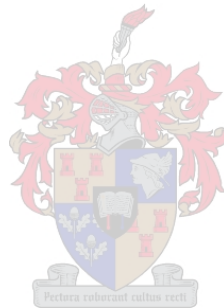


LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

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presented at Stellenbosch University

Study leader: Prof HJ Hendriks

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any University for a degree.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ABSTRACT

The dissertation explores lay leadership developments in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe by investigating the leadership history of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ) from 1891 when it was founded in Zimbabwe, to the present.

Chapter 1 introduces the problem statement, i.e. the exclusion of laity and women in the broader church structures, dominated by male clergy. It currently blocks transformation. The hypothesis of this study is that lay leadership is not sufficiently represented in the leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Reasons for this can be that the influence of the clerical paradigm model of leadership, or the hierarchical *Shona* culture structures, adopted by the missionaries of the RCZ are still haunting the leadership of the church. The methodological framework for the study is practical theology, used by Hendriks (2004). Some important working concepts are explained and a short historical background of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is laid out.

In Chapter 2 different views on church offices are discussed. Methodologically, the Word of God provides the normative basis from which the problem statement is addressed.

In Chapter 3 some aspects of the historical background of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe are described. The *Shona* cultural background and its hierarchical structures are discussed in order to determine how the *Shona* culture influenced the leadership structures of the church to exclude laity and women.

In Chapter 4 the history of leadership in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is explored and the position of the lay people from 1891 to the present is discussed. This is done to determine whether there have been developments in the area of laity inclusion in the broader leadership structures of the church and to prove or disapprove the statement that the broader leadership structures of the church were dominated by male clergy.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical part of the study. Attitudes towards women in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe are analyzed through qualitative research methods. The data was gathered through interviews that assessed the relation between laity and clergy and men and women in the church. Negative and positive attitudes have been noted from the different groups that were interviewed.

Chapter 6 describes the Zimbabwean situation which influences the church leadership due to the pressure of the political, economic, education and health situation in the country. The influence of modernism and postmodern megatrends towards church leadership styles are discussed. These trends seek participation of every individual member for transformation to take place.

In Chapter 7 the focus is on five strategies to empower lay leadership to participate in all the broader structures of the RCZ. It also focuses on the applicability of lay leadership development in the RCZ.

Finally, the overall summary, conclusion and recommendations are given in Chapter 8. The recommendations need to be considered by the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in order to strengthen the inclusion of laity and women in the broader structures of the church.

The research proved that lay leadership development is gradually taking place in the RCZ, but empowerment of laity and women is still needed.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif is 'n verkennende studie oor ongeskoolde leierskapontwikkelings in die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe. Leierskap geskiedenis van die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe word ondersoek vanaf 1891 toe dit tot stand gekom het in Zimbabwe tot huidiglik.

Hoofstuk 1 omskryf die probleemstelling, naamlik die uitsluiting van ongeskooldes en vroue in breë kerk strukture wat gedomineer word deur manlike klerke. Huidiglik stuit dit transformasie. Die hipotesis van die studie is dat ongeskoolde leierskap nie voldoende verteenwoordig word in die leierskapstrukture van die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe nie. Redes hiervoor kan wees dat die invloed van die klerklike paradigma model van leierskap of die hierargiese Shona kultuur, wat deur die sendelinge van die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe aangeneem is, steeds die leierskap van die kerk oorheers. Die metodologiese raamwerk van die studie is praktiese teologie, soos gebruik deur Hendriks (2004). Van die belangrike konsepte word verduidelik en 'n kort historiese oorsig van die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe word uiteengesit.

In Hoofstuk 2 word verskillende standpunte van kerkkantore bespreek. Metodologies verskaf die Woord van God die normatiewe basis vanwaar die probleemstelling aangespreek word.

In Hoofstuk 3 word sekere aspekte van die historiese agtergrond van die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe beskryf. Die *Shona* kulturele agtergrond en sy hierargiese strukture word bespreek sodat daar bepaal kan word hoe die *Shona* kultuur die leierskapstrukture van die kerk beïnvloed het om ongeskooldes en vroue uit te sluit.

In Hoofstuk 4 word die geskiedenis van leierskap in die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe verken en die posisie van ongeskoolde mense, vanaf 1891 tot huidiglik, word bespreek. Dit word gedoen om te bepaal of daar enige ontwikkelings in die area van die insluiting van ongeskooldes in die breë leierskapstrukture van die kerk was en om te bepaal of die stelling dat die breë leierskapstrukture van die kerk gedomineer is deur manlike klerke waar of onwaar is.

Hoofstuk 5 behels die empiriese deel van die studie. Houdings teenoor vroue in die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe word geanaliseer deur middel van kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodes. Die data is versamel deur middel van onderhoude wat die verhouding tussen ongeskooldes en klerklikes en mans en vroue in die kerk assesseer. Negatiewe en positiewe houdings is genotuleer komende vanaf die verskillende groepe wat deelgeneem het aan die onderhoude.

Hoofstuk 6 beskryf die Zimbabwiese situasie wat die kerkleierskap beïnvloed deur middel van die druk wat die politieke, ekonomiese, onderwys en gesondheidsituasie in die land daarop plaas. Die invloed van modernisme en postmodernistiese mega-neigings teenoor kerkleierskap style word bespreek. Hierdie neigings streef na die deelname van elke individuele lid sodat transformasie kan plaasvind.

Hoofstuk 7 fokus op vyf strategieë om ongeskoolde leierskap te bemagtig om deel te neem aan die breë strukture van die RCZ. Dit fokus ook op die toepaslikheid van ongeskoolde leierskapontwikkeling in die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe.

Die algehele opsomming, slot en aanbevelings word in Hoofstuk 8 bespreek. Die aanbevelings moet deur die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe oorweeg word sodat die insluiting van ongeskooldes en vroue in die breë strukture van die kerk versterk kan word.

Hierdie navorsing bewys dat ongeskoolde leierskap ontwikkeling geleidelik besig is om plaas te vind in die Gereformeerde Kerk in Zimbabwe, maar dat bemagtiging van ongeskooldes en vroue steeds nodig is.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved late mother, Selina Rutoro (née Mureba). She was called by the Lord in 1998 at the women's church conference soon after delivering her testimony. She has been a source of inspiration to my Christian life. She proved to me that the absence of a woman in the home leadership makes the home crumble. In Shona we say: "Musha Mukadzi".

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARC	African Reformed Church
BEM	Bamptism Eucharist and Ministry
CBC	Catholic Bishops Conference
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCM	Dutch Reformed Church Mission
EFA	Education For All
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
F	Female
GAB	General Administrative Board
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M	Male
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NetACT	Network for African Congregational Theology
NRF	National Research Foundation
NT	New Testament
NUST	National University of Science
OT	Old Testament
RC	Roman Catholic
RCZ	Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
SAB	Synodical Administration Board
SMC	Station Management Council

UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WCC	World Council of Churches
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a practical theological study on lay leadership development. It focuses on lay leadership development in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ). It aims to analyse the history and present situation with regards to lay leadership in the church.

The research was undertaken as a consequence of the researcher's personal interest to do an in-depth analysis of leadership structures in the RCZ. More specifically, the researcher seeks to find out how a balance between clergy and lay leadership responsibilities can be attained. The research focuses on lay leadership groups such as evangelists, lay preachers, youth and women. One of the for seen outcomes of this research is to develop the leadership potential of these groups in the RCZ structures at congregational, presbytery and synod levels, with the main focus and emphasis being on women.

The study was self-initiated. The researcher observed that the leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe almost excluded lay people, especially women. Lay people, however, constitute the backbone of the church at congregation level. Hence, this study challenges the church to look at means and ways to co-opt lay leadership in broader church leadership structures.

The researcher believes that lay leadership development, empowerment and involvement in the structures of the church leads to improved transformation and growth of the church both in numbers and spiritually. The task of men and women called to leadership in the church is to think about and discuss the calling they have received, as well as the actions they need to take to fulfil their calling (Adeney, 2005: 84). In turn, these men and women can become Joel 2 and Acts 2 Christians who develop leadership practices that seek to enhance competencies and nurture Christians to set them upon the journey of the kingdom of God.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The overall problem addressed in the study, is the leadership and decision-making structures that are being dominated by the male ordained clergy and the exclusion of women and laity in

the broader hierarchical structures of the church. Authority is concentrated within the ranks of the male clergy. However, in an ordinary congregation in the RCZ, responsibilities are shared between the clergy, elders, deacons, evangelists, lay preachers, youth and women's guild. Despite this, the church council and the decision-making process do not involve some of those who do the work and carry the responsibilities. The church council is comprised of the ordained ministers, elders and deacons only. The elders and deacons represent the lay people. However, their influence is minimal. Evangelists and lay preachers attend church councils as observers, but in actual fact, play a more important role than elders and deacons.

