harare. Completed questionnaire. Harare. 5 June 2018 [InV7].

Edwin Magwidi. National Conference President, Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. Interview. Gweru. 16 August 2018 [InV8].

Emias Mashindi. Pastor, Warren Park Church of Christ, Harare. Completed questionnaire. Harare. 27 May 2018 [InV9].

Enock Jirrie. Senior Pastor, Waterland Church of Christ, Harare. Interview. House, Waterland, Harare. 26 May 2018, [InV10]

Evan Mabani. Pastor, Former National Youth President, Domboshava Church of Christ. Interview. Windsor Park Church of Christ, Gweru. 3 February 2018 [InV11].

F.N. Sibane. Somabhula Church Elder, Gweru. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 18 August 2018 [InV12].

Famalous Zhou. Pastor. Matabeleland Rural, Bulawayo. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Lizwe Nyoni. Pastor, City Church of Christ, Zvishavane. Interview. Windsor Park Church of Christ, Gweru. 3 February 2018 [InV13].

Loice Mudhosi. Ladies' Fellowship Chairlady, Waterfalls Church, Harare. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 18 August 2018 [InV14].

Lovemore Gunguvo. National Conference Secretary, Chiredzi. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 17 August 2018 [InV15].

Rev, Mabika. Pastor. Mashoko Churches of Christ, Masvingo. Message – Self-reliance and self sustenance in African churches. Men's Conference. Masvingo. 8 October 2010

Maxwell Dube. Elder, Sunningdale-Mbare Church of Christ, Harare. Interview. Workplace, Harare. 18 June 2018 [InV16].

Maxwell Mukotami. Elder, Retired Headmaster and Church Schools Councillor, Chiredzi. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 18 August 2018 [InV17].

Memory Longoni. Former National Youth Secretary, Gweru. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 18 August 2018.

Misheck Svodziwa. Pastor. Bindura Church of Christ, Bindura. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Never Mzila Sithole. Pastor, Guinea Fowl Church of Christ, Gweru. Interview. Somabhula conference centre, Gweru. 19 August 2016 [InV19].

Nicholas Kakava. Pastor, National Pastors' Fraternity Vice Secretary, Chinhoyi. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 17 August 2018 [InV20].

Nicholas Kakava. Pastor. Mashonaland West Churches of Christ, Chinhoyi. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Noel Chishamhu. Elder. Binga Churches of Christ, Victoria Falls. Report send via Whatsapp SMS. 28 August 2018.

Obert Ganyata. Deacon, Mkoba B. Church of Christ, Gweru. Interview. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 18 August 2018 [InV21].

Peter Nyoni. Pastor, Pumula Church of Christ, Bulawayo. Interview. Personal Offices, Bulawayo. 17 August 2018 [InV22].

Promise Nyati. Pastor. Pumula Church of Christ, Bulawayo. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Rosemary Mutamiri. National Secretary, Women's conference, Harare Christian Church, Harare. Completed questionnaire. Harare. 28 May 2018 [InV23].

Shelton Mafohla 2018. Pastor. Gweru Churches of Christ, Gweru. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Vengai Shumba. Elder, Windsor Park Church of Christ, Gweru. Personal Reflections. Home., Gweru. 22 February 2018

Sydney Kapita. Elder, Warren Park Church of Christ, Harare. Interview. Workplace, Harare. 5 June 2018 [InV24].

T. Hlambelo. Pastor. Matabeleland Rural, Bulawayo. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Themba Madzore. Pastor. Zvishavane Churches of Christ, Zvishavane. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Tivaringire Dangiri-Nhenga. Manicaland Churches of Christ, Mutare. Report. Somabhula Conference Centre, Gweru. 16 August 2018.

Zebedee Togarepi. Superintendent, One Mile Trust and former President of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. Summit Reflections Speech, Zimbabwe Christia College, Harare. Chiredzi, February 2010.

**Permission Letter**

# CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE
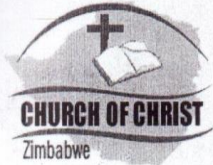
CHURCH OF CHRIST
Zimbabwe

Somabula Conference Centre, Gweru          P.O.Box 7484, Harare

06 October 2016

RE: PERMISSION TO STUDY ON THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE

We refer to the above matter and wish to grant you permission to carry out your research in the Church of Christ in Zmbabwe (COCZ). Your research is on Ritual, Identity and Power, and mainly focuses on church leaders' views. We give you permission to interview relevant church leaders in the COCZ.