Evangelists and lay preachers are trained in theology for a period of two years. Their work is to preach, open new preaching centres and help the minister with house visitations and pastoral care. They do most of the work at grassroots level in the congregation. They are not ordained or licensed to confirm the importance of their work. Furthermore, they do not have any decision-making influence in church structures.

The minister dominates the whole congregation. He chairs most of the church meetings, preaches, officiates on sacraments, and does most of the administrative responsibilities. He has the final say in most decisions made in the church. The elders and deacons support the minister in his official duties like officiating sacraments and chairing meetings, but apart from that, the lay leadership do most of the work. Deacons collect church finances and together with the elders, they have the power to make decisions in the church council with the minister. They do not have any training in theology like evangelists and lay preachers.

The youth operate as the evangelistic wing of the church. They have their own leadership structures which seem to be independent from the whole church. They are not part of the leadership structures either. An elder sits in on their meetings to check on their programmes. This elder acts as their representative within the church leadership. No representative from their group is allowed in any church leadership meeting. Such a situation is becoming unacceptable in a modern society.

The women's guilds also have their own leadership structures. They are the financial stronghold of the church. They perform all the duties needed to make a congregation strong and most of the time they operate their own programmes. They have to report problems and matters pertaining to church work through the elder of their ward. Decisions which affect them as women are made by the church council through a representative male elder. Then

they are told to implement those decisions. They do not have any representative in the broader church leadership structures. In 1984, female elders and deacons have been accepted in the church councils, but it is still dominated by males due to the influence of *Shona* culture that still dominates the church. Women were also not elected to represent the church at presbytery and synod levels (Synod 1984: 32/19). This position was changed by the 2002 synod which allowed women to be elected as presbytery and synod delegates from their congregations (Synod 2002: 32/4). However, women elders still face resistance from some clergy and male elders in their individual congregations.

At congregational level, lay leaders do most of the grassroot work. These people are not represented in broader decision-making bodies, nor are they empowered to fulfil their duties. They wait for the decisions of the church to be passed on to them. The hierarchical approach to leadership in the RCZ limits the ability of God's people to see them as initiating centres of ministry.

At presbytery and synodical level, only the clergy, elders and deacons form part of decision-making processes. Evangelists, lay preachers, youth and women leadership are excluded. If they attend meetings, they attend only as observers and spectators.

The hierarchical leadership structures in RCZ are still a carbon copy of the clerical paradigm church. Flexibility is discouraged, whereas uniformity is encouraged. In many areas of the church life, clerical paradigm church patterns continue to dominate (Runyowa & Rutoro, 2001: 56-64; Mead 1994: 60). Leadership patterns, set by the missionaries who founded the church in 1891, are still haunting leadership structures. One acknowledges that history and traditions are important, but in places where new life emerges and new challenges to ministry are developing, transformation is needed. Attention needs to be given to opening up, even in the articles of the church order. Space is needed for areas of experimentation where the official rules may be suspended to allow transformation to be initiated (Mead, 1994: 60). Participatory leadership to be implemented at every level of church of structures.

Related to the abovementioned problem is the inability of clergy to equip and empower lay leadership efficiently. A problem with leadership inadequacy also exists. The researcher agrees with Mead (1994) when he states: "I fault the denominations for the system of leadership that sets impossible tasks without adequate support and training without clear delegation of authority" (1994: 60).

Leadership structures are also affected by the nature of the *Shona* society (the main tribe in Zimbabwe). Leadership structures are hierarchical, with clear top-down control. A clear chain of command is taken for granted. Only those in senior positions have a say in matters affecting the society. Elderly people and males are not questioned or challenged by young people even when they are wrong. Women and youth are not thought of as part of leadership (Gumbo et al 1982: 34). Cultural and contextual changes, however, are influencing the *Shona* society to such an extent that these leadership styles are becoming unacceptable and detrimental to institutions like the church.

To overcome the problem of exclusion of lay leadership in the RCZ structures, we need to rethink in biblical terms what it means to speak of the church as "a royal priesthood", "a holy nation", "a peculiar people", and as the "Body of Christ" to which every member contributes (Ruppell, 1990: 9). RCZ structures also needs to promote the goal of the early Reformers of "the priesthood of all believers" where both lay and ordained people can discern their identity in the image and likeness of God together (Ogden, 1990: 11). This idea is supported by the Biblical teaching that God created man and woman in close relationship to one another and to Himself in order to work in partnership (Paas, 2006: 235).

1.3 PURPOSE

The first purpose of this study is to describe the situation and events that led to the present structures and practice of ministry in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. This will explain why most of the lay leadership are excluded from participation in broader church structures, such as the synodical administration board (SAB), presbyteries, moderamen, synodical committees and synod.

Secondly, the study aims to examine the normative biblical principles regarding leadership in the church in order to make suggestions as to how to rectify the present situation in the RCZ where currently, leadership is dominated by the male clergy.

Thirdly, the study will explore possibilities of flexibility in the leadership structures of the RCZ in order to promote a mutual relationship between the clergy, elders, deacons and the lay leadership groups. The study will suggest amendments where necessary to accommodate lay leadership in all structures, without to dismantle existing structures.

Fourthly, the study will also suggest means to remove barriers which prevent people in the church offices from sharing leadership with lay leaders.

Lastly, the study aims to formulate concrete objectives which promote solidarity between the clergy and lay leadership in the RCZ, which in turn will lead to:

- Empowerment of lay leadership to challenge oppressive structures in their Zimbabwean community, their *Shona* culture, their synod, their presbyteries and congregations.
- Affirmation – through shared leadership and decision-making – the decisive contributions of lay leadership in congregations and communities.
- Giving visibility to women’s perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of the creation in the church.
- Encouraging the church leadership to take actions in solidarity with lay leadership in all church structures (Njoroge & Paraic, 1994: 54).

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

According to Carroll, Dudley and McKinney (1998: 154), a hypothesis is essentially an informed hunch or expectation which helps to focus research on an issue or a series of issues which are central to the research question.

The typical exploratory question of this study is: Why is lay leadership not represented in the leadership structures of the RCZ? In other words: Why is the lay leadership excluded in the broader decision-making bodies of the church?

The hypothesis of this study is that the RCZ leadership structures are still operating under the influence of the clerical paradigm, the hierarchical *Shona* culture and the structures employed by the missionaries. A traditional Western European method of doing theology is still haunting the leadership of the RCZ. Adeney (2005: 287) called this method “the Imperial Mood of theology”. Theological leadership done in the “Imperial Mood” starts moving from the top down. There are still some rigid church traditions maintained by the church which are still influencing leadership structures.

1.5 SOCIOLOGICAL DIMENSION

This research, from the perspective of the researcher, operates within a framework of an interdisciplinary paradigm that uses sociological methods to describe and explore the present situation in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The sociological dimension of the research points to the fact that one has to understand that the researcher belongs to a specific social community or setting. His social status and position have an impact on the research and are taken into consideration (Mouton, 1998: 10; Dingemans, 1996: 92). In order to clarify these aspects, the sociological dimension is discussed below.

The study takes place in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, one of the pioneer churches which have led many people in the southern region of Zimbabwe to be followers of Christ and members of the church. It has its administrative headquarters in the town of Masvingo. The church has a strong Reformed tradition.

The interest to undertake this study emerged from the researcher's interaction and involvement with the whole community at Morgenstern Mission as a minister of religion and lecturer at the Murray Theological College of the RCZ. Morgenster Mission is situated in Masvingo Province in the southern region of the country. The Mission has a multi-dimensional departments composed of the following institutions: two primary schools; a secondary school; Teachers Training College; Bible Correspondence School; Theological College; a medical hospital; a printing press; a sub post office; a farm and a shopping centre.

The researcher has theological influence and holds to the Reformed faith. He teaches practical theological subjects at the Murray Theological College, which explains his interest and passion in the study. He did postgraduate studies in theology through the Faculty of Theology in the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. The faculty has a Reformed tradition and ethos.

The abovementioned remarks determine the background, social status and belief of the researcher. His status has an impact in executing this study. On the one hand, he has access to the literature needed in this regard. But on the other hand his status might have influenced the responses of certain people during the collection of information because he knows the nature of the community. Appropriate measures have been taken to get trustworthy feedback during interviews. These are discussed in the section on methodology.

1.6 ONTOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The ontological dimension is defined by Mouton and Marais (1988) as "the study of being or reality" (1988: 12). It refers to the study or reality of the object to be researched or investigated.

In this study, it refers to the classification of units of analysis, more precisely, units of observation such as individuals, groups, organisations, etc. This study has been conducted within the geographical area of the RCZ community in the southern region of Zimbabwe. The unit of analysis was the organisation. In 2006, the organization is made up of fifty congregations, eight presbyteries and one synod. Attention is focussed on lay leadership groups in the church. These groups are evangelists, lay preachers, youth leadership and women guilds, the main focus being on women involvement in the broader church structures from which they are almost excluded.

Theory on lay leadership development states that the church needs to empower all the representatives of lay leadership groups to participate in the broader leadership structures for transformative action to take place in the church. Policy makers in the church need to understand this theory for it to be a success. If the clergy, Theological College lecturers and some of the lay leaders in decision-making bodies do not understand it, then it will fail. The study has a longitudinal or diachronic point of view in that it analyses the leadership patterns of the RCZ over an extended period of time (Mouton, 1988: 37). On the other hand, the study is also cross-sectional or synchronic; it is describing the current position or situation of leadership development in the RCZ.

A research project done in 1999 by Rev W Runyowa and the researcher had a big impact on the RCZ leadership. A research team was formed with Prof H Jurgens Hendriks of the Faculty of Theology and Dr Johannes C Erasmus. The research was done with the RCZ moderamen support. It was titled "Resource Development and Women in leadership Positions in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe" (Runyowa and Rutoro, 2001: 56-64).

The research findings were distributed to the church leadership and lay leadership groups. It was presented to the RCZ synod of 2002 by Rev W Runyowa, Rev K Muungani, Rev C Munikwa and the researcher himself (Synod 2002: 32/3). This synod passed the resolution for women to be trained as ministers at Murray Theological College (Synod 2002: 32/6).

Rev W Runyowa and the researcher himself, in conjunction with the doctrinal committee of the RCZ, researched and presented the issues of women and laity in church leadership as they were tasked by the successive synods of 1996, 1998 and 2000 (Synod 2000: 16/19). Some current results of this study were influenced by the contributions of the RCZ ministers who have studied and are studying at the University of Stellenbosch¹.

The study has also influenced the RCZ to allow Rev L Hoffman, the Dutch Reformed Church female minister to teach its ministers in New Testament as part time lecturer in 2000 and 2001. Initially, it was hard for the church leadership to allow her. But the influence of the researcher who is a lecturer at the college and some of the ministers mentioned above influenced the decision.

It is important to be aware of the two research fallacies that may endanger the results of the study. Babbie (1992: 96) refers to the first concept as the ecological fallacy, i.e. "the danger of making assertions about individuals as the units of analysis based on the examination of groups or other aggregations". The researcher argues that to listen only to the viewpoint of the clergy and church councils on the matter of the involvement of lay leadership in the leadership structures will be to adhere to this fallacy. One has to listen to both the individuals in lay leadership structures as well as to the groups they represent. One also has to take the principles of scripture into account. This leads us to a discussion of the other typical fallacy, namely reductionism.

Babbie (1992: 97) refers to reductionism as "an overly strict limitation on the kinds of concepts and variables to be considered as causes in explaining a broad range of human behaviour". In other words, making conclusions based on only one perspective or one discipline. The research problem therefore needs to be analysed from different perspectives. One has to understand the history of the church, the social and political factors that influence the situation as well as the views of different people and groups involved. Most importantly, one also has the challenge to apply the scriptural principles to the present situation.

1. Some of the ministers are: Rev Dr Mutumburanzou, Rev M Zvenyika, Rev K Muungani, Rev C Zvandaziva, Rev G Gurajena, Rev C Munikwa, Rev C Mufumhi, Rev E Chomutiri, Rev S Kundishora, Rev W Runyowa, Rev JJ Zingoni and Rev I Pandasvika.

1.7 METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSION

This section discusses the epistemological dimension of the study, the data collection method of the study, the four dimensions used by Dingemans to describe practical theology and the methodology of doing theology in practical theology as described by HJ Hendriks (2004), which is the framework of this study.

1.7.1 Epistemological dimension

According to Mouton and Marais (1988: 14), epistemology is the key dimension in any social scientific research study, because it deals with the reliability of the scientific declarations, the quest for the truth. In other words, this dimension aims at providing valid statements of the truth and reality under study. The research is done within the epistemological framework of practical theology. Practical theology holds an interdisciplinary approach. It makes use of sociological and other research methods. Therefore, to understand the argument of this study, one needs first to understand what practical theology is. According to Browning (1991: 5), practical theology is the theological discipline which is primarily concerned with the interaction of belief and behaviour.

DJ Louw (1998), expressed the developments in practical theology using 7 models according to the changes over time: personality oriented moral model, the official model, the so-called application model, an empirical model, the praxis model, the ecclesiological model and the hermeneutical model (1998: 95-96).

In practical theology a shift is underway from a narrower focus on training ministers (the clerical paradigm with its emphasis on preaching, worship, pastoral counselling, education), to one that centres on the congregation and the development of its members (Venter, 1995: 13).

1.7.2 Data Collection Methodology

This research focuses on lay leadership development in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

The main method used in this study is the study of literature. It examines biblical principles and the RCZ's official stand on the involvement of lay leaders in the decision-making bodies of the church.

The researcher has access to all the primary sources of information such as important church documents. These sources are kept in the archives of Morgenster RCZ congregation, the printing press and *Munyai Washe*, Mabuku Bookshop Warehouse and RCZ headquarters archives in Masvingo. The primary sources include various RCZ documents, congregational minutes, minutes of past presbyteries, synodical minutes, moderator's annual reports, synodical reports, annual reports for the Synodical Administrative Board, annual reports from the women's desk and newsletters (*Munyai Washe*).

Through analyses of the primary sources, the researcher was able to compare and contrast how leadership has been executed in the past and present. The documentation assisted the researcher to find whether there have been any changes in leadership structures from the time of the first missionaries in 1891 to 4 May 1977, the date on which the DRC Cape stepped down and leadership was entrusted to the indigenous.

In order to describe the present situation and attitudes of men towards the position of women in policy-making structures, the researcher conducted interviews and distributed some questionnaires. In-depth interviews were done with some of the retired ministers, serving ministers, evangelists and lay preachers. This was done to access the present situation and that of the missionary period. To avoid biased and false conclusions, the following groups were also interviewed: Youth leadership and women leadership, the present church leadership, church elders and deacons from various congregations. The interviews were done at congregational, regional and national level conferences. Some elderly people were visited in their homes. Murray Theological College students were trained to assist the researcher conduct interviews among the women's guild conference held on August 1999 at Morgenster. The researcher did a follow-up on the results of the interviews done by the students and compiled the final report.

Retired missionaries in Zimbabwe were also interviewed. Questions were asked about their view on church leadership structures and involvement of lay leadership in church structures. After each interview a verbatim report was written. Questions were asked such as: "What is your view on the exclusion of the lay leadership in the church structures on major decision-making bodies in RCZ today? How do you compare the present leadership structures with that of the missionary period?" These interviews enabled the researcher to grasp and understand the views of church members on the issue of lay leadership participation in church leadership. One expects to find different views in different age cohorts as well as differences

between clergy and laity. A detailed analysis is given in Chapter 5 of this study.

1.7.3 Dingemans' four paradigms of practical theology

At first, practical theology was basically the application of biblical and systematic theology in ministry. The focus was on the role and work of the offices, especially that of the minister; hence these positions became known as the “clerical” paradigm (Dingemans, 1996: 84-85). This paradigm went hand in hand with a theology that greatly emphasised Christology and proclamation of the Word. The result was that congregational activities were centred on the institutional role of the minister, cognitive expository preaching and teaching during worship. A “controlled and governed” type of ministry developed.

According to Hendriks (2004: 26), “at present, due to contextual changes, it seems important to emphasise the role of faith communities and the laity who constitute the church. A practical theological ecclesiology has become important”.

1.7.3.1 The clerical paradigm

Practical theology has been traditionally concerned with the training of the clergy for leadership in the church. It is subdivided into various disciplines such as spiritual leadership, homiletics, liturgy, stewardship, Christian education, pastoral care, etc. Some social disciplines already developed a real academic status were later added, such as psychology, philosophy, sociology and communication theory (Dingemans, 1996: 84).

This paradigm describes the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe situation as it stands today. Theological education centres on the training of ministers for their work. Even church administration is taught only to ministers. This paradigm is popular with certain ministers but not with the lay leadership groups in the RCZ.