We hope your findings will entich our church transformation processes in the postmillennial and postmodernist Zimabwean society.

Yours faithfully

Pastor Edwin Magwidi
Church of Christ Conference President

CONFERENCE PRESIDENT
CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE

0 6 OCT 2016

P.O. BOX 7484
HARARE

*************************************************************************************
*To build and manifest a ministry that is modeled on Christ's mission*
Contacts:          0773636918,                    0712758222,                    0775141098

# Appendix: Research Instruments

**Appendix I: Participant's Information and Informed Consent Sheet**

**Principal investigator**: Rev Gift Masengwe
**Student number**: 58527494
**Phone number**: 0773221677, Zimbabwe

Dear Participant,
I am a PhD student at the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology in the School of Humanities at the University of South Africa (UNISA). You are invited to voluntarily participate in the research study entitled: *The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ): Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in diversity).* Transformation theology is a form of contextual theology that is being developed from the postmodernist thinking, and an acceptance and acknowledgement of the essentiality of African theology which reacted to Western theology, and was seen as a reactionary theology to classical theology.

This letter informs you to be able to decide if you **want to/not to** take part in this study. Read below before you decide:

**What You Should Know about this Research**
We give you this consent form so that you may read about the purpose, risks and benefits of the research study.
1. This study seeks to assess the role and place of the Holy Spirit in the current COCZ transformation, which has seen the Church acquiring land for the construction of the conference centre, building a Church constitution and having an increased number of pastors with degrees.
2. We cannot promise that the research study will directly benefit you in any manner; however, information gathered will be used in formulating future Church policies.
3. Your decision to or not to participate in this study will not affect your participation in any programmes that may result from the recommendations of the study.
4. Please read this consent form carefully and ask any questions before you make a decision to participate.
5. This research has minimal risks and your choice to participate is voluntary.

**Purpose of the Study**
The main purpose of this study is to lead the researcher to complete his PhD studies. It also contextualizes the developments/transformation of the COCZ and aims to make suggestions on how Church transformations can be done with minimal tension. This helps to ensure that future Church development programmes are effectively done, using proper theories of change/guidelines.

**Procedure of Duration**
Key informant interviews with COCZ policy makers at national and provincial levels will be done with the mainstream and fellowship groups of the Church. The study is being carried out in three of Zimbabwe's ten provinces, representing Gweru-Kwekwe, Harare and Chiredzi, ordinarily

where the Church has a huge following.

The duration of the course of study is three years, while data collection is conducted over a period of six months. You are asked to participate in an interview where questions relating to your perceptions about the implementation of Church policies are influenced by the 'indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit' among members of the COCZ, and the implications this has for the future of the COCZ. If you agree, the interview will be recorded on tape. This will help us in writing the interview transcripts and selecting the key issues of what you would have said during the interview. In addition, I will take notes on paper. The duration of the interview will be approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

**Risks and Discomforts**
There is no major anticipated risk for participating in this study; however, we will take up some of your valuable time during the interviews.

**Benefits and Compensation**
You will not directly benefit from participating in this study. This study will contribute to the theological and religious knowledge that may be used by Church policy makers in improving the COCZ's processes of transformation. The information will further develop a base for the Church to revise its policies and practices on the subject of worship, integrity and progress in the Church.

**Confidentiality**
Information obtained from you will be stored in confidential places and only accessed by authorized research team members. This information includes recordings, written notes and completed questionnaires, among others. No addresses or names will be recorded on the forms, but only numbers will be used. All written materials and reports resulting from the study will be anonymised.

**Conflict of Interest**
There are no other intended gains other than normal scholarly gains for the researcher and participants alike in this study.

**Voluntary Participation**
Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to decline the interview at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study, your decision will not affect your future relations with the COCZ institutions, UNISA, the COCZ and their personnel and individuals in the research team. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at any given time without any penalty.

**Whom to Contact**
For any questions you may have regarding this study, you are advised to contact the principal investigator, Gift Masengwe on +263773221677/+263717581260; email: 58527494@mylife.unisa.ac.za or masengweg@gmail.com. If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form, beyond those answered by the investigators, including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant or research-related injuries, or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than a member of the

research team, please feel free to contact my supervisor on [woodjm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:woodjm@unisa.ac.za)

**Offer to Answer Questions**
Before you agree to participate in this study, ask any questions on any part of the study that is unclear to you.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**
The researcher will interview a leader in the COCZ who is above 18 years of age. In case there are leaders in the youth fellowship and Sunday school below the age of majority, a parental consent form will be created as well as a child assent form.