1.7.3.2 The church paradigm

The second paradigm is the church paradigm. According to Dingemans, (1996: 84) practical theology has widened its focus to include the functions of the church as a whole. More emphasis now lies on the internal functioning of congregations such as church development and church vitalization, the distribution of power and the interaction between various institutions within the congregation. However, the external impact of the church in this paradigm has also been promoted, i.e. the mission of the church in witness, preaching and

education (Dingemans, 1996: 84).

The approach in this paradigm includes the work of the ordained ministry but with a wider scope. For many practical theologians, practical ecclesiology and church development have become the foundational sub disciplines of practical theology. This paradigm concurs with the present study which seeks the development of lay leadership in the RCZ. The researcher concurs with the conclusion of Dingemans (1996) that the majority of academic practical theologians seem to consider, "the functioning of the church in the perspective of the coming Kingdom of God in the world", as the actual field of practical theology (1996: 85). It promotes clergy and lay leadership working together.

Practical theology in the present study should not be constrained by the reins of the clerical paradigm, which weighs down the growth of the church. It should be liberated by the church paradigm which supports freedom of worship. This is the paradigm the RCZ should resemble to let every member participate in church leadership, though it needs to be implemented gradually.

1.7.3.3 The liberation paradigm

The third paradigm discussed by Dingemans (1996) is the liberation paradigm. This paradigm emerged in Latin America. Liberation theologians in Latin America did not hesitate to define their theology as a form of practical theology. The Latin American liberation theologians believed that practical theology should move away from private isolation. It should reflect upon and influence political and social reality. They made a strong plea for a fundamental change and liberation of society, to which practical theology should make a contribution (Dingemans, 1996: 85).

In the Netherlands, liberation theologians argued that it is the primary mission and vocation of the church to serve society. On the other hand, practical theology has an important task in revealing sexual discrimination and other forms of oppression in the church and society. In all these liberation approaches, the task of practical theology is critical and engaged, not only in the function of the church, but in the life of society as well (Dingemans, 1996: 86).

The approach in this paradigm is valid, but the use of political force to attain change will not be encouraged by this study. The approach is political and emotional for the church, even though people feel the pain caused by injustice. The church needs to resort to non-violent

means of solving problems. The politics of the nation can be better valued by using non-violent approaches. The approach should not put too much emphasis on the external aspect of the church to the expense of internal aspects. According to the researcher, a certain balance needs to be put in place in order to attain the necessary challenges.

1.7.3.4 The individual paradigm

The fourth paradigm is the individual paradigm. Dingemans (1996: 86) informs us that a new movement in practical theology has emerged, moving not from the clerical and church paradigms to the whole society, but moving in the direction of individual believers. This approach is typical of the Dutch-European context with its individualistic consumer-based ethos. The positive aspect of this paradigm is its focus on the lay believer, lay leadership, the hearer in the pew, and the person who seeks meaning for his/her life.

However, this paradigm has not yet fully come to function in Africa and in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Dingemans (1996) suggests that we must wait for a further development of these ideas (1996: 87).

The individualistic mentality is not the way of life in rural African societies. The approach works in some urban congregations where people are influenced by Western culture. A postmodern approach is simultaneously emerging. It promotes the idea that each individual has to create his or her own meaning and associate with others to increase his or her powerbase in a fragmented society of competing interests (Gibbs & Coffey, 2001: 29). Although individualistic theology is accepted in the churches of the West and in Europe, in the church in Africa, where the society has strong ties of communalism, the approach faces resistance from traditional rural congregations in particular.

From the overview of the four paradigms, it is apparent that the clerical paradigm is good at preserving the tradition of the church. But it has proved to be too pious and clergy centred. The liberation paradigm has some good notions of setting every believer in the church free and addressing social evil prophetically. On the other hand it seems to be too critical and politically embedded. The individual paradigm carries more support in this study as it encourages direct communication lines with every member in the church. The individualistic ideas are not popular in some RCZ contexts and it is doubtful if it will serve the church in Africa.

The church paradigm seems to suit the present Reformed Church in Zimbabwe context best. The researcher supports the viewpoint of the church paradigm which puts emphasis on the internal and external functioning of the church. It is a proven fact that it supports church development and church vitalization, the vision of power and interaction between various institutions within the congregations (Dingemans, 1996: 84). The paradigm also supports the contemporary methodology of doing theology in that it supports the internal and external functioning of the church. “Theology that tries to grasp God’s action in history - past, present and future - and points out the way that goes on towards God’s future kingdom” (Steuernagel, 2003: 103) that is the ‘*eschaton*’, the end of all things. This assists the Christians to start participating together for transformation of the future church.

In executing this research on lay leadership development in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, the researcher will make use of the positive aspects of all four paradigms. The church paradigm, however, is the paradigm used in this study and also in the methodological framework discussed below. It will also best assist the Zimbabwean community to understand why there is need to share power.

In conclusion, the researcher declares that this research raises important practical concerns: The interaction of belief and behaviour, the liberation of the biblical text and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The church paradigm will hopefully lead to a new perspective on teaching and praxis.

1.7.4 The methodological dimension of the study

According to Mouton (1996: 35-36) methodology refers to methods, procedures, techniques, approaches and ways used to carry out any research. It outlines the stages taken in the research process or simply the steps taken in reaching the goals of the study. The methodology followed to structure the framework of this study is the practical theology methodology. This methodology, originally used by Fowler (1999), is used by Hendriks (2004) in his book “Studying Congregations in Africa”, a NetACT publication. It is the basic structure of this study. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the concept of theology and its definitions.

1.7.4.1 Theology defined

According to Hendriks (2004: 23-24), practicing theology implies:

1. “The missional praxis of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and;
2. About God’s body, an apostolic faith community (the church);
3. At a specific time and place within a globalised world (a wider contextual situation);
4. Where members of this community are involved in a vocationally based, critical and constructive interpretation of their present reality (local analysis);
5. Drawing upon an interpretation of the normative sources of Scripture and tradition;
6. Struggling to discern God’s will for their present situation (a critical correlational hermeneutic);
7. To be a sign of God’s kingdom on earth while moving forward with an eschatological faith-based reality in view (that will lead to a vision and a mission statement);
8. While obediently participating in transformative action at different levels: personal, ecclesial, societal, ecological and scientific (a doing, liberating, transformative theology that leads to a strategy, implementation and an evaluation of progress).”

The researcher now turns the discussion to the eight points outlined above. He explains in more detail how the structure functions in this study and the relationship thereof to each chapter. In this study these points function as a set of markers or orientation beacons. The points are intertwined and are to be used in the process of doing theology in a living faith community where believers are called to take part in God’s missional praxis.

Missional “refers to a way of understanding theology as being inherently focused on God’s purpose with humans and creation. God as our creator-redeemer-sanctifier is a purpose-driven God and as such, theology and the church should reflect it, it should be part of our identity” (Hendriks, 2004: 21). Gibbs & Coffey (2001: 55-56) state that, *Praxis* “means reflective (prayerful) involvement in this world”. “The reflection involves the teaching of history and systematic theology” (Hendriks, 2004: 22). The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is the faith community reflecting on the Word and its present situation in church leadership. It focuses on the Word and its context to discern the will of God on the way of defining church leadership that is transformative for clergy, women, and laity together.

- **The first two points:** State that theology is about God and about the church. It asks the question: What do we know about God in our doing theology as the faith community? We know God is a Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier (Hendriks, 2004: 24). We know He loves us, He comes to us, and He wants to use us to live in relationships to look after the earth to take care of it and to be in relationship with God as our Creator. Guder (1998: 4) points out that the basic shift that is taking place in the method of doing theology boils down to moving away from a theology that “obediently analyzed” the faith tradition to an approach that says that the safer way to do theology is to “obediently take part” in God’s missional praxis. The older paradigm worked with a subject-object scheme where a theologian was the subject studying texts about God and the church.

We need to know that the church is the “body of Christ” as emphasized by point two of the above definition. The basic argument follows from Genesis 1:26-28 where the triune God made humankind to his image and likeness. God places humans in three relationships: to Himself, to nature and to one another (husband and wife). The basic presupposition is that one’s personal identity (anthropology), as well as the identity of the church (ecclesiology), is derived from God’s very being. He called us His people, His body to participate together. People are the stewards of God’s creation and of His mission (Hendriks, 2004: 26-27; Hanson, 1986: 2, 10f).

Whilst doing theology in the RCZ, the leadership needs to be clear about God’s identity. God, who is triune, missional and relationship oriented, is not a dictator, and does not enforce authority. He leads His sheep (Psalms 23). As the church with the identity of the “body of Christ”, we should mirror something of God’s identity. We need to emphasize the role of the faith community, of the laity who constitute the church. Our context shows that we cannot only depend on theologians and the clergy to lead the way in reforming church ministry. Ours is a society in which traditional modes of authority are no longer influential due to modernism and postmodernism trends (Gibbs & Coffey, 2001: 27-28).

- **The third and fourth points:** These points deal with the global and local (wider and then more specific) contexts. Theology is about the world and about the interpretation of people’s present reality (local analysis). John Douglas Hall (1991: 69-70) states that Christian theology is contextual. He states three reasons for this:

(1) Theology is a human enterprise; (2) it speaks of the living relation with a dynamic creation; and (3) theology is done as a way of discerning what the church should confer. Theology is done in a faith community of people called by God.

The people living in a particular time and place, where they are called to witness within the confines of their world. They have to answer questions such as: what is happening in our context? How should we react to whatever comes to our attention and how should we react to what confronts us?

In this study the world or situation to be analyzed is the leadership history of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Its present identity will be discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 6. The position and identity of lay people is discussed in Chapter 4. The attitudes towards women and their identity in leadership structures will be analysed empirically and discussed in Chapter 5, and the Zimbabwean situation which also affects the identity of the RCZ, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

A “critical” interpretation of the present reality of leadership in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is done by considering the view of Fowler in Hendriks (2004: 28) that Practical Theology is a “problem-posing theology”. The problem that the RCZ deals with is the fact that the lay leadership is not presented in the leadership of its structures at all levels. This Practical Theology methodology of doing theology challenges the RCZ to avoid doing theology by simply studying traditional texts (systematic theology and creeds) and then applying them to a specific situation. There is need to know that in doing theology in Africa and in particular in Zimbabwe, we should be realistic about our local situation, as well as the global context. The research question of the study is: “Why is lay leadership not represented in the leadership structures of the RCZ?” It will be addressed throughout in each of the chapters.

- **Theology is about the Word (fifth point):** The fifth point of the definition of theology looks at our faith heritage or past. It refers to the interpretation of the Bible, the church’s tradition and its creeds. The interpretation is done by fallible people who want to understand their context in the light of the normative Word of God.

Chapter 2 of the dissertation deals with this aspect. It looks at the biblical and normative Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) teachings on the principles of church leadership, taking into account the historical church views of different traditions.

In order to interpret normative sources, the position and role of laity and women in the church need to be considered. This is where history, memory, story and tradition are at stake. The biblical disciplines of Old and New Testament studies specialize in understanding the text of Scripture. Systematic Theology makes a systematic compilation of the content of Scripture using different scientific methods. Philosophical and comparative religious studies also play a role; ethical debates have taken place; and church history tells the ongoing story of the church in the world (Fowler, 1995: 5; Hendriks, 2004: 29).

Theology in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe needs to be able to interpret the Christian faith tradition in the light of its present realities and also discern what God requires of it. The researcher agrees that this is not an endeavour that only theologians, clergy or church bodies, such as presbyteries and synods, should engage on their own. Local congregations and individual Christians such as women and laity need to be able to make informed theological decisions based on more than what the Bible, textbooks, or even creeds, prescribe (Hendriks, 2004: 29). Congregations must be empowered to discern God's will for our own contextual situation. We should be cautious not to do away with traditional wisdom and the input from wider ecumenical community in our process of discernment. Chapter 2 of this study deals with biblical normative principles and the tradition of the reformed faith and others to address the RCZ situation that currently excludes the laity.

- **Theology is about discernment and action (sixth point):** This is the heart of doing theology where the correlational hermeneutical dialogue takes place and where discernment should happen. This dissertation is a discernment process. It addresses the purpose of this study, namely, the participation of lay leadership and the clergy in decision-making processes at all levels.

In this point, Hendriks (2004: 30) argues that:

The solution to faith communities' questions about how to participate in God's missional praxis is a critical and constructive dialogue or correlation between their interpretations of the realities of the global and local context and the faith resource at their disposal. On the one hand, the discernment process is rational and on the other, it is a mystery.

In this study, the challenges of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership to participate with laity at all levels are addressed. The leadership needs to understand the identity of the triune God who is the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. God is missional and relationship-oriented and not a dictator. The church leadership needs to understand the identity of the church as the "body of Christ". The church leadership is also challenged to understand that "to do theology is our business. It reflects our effort in knowing God, our eagerness in talking about God together" (Steuernagel, 2003: 103). It is important to understand that theology is a church thing. It belongs to the people of God who, being aware of their mess and confusion, recognize as well that they are loved and involved by God all the same (Steuernagel, 2003: 103).

Some scholars call the abovementioned hermeneutical approach, a two-dimensional exegesis of the world and the Word that takes place in a gathered faith community who actively relies on God's presence and guidance. It can also be called a fusion of two horizons in which the interpreted social reality and the interpreted Christian normative sources meet in order to provide vision and guidance for an anticipated future (Hendriks, 2004: 30-31; Van der Ven, 1998: 19; Hanson, 1986: 523-537; Fowler, 1995: 6-7).

Throughout this dissertation, the belief of the researcher is to challenge the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe to understand the hermeneutical, correlative way of doing theology at five levels of action (Tracy, 1981: 3-31; Van der Ven, 1998: 22-23). Firstly, at a personal level, we are called to be followers or disciples of Jesus Christ to discern our vocation and become missional involved. In the case of the RCZ women and laity are to be involved in all leadership structures with the clergy. Secondly, at an ecclesial level, within the congregation or faith community, we are

the body of Christ, a missional church that acts in worship and witness where we assist and serve in leadership structures together. Thirdly, at the level of society, the church also has an important role to play (Hendriks, 2004: 33) and provides leadership as servants to society. The church should play witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and proclaim prophetically that justice be done to all people. This can only be done by getting involved. The scientific level refers to the academic intellectual aspects of theology (Van der Ven, 1998: 23). Lastly, at the ecological level, the body of Christ needs to play part in being a humble custodian of the creation (Hendriks, 2004: 33). For those who have read the book of Hendriks (2004) “Studying Congregations in Africa”, the graphic illustration of the cross on page 23 explains the issue of discernment better. In the centre of that cross, we find the faithful struggling together to discern the will of God (Phil. 1:9-10) in order to obediently engage in strategic action realizing God’s Kingdom.

This study proclaims that the inclusion and involvement of women and laity in broader leadership structures will bring transformative development to the whole church. The mission and vision of this study is to see every church member participating in the realization of the kingdom of God, not excluding people because of their status or class, be it poor, weak, outcast, women or laity. Chapter 7 of the study focuses on strategies that will fulfil this vision when taken into consideration by the RCZ leadership.

- **Theology is about the Kingdom (seventh point):** This point deals with the mission of doing theology and about where we are heading. It aims at helping us to claim, realise, or mature into the identity our Creator, through Christ, wants us to become. This is about “claiming” or realizing or maturing to become what we received as our identity in our Creator through Christ. The sign of the Kingdom should be visible in faith communities.

The Kingdom of God is a dream about the future that shapes our reality and, as such, is linked integrally to the process of doing theology. It aims at the realisation that in Jesus Christ, the Kingdom became flesh and blood (Hendriks, 2004: 32). It is also clear that His life and death are linked to the creation motive, because in his death and resurrection, one finds recreation, a new creation dawn upon us. Jesus’ life and teaching teaches us that the Kingdom of God is approaching and that it

brings salvation (Hendriks, 2004: 32). This is good news for all those who believe in His uniting death on the cross. The researcher believes that RCZ church polity and structures should be shaped by this dream.

- **Theology is about transformative action (eighth point):** Instead of concentrating only on Scripture and tradition with the aim of making systematic interpretations, a missional praxis theology firstly focus on local and particular issues with the goal of taking action and then addresses the reality and problems that confront the faith community and the society at large (Hendriks, 2004: 33). It does so because God, in coming to this world in Jesus Christ, initiated something that changed people and formed them into a community called to love God and their neighbours. Theology, according to Hendriks (2004:33), tries to discern present and past realities hermeneutically in order to discern God's will so as to move towards an anticipated reality.

The eight points on practicing theology, as described in the above section, forms the framework of this study. The points are interwoven in their approach and explanations. Points one and two are about the identity of God who is triune, missional and relationship-oriented. Point two talks about the identity of the church which is the body of Christ. The RCZ should mirror something of God's identity in its leadership. This is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of the study, which deals with history and leadership in the RCZ. Points three, four and six explain the local and global contextual situation of the faith community members struggling to discern God's will in their contextual situation in a critical correlational hermeneutic way. The attitude of men towards women is discussed in Chapter 5 and the Zimbabwean situation in Chapter 6.