**Authorisation**
You are making a decision whether to participate or not in this study. Ensure that the interviewer has ticked in the appropriate box on this form to indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had all your questions answered and have decided to participate.

**Inquiries**
If you have questions about the study, do not hesitate to contact any of the listed bodies that authorized or approved the study: The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, President Rev Edwin Magwidi, [pastormagwidi@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pastormagwidi@yahoo.co.uk); cell: 0773636918; and the Secretary, Mr. Lovemore Gunguvo, 0775141098; [lgunguo@gmail.com](mailto:lgunguo@gmail.com), or the study supervisor, Prof Hannelie Wood,

woodjm@unisa.ac.za

I sincerely appreciate your time and cooperation to this study.

Gift Masengwe (Researcher)

---

**Participant's Statement and Signature Sheet**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I have read and understood the information sheet for this study | Yes | No |
| I know who to contact if I have questions on my participant rights | Yes | No |
| I agree to take part in this study, voluntarily | Yes | No |
| I agree that this interview may be audio-taped | Yes | No |
| I agree for comments I make to be quoted in this study's report | Yes | No |
| I agree that my identity will be/will not be revealed | Yes | No |

*(Please tick and cancel wherever appropriate)*

_____ Date_____/_____/_____
Signature of the participant                  dd            mm            year

Signature: _____Date_____  /_____    /_____
            Research leader                dd            mm            year

Signature: _____Date_____/_____    /_____
            Witness                dd            mm            year

---

NB. The interviewer must retain one copy of the participant's consent signature form on file and must give one copy to the participant.

**Appendix II: Interview Guides**

**Section A**

Dear Participant

I am Gift Masengwe, a PhD student at the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology in the School of Humanities at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am doing research on *The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ): Identity- and Mission-Continuity (in diversity)*. The study attempts to answer the question: *How is the transformation of the founding charism of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (COCZ) underpinning identity and mission that is also informed by local spirituality for continuity in diversity among the Bantu-Shona Christians?*

You have been selected to participate in this important study as a key informant and your responses will benefit the COCZ, Church members, other religious organizations, Church policy makers and the study. To be eligible to participate, you are required to know the risks and benefits involved in the study as well as your rights. This interview will take at least 45 minutes to an hour of your valuable time.

You are therefore requested to devote a part of your valuable time to respond to questions pertaining to the Holy Spirit on the COCZ. Issues triggering the study concern the conference centre construction, constitution-making and the pastor's further education. Before we proceed, I need to receive your written consent to participate in this important study. The information you supply will be treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only.

**Instructions**
1. You may not write your name in this questionnaire.
2. Please ensure that you are free to participate and to terminate your participation and no consequences are prejudiced against you in any way.
3. If you have problems during and after the interview process, you can contact me on 0773221677/0717581260, 58527494@mylife.unisa.ac.za or masegweg@gmail.com, or my supervisor at UNISA: woodjm@unisa.ac.za

**Biographical Data (Biodata)**

1. Sex: male ☐  Female ☐

2. Age: 18-30 ☐  31- 40 ☐  41-50 ☐  51 to 60 ☐  Above 60 ☐

3. Marital status: married ☐  single ☐  divorced ☐  widowed ☐

4. Region: _____

5. Highest qualifications: O/A Level ☐  Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐  Degree/s ☐  None ☐

6. Position in Church: _____


**Data Collection Instruments**

1. What did the Bantu mean by *Unhu* or *Munhu chaiye*?

2. How does this *Unhu* find full expression in the creation and baptismal dignity of the image of God/Christ?

        a. Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.

        b. In baptism, believers become Christ-like, co-heirs with Christ?

3. What does being fully human mean in the 'God-human-cosmos' (theanthopocosmic) reciprocal and mutual relationality?

4. Are there any Bantu elements of *Unhu* that are elaborated, corrected or rejected by the COCZ?

5. What are the distinctive marks of the COCZ that are:

        a. peculiar to the COCZ?

        b. in continuity with the pristine Church?

        c. in continuity with its foundations in the USA?

        d. in continuity with its missionary mandate from New Zealand?

6. What improvements has the COCZ done to the foundational principles, RE, American foundations, New Zealand missionary thrust and the Ecumenical (unity) Christian thrust?


Thank you for your time and cooperation.


*Masengwe*


Gift Masengwe