The dissertation deals with what Hendriks (2004: 23, 32-34) calls becoming what we already are in Jesus Christ (the movement from the Alpha to the Omega in the cross-symbolism). This identity, founded in grace, in God's creation and recreation in Jesus Christ, has to be realized in our lives and work of practicing leadership in the RCZ. It is a process of sanctification where the Holy Spirit guides us and empowers us. Hence we will be able to understand that theology is in its essence discerning to be obedient to the missional God. It is about finding our mission in life

by realizing the unity of the body of Christ and finding ways to express that in our church polity and structures.

In conclusion to the methodological framework of the study, it needs to be understood that theology is about God. It is words about God in our life situation. It is faith-seeking to understand who God is in order to understand what we should do. The heart of theology unfolds from this premise. According to Steuernagel (2003: 100-112) we need to do theology with an eye on Mary, the mother of Jesus who was available to be used by God. We will know that theology is not, in the first place, about what we are to do. Theology comes at the second hour after one has experienced the encounter with God. In Mary's story of Luke chapter 1, God came to Mary, He spoke to her. Afterwards, as she struggled to understand, as she spent time with Elisabeth, she began to realise what she was called to do. It involved a life of discernment. Mary listened and exercised what God called her to do. "To do theology is our business. It is reflecting our efforts in knowing God. Theology is trying to grasp God's actions in history – past, present and future – and points out the way this very story goes towards God's '*eschaton*', the end of things" (Steuernagel, 2003: 101-103).

Steuernagel (2003) further echoes that theology is a church thing. It belongs to all God's people. Discernment is contextual and done in faith communities. Theology is the seed of God's revelation to those people who discern His will together (Steuernagel, 2003: 103-104). People who say like the humble Mary: "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38), are theologians. Theologians who, like Mary, understand that discernment is a second-hour matter, for what came at the first hour is God's revelation, God's interruption, God's visit and God's incarnation in Jesus Christ (Steuernagel, 2003: 103). This understanding of doing theology helps the church to do church leadership together at all levels.

1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

In the interest of clarity and understanding of the scope of this study, it is important to define some of the concepts, like leadership, development, clergy, laity/ lay, minister, elder and deacon. Some of the terms like clergy and minister, lay and laity will be used interchangeably in this study.

1.8.1 Leadership

A great deal has been written about the concept "leadership". "Leadership seems to mean so many different things to different people. Some people think of leadership as power or authority, some as personality traits, still others as status or position" (Cawood, 1985: 45; Gitari, 2005: 93). Consequently, a great variety of definitions exist in the literature on leadership. From a managerial point of view, Cawood (1985: 45) states, "Leadership is a process in which an individual takes initiative to assist a group to move towards production goals that are acceptable, and so dispose of those needs of individuals within the group that impelled them to join it".

Richards and Martin (1981: 297-298) stress the equipped model of leadership and see leadership as mainly servanthood leadership, servanthood is the model for Christian leadership. It is the antithesis of power. Rather than having the right to control others, a servant leader lives his life under the control of another's. Rather than being superior, a servant spends his/her life ministering among others. In other words, servanthood leadership means spending time to train or to show how ministry may be carried out. This type of leadership does not exercise authority over others.

According to Shawchuck and Heuser (1993: 22-24), "Christian leadership is not merely management, not merely equipping, but the two can hardly be separated. Leadership is seeing that the right things are done; management, on the other hand, is concerned about doing things the right way. Christian leadership seeks the revisions of the process and the structure required by an ever-changing reality."

Dulles (1976: 83-84) describes leadership by using ecclesiological models: The institutional model, the communal model, the sacramental model, the herald model, and the servanthood model. Dulles' models serve as a very helpful tool to outline the different views, even paradigms, of leadership in the RCZ.

The institutional model: In this model, leadership is hierarchical, the leader (clergy) possess total authority in the church. The official church teaches, sanctifies, and rules with the authority of Christ (Dulles, 1976: 83). This model resembles the clerical paradigm which excludes lay leadership participation. This is current position in the RCZ.

The communion model: Within this model, leadership is shared; it reacts against an excessive emphasis on the hierarchical elements of leadership. The church is viewed as the “People of God or the Body of Christ”, growing to the final perfection of the Kingdom of God (Dulles, 1976: 83, 154). This model shares many qualities of the church paradigm already discussed previously. In this model, hierarchical structures are avoided. There is a strong emphasis on the gifts of all members (1 Cor.12; Rom.12). Leadership is seen as a shared enterprise where consensus-seeking and the involvement of lay leaders play an important role. The empowerment of lay leadership and equipping of the laity are basic aspects of this model.

According to the researcher's point of view, the RCZ's problem is that leadership is entrenched in the institutional model (clerical paradigm). Leadership, in this study, is defined from the perspective of the Body of Christ model or the church paradigm and servanthood.

The purpose of this study is to show why it is important for the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe to have a better balance in its views on the practice of leadership. The study tries to enhance strategies (discussion of chapter 7) that will help the RCZ to set a process in motion to move away from a leadership style dominated by the institutional model and to move towards a style of leadership where the communion-model plays a more important role.

1.8.2 Development

"Development" is a word used by many people today. It has many meanings. Many governments define development as building new towns, hospitals, clinics, schools, roads, etc. In churches it is described as anything pertaining to a person's physical and spiritual growth. Development necessarily involves structural transformation which implies personal, political, social and economic changes (Max-Neef, 1991: 14).

Teddy Brett (quoted in Max-Neef, 1991: 43) noted that “Development is a change process characterised by increased productivity, equalisation in the distribution of the social product, power, and the emergence of indigenous institutions whose relations with community and the outside world are characterised by equity and equality rather than by dependence or subordination”. Development is not just a question of things – schools, clinics, roads, dams – but one primarily of people and social, economic, political and gender relations. Development concerns people; it affects their way of life and is influenced by their conceptions of the good life, as determined by their cultures (Hettne quoted in Burkey 1993: 30).

According to Thompson (1981: 2) "development" means "a process of enabling people to accomplish things that they could not do before – that is to learn and apply information, attitudes, values and skills previously unavailable to them in one's local context".

Chung and Ngara (1985: 128) state that genuine development is the creation of adequate manpower in every organization. Development depends a lot on human knowledge and skills, and where this knowledge and these skills are inadequate to the task at hand, social development will be thwarted. The development of human resources must include cognitive and affective development, physical development and development of suitable attitudes and worldviews. It is also a systematic procedure of training and growth in which individuals and other people at large gain and apply knowledge, skills, insights and attitudes to manage work in organisations.

Burkey (1993: 35-39) defines development by using four dimensions, namely human (personal), economic, political and social development.

(i) Human development

Human development is defined by Burkey (1993) in the following way:

Human (personal) development is a process by which an individual develops self-respect, and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative and tolerant of others through becoming aware of his/her shortcomings, as well as his/her potential for positive change. This takes place through working with others, acquiring new skills and knowledge, and active participation in the economic, social and political development of their community (Burkey, 1993: 35-36).

This shows that development in any meaningful sense must begin with and within the individual, even in our way of doing leadership theology in the church. Unless the motivation comes from within, efforts to promote change will not be sustained. The individual will remain under the power of others. Women need personal motivation and courage to acquire change in the church to work together with men. Men in leadership positions should resist having attitudes of blocking women development.

(ii) Economic development

In defining economic development Burkey (1993) states:

Economic development is a process by which people through their own individual and/or joint efforts boost production for consumption and to have a surplus to sell for cash. This means that the returns to the activity must be greater than the costs: it must be profitable. The back side of production is marketing – there can be no cash profits without available markets. It also means that some of the surplus produced must be reinvested in the same activity or in profitable new activities (Burkey, 1993: 36).

(iii) Political development

Burkey (1993) defines and explains political development in the following way:

Political development is a process of gradual change over time in which the people increase their awareness of their own capabilities, their rights and their responsibilities and use this knowledge to organize themselves so as to acquire political power in order (1) to participate in decision-making at local level and to choose their own leaders and representatives at higher levels of government who are accountable to the people, (2) plan and share power democratically; and (3) to create and allocate communal resources equitably (fairly) and efficiently among individual groups. Hence it may be possible to avoid corruption and exploitation, realize social and economic development, political stability and people, and create a politicized population within the context of their own culture and their political system (Burkey, 1993: 37).

(iv) Social development

Burkey (1993) defines social development in the following way:

Social development is a process of gradual change in which people increase their awareness of their own capabilities and common interests, and use this knowledge to analyze their needs; on solutions; organize themselves for cooperative efforts; and mobilize their human, financial and natural resources to improve, establish and maintain their social services and institutions with the context of their own culture and their own political system (Burkey, 1993: 39).

These examples of definitions of personal, economic, political and social development illustrate one way of defining development. Burkey (1993) states that “The relationship between social, economic and political development can be explained as two pillars representing economic and political development and a girder on top of the pillars representing social development where the girder is dependent upon the support of the two pillars which in turn rest upon a foundation of personal development” (1993: 38). If men and

women in any given society could be developed to the level explained by Burkey (1993), development in church leadership will be attained as well. Women in the church cannot articulate their views because they are not personally, economically, politically and socially developed.

Literature on development stresses that it is people who develop, and that unless there are large numbers of suitably qualified people, development cannot take place even if other factors such as adequate financial investment and adequate material resources are entirely satisfactory (Chung and Ngara, 1985: 128).

Applied to the aims of this study, development will refer to the ability of the RCZ leadership to create new structures that allow lay leadership to be involved in moving from institutional and clerical models of leadership to a mystical communion model and training the lay leadership in all church ministries; not holding church education only to ministers.

1.8.3 Clergy and Minister

"Clergy" is a term used along with "minister" and "priest" that formally designates a leadership type. In an institutional church like the Roman Catholic Church, the term clergy refers to a member of the clerical caste, set off against the laity by ordination (Dulles, 1976: 51). "Clergy is a person because of his office and ordination carries with him the sacramental presence of Christ" (Ogden, 1990: 65). The common understanding of clergy is that of a person authorized to perform religious functions in a church.

In the institutional church, the clergy is viewed primarily in terms of power. They have a threefold responsibility of teaching, sanctifying and ruling, which led to hierarchical power structures (Dulles, 1976: 153). In this study "clergy" refers to the ordained ministers or workers as opposed to the rest of the church members. In the RCZ clergy generally is understood as referring to the ordained minister.

The term "minister" is the one preferred in the Reformed tradition. Ministers are persons who, because of their office and ordination, carry with them the sacramental presence of Christ (Ogden, 1990: 63).

Ordinary people in the RCZ know two kinds of ministers: Those who serve in the parliament and ministers of religion. Thus the term "clergy" is often used to clarify which is meant.

Though the words "clergy" and "ministers" are from two different models according to the theory of Dulles (1976), they are used interchangeably in this study.

The role of the clergy or ministers is to preach the Word, officiate sacraments, officiate marriages, chair church council meetings, determine who can be allowed to preach in the congregation, to do house visitation, to confirm church elders and deacons, etc. (Rules and Regulations RCZ, 1986: 33-34).

1.8.4 Laity / Lay

Up to this point, the researcher has defined the terms "clergy" and "minister" which have all become associated with a particular, set-apart class, often designated as the ordained. On the other side of the ledger is "laity", used for the vast majority of the church. In common speech the words "layperson" and "laity" have a largely negative connotation, simply meaning the untrained or unqualified (Ogden, 1990: 60).

Kathleen (1963:69) defines laity/lay as "the body of people not in orders, as opposed to clergy". Ogden (1960: 67) captures this sense of non-entity of laity well: "For these [the laity] has a strong element of 'over-againstness' toward the clergy – the clergy are, the laity is not, the clergy do, and the laity does not. Nobody wants to be unrecognized". John Stott (1968) illustrated further how the word "lay" has been debased: "'Lay' is often a synonym for 'amateur' as opposed to 'professional' or 'unqualified' as opposed to 'expert'" (1968: 29).

This negative view of the distinction between clergy and laity also holds sway in the RCZ. Over and against this common perspective, Peterse (1993: 31) explains that "laity/lay" are the men, women and children who have been "ordained" by baptism to become the church in the world. Their ministry is accomplished through a double presence:

- They come before God as representatives of all human beings and of the whole creation to worship God.
- They are sent out as God's representatives into areas of life to be prophets of hope and priests of reconciliation.

The etymology of the word "laity/lay" is from the Greek word '*Laos*' meaning the people of God. '*Laos*' gives a sense of specialness of all people of God, both clergy and non-clergy (Ogden, 1960: 67-68). This study supports the latter view of the concept. Both groups must

work together, learning from and with each other as they seek to discern God's will and act to restore God's design of church leadership.

1.8.5 Elder

Watson (1978: 248) says that the etymology of the word comes from Latin '*presbyter*' and from Greek '*presbuteros*', meaning "elder". Consequently it was used to describe the leader of the community. The church later used the word to mean a person ordained by laying on of hands for church ministry.

According to McKee (1989: 39-40), "elder" in other Protestant churches refers to the ordained, ordained people to preach the Word and administer the sacraments. But the elders in the Calvinist Reformed church were "lay" ecclesiastical leaders elected to work with the ordained minister in overseeing the daily lives of the congregation, helping to resolve conflicts, counselling, admonishing, and (if finally necessary) discipline those whose lives or beliefs required rebuke. Elders in the RCZ preach when the minister is not there. They guard the church doctrine, assist the minister to serve Holy Communion, they attend church councils, and they do house visitation (Church Rules and Regulations 1986: 34).

The definition of "elder" in the RCZ is therefore someone who is not ordained by laying-on of hands like a minister, but initiated or confirmed by the minister in charge of the congregation.

1.8.6 Deacon

The Greek word for "deacon" is '*diakonos*', meaning "servant" or waiter. Apparently, deacons were initially the assistants to bishops or overseers. They were a special group of people in the church called to service the social needs of people. Their origin was attributed by some to the appointment of the seven in Acts 6:1-6, though they are not actually called deacons (Stringer, 1990: 52).

According to McKee (1989: 64), deacons are the second officers to the presbyters in rank. They are the collectors and administrators of the church finances. They are not ordained by the laying on of hands as ministers, but initiated or confirmed by the minister of the congregation. McKee's (1989) definition is also the factual understanding of the deacon in the RCZ. They also share the leadership responsibilities of the church with the minister and the

elders.

Deacons in the RCZ also receive church offerings:

- they visit the poor, needy and ill
- they supervise the alms offering
- they attend church councils (Church Rules and Regulations, 1986: 34)

1.9 CHAPTER'S OVERVIEW

The nature of Chapter 1 of the study is a preface. The problem is introduced and described. The central purpose of the study is to restructure the leadership of the RCZ based on the methodology of doing theology in as defined in all 8 points by Hendriks (2004) in his book “Studying Congregations in Africa” a NetACT publication (2004: 23-34). This discipline of doing theology to discern the normative biblical principles, church tradition, regarding church leadership to accommodate laity in decision-making bodies, especially women, is based on the understanding of our identity in God (points one and two of the definition in point 1.7.4.1 of this chapter). A hypothesis, which is a proposed bridge between the problem and goal of the study, is supplied, followed by the sociological, ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions of the research design. Definitions of some major concepts are given. A framework of chapter's overview is laid out. Finally, a short historical overview of the Reformed church in Zimbabwe is provided.

Chapter 2 discusses different views on the church offices. Methodologically the Word provides the normative basis from which the researcher addresses the problem. The biblical views on church offices from the perspective of the Old and the New Testaments are discussed first. Some Old Testament scholars, like W Brueggemann, RR Hutton, and others are used to analyse offices and leadership in the Old Testament. Scholars like DL Bartlett, EE Ellis and others are used to analyse leadership in the New Testament. The relationship between leadership style and structure and the contextual situation is an important consideration for this study. Therefore, the researcher aims to construct a good theological and normative basis of church leadership from the Old and New Testament sources.

After the biblical studies, analyses of Roman Catholic theologians, the Early Reformers, Reformed theologians, twentieth century theologians and liberation theologians are outlined

and discussed to explore their views on leadership, offices and authority in the church. Lastly, “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” the outspoken document of World Council of Churches and viewpoints on the subsequent debate is analysed in this chapter. Once again the researcher tries to point to the relationship between leadership styles and structures and the ever-changing contextual situation.

Chapter 3 discusses the historical background of the RCZ in brief, the *Shona* cultural background and its structures. This is to determine how the *Shona* culture influenced the leadership structures of the RCZ. The identity of the *Shona* culture is explored in relation to the identity of God our creator, redeemer and sanctifier to influence the leadership of the church to work with the laity on the basis of God’s identity and not the *Shona* culture.

Chapter 4 explores the history of the present identity of the RCZ. It traces the history of church leadership patterns in the RCZ from 1891 to the present situation, to determine whether there have been developments in the area of lay leadership. The following periods are analysed: 1891-1952, the period of missionary and colonial leadership up to the formation of an indigenous “*Shona*” Reformed church in Zimbabwe in 1952, the period 1953 to 1975, the joint leadership of missionaries and *Shona* people to 1975, which saw only *Shona* ministers elected on the Moderamen for the first time. 1976 was the outset of the period of the liberation struggle in the country which had an effect on church leadership. This period finished in 1980 when independence was reached. The last period is 1981 to the present, the period after independence, when RCZ ministers took full responsibility and initiative in the church.

Chapter 5 deals with the present context, relating to the fourth point of the methodology of doing theology. It is here where the research is involved in a vocationally based, critical and constructive interpretation of the present reality of leadership in the RCZ. In this chapter, the researcher carries out an empirical study in the lay leadership groups. Interviews and questionnaires are used. Different groups of people in the church are interviewed. An analysis on lay leadership involvement in the following structures of the church is done: congregations, presbyteries and synod. Empirical data is gathered, analysed and assessed to determine the relationship between the laity and the clergy.

In Chapter 6, the researcher continues to describe the present situation and looks at the bigger Zimbabwean context and its influence on church structures and offices. The present

contextual situation is analysed from the perspective of the mega trends: Modernism and post-modernism, new moral approaches to life and the break up of structures. Other aspects of the present situation in Zimbabwe is analysed to understand their influence on society and the RCZ, in:

- The political situation
- The economic situation
- The educational situation
- The health situation
- Current communication styles in the Zimbabwean society

Lastly, Chapter 7 focuses on strategies for empowering lay leadership. The first part of the chapter looks at different models for empowering lay leadership. They are the following:

- The discipleship movement
- Thomas H Groome
- Lawrence O Richards
- Others, such as the Lumko series methodology
- Theological Education by Extension (TEE)

The second part focuses on the applicability of lay leadership development in the RCZ on the following groups:

- Evangelists
- Lay preachers
- Women leadership
- Youth leadership

The third and last part of the chapter reflects on all the findings of Chapters 2 to 5. The researcher believes there is a typical pattern visible in the Bible between leadership style, church structure and contextual situations. However, the principles of church leadership are clear. Through this study, the researcher hopes to give guidance on how the principles of church leadership and structure need to be applied in the contextual situation of the RCZ. This means that the conclusions of Chapter 2 are related to that of Chapters 3 to 5. The chapter ends with some recommendations to the RCZ on what strategies and procedures need to take to develop strong, transparent, biblical and effective lay leadership involvement in the decision-making structures.

Chapter 8 provides an overall summary and conclusion and recommendations to the study.

1.10 A SHORT HISTORY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE (RCZ)

The purpose of this short historical overview is to explain something of the present identity of the RCZ. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is "the daughter" church of the DRC (Cape) founded in 1891. The church was initiated by the black Dutch Reformed Christians in Zoutpansberg under the guidance and inspiration of the pioneer missionary, Stephanus Hofmeyr (Van der Merwe, 1981: 35). The task of the mission in Zimbabwe initially was a concerted effort by white, coloured and black missionaries. Cronje (1982: 114) stated that, compared with other South African missions, it was also unique in so far as the first missionary endeavour in Zimbabwe was initiated by black missionaries and a black church.

From the hunters who periodically visited Zimbabwe on hunting expeditions, Hofmeyr learned of the "*Banyai*" people or "*Vakaranga*" (the Shone tribe in Masvingo and Gutu areas) living in the mountains out of fear of the Matebele marauders, who regularly raided their villages. In 1890, Rev SP Helm, accompanied by the evangelists Micha Makato and Jozua Masoha, were sent to investigate the possibility of a more settled and permanent mission in the country of Mashonaland. According to Cronje (1982: 115), they found that the Shona people in the neighbourhood of the Great Zimbabwe Ruins, in the area ruled by Chief Mugabe, were anxious to have a missionary. But a major problem, however, was Chief Lobengula of the Matebele, who categorically refused to allow any mission to be started among the Shona.

After the entrance of the Pioneer Column of the British South African Company in 1890, the conditions became more peaceful among the Shona. Through persevering prayers and faithful and fearless witness, the Dutch Reformed congregation in Zoutpansberg had also been used by God to pave the way for a more intensive and far-reaching mission in Zimbabwe by the DRC (Cape) (Van der Merwe, 1981: 45).

Touched by the spiritual need of the Shona people, Rev Helm went to South Africa after his return from Zimbabwe to share this good news. He addressed the Synod of the DRC (Cape) and visited fourteen congregations to explain the spiritual need of the Shona and the great opportunity which confronted the church. To his great disappointment only one recruit came forward: Andrew Louw, the son of a DRC minister in the town of Paarl. He had discontinued his theological studies at the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch because of health problems and started farming in the dry climate of Colesberg (Cronje, 1982: 115-116).

Despite his poor health, Louw accepted the call. He asked for permission from his father to go on God's mission to Zimbabwe. He left Paarl on 1 April 1891 heading for Zimbabwe. In Transvaal, at the congregation of Hofmeyr, he was accompanied by seven African evangelists. They left Kranspoort by ox-wagon on 18 June 1891. They crossed the Limpopo River and entered Zimbabwe. After a journey of two-and-a-half months they reached the mountain of Chief Mugabe. Here the first mission, Morgenster, was founded by Louw on 9 September 1891. On that date, Louw pitched his tent on Mugabe's hill, five kilometres from the Zimbabwe Ruins.

The mission work started at Morgenster by AA Louw and seven African evangelists has gradually grown and spread over the whole country. The RCZ now has fifty congregations, eight Presbyteries and one Synod.

CHAPTER TWO

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON CHURCH OFFICES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the introductory chapter it has been established that this study is concerned about the hierarchical structures in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, where the ordained clergy dominates leadership and decision-making. Authority is concentrated within the ranks of the male clergy whilst lay leadership are excluded from broader leadership levels. Yet on the other hand, in an ordinary congregation in RCZ, responsibilities are shared among the clergy, elders, deacons, evangelists, lay preachers, youth and women's guild.

The hierarchical leadership structures in the RCZ are still a carbon copy of the clerical paradigm. Flexibility is discouraged and uniformity is encouraged. In many areas of church life, clerical paradigm church patterns continue to dominate (Mead, 1994: 60). The leadership patterns, set by the founder missionaries in 1891, are still haunting the leadership structures. One acknowledges that history and traditions are very important, but in places where new life emerges and new contextual challenges to ministry are developing, transformation is needed.

The Zimbabwean cultural pattern of leadership of the *Shona* people in the Southern part of the country, is hierarchical, and has decidedly influenced the church leadership style.

In the RCZ, the development of lay leadership is minimal, because of this hierarchical model in place. But in our contextual situation, one could argue that the biblical teaching which supports the idea of "all God's people are ministers, and that ministry has become an expression of giftedness of the Body of Christ" (Ogden 1990: 20) should be taken into consideration.

The purpose of this chapter on church offices aims to critically examine the normative biblical principles regarding leadership in order to suggest how to rectify the situation in the RCZ, whereby the male clergy and a few male ruling elders dominate leadership, mostly on the Presbytery and Synod levels.

The problem this study addresses is that leadership in the RCZ still function in the clerical paradigm and consequent bureaucracy and rigidity. Lay leadership is not represented in church structures. In this chapter the researcher explores normative sources from the Bible and other church documents in order to describe the identity of both leadership and laity scripturally. In terms of the methodology, the chapter handles the important normative element, the biblical principles on leadership. In the process of doing so, two other aspects of methodology are addressed, in characteristics of the identity of the church and the creation of a dream or ideal. This dream or ideal is to assist the RCZ to get to a situation where the leadership functions in alternative ways, supported by structures that differ from the present ones.

In this chapter, the researcher will not address the issue of offices comprehensively but will rely on the views of the accepted specialist theologians in this field. Views from early reformer theologians, Roman Catholic theologians, twentieth century theologians, liberation theologians and views from the WCC Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (document) will be considered.

The aim of this chapter is by no means to dismantle the existing structures of the RCZ. Structures are indeed necessary and important to the functioning of the church. The aim is to suggest amendments where necessary to accommodate lay leadership in all the structures of the church.

2.2 BIBLICAL VIEWS

Under the section on biblical views, the researcher explores whether the clerical paradigm leadership that led to the bureaucracy and rigidity in the structures of RCZ is biblically influenced. The purpose is firstly to examine whether the Old Testament and New Testament views on the church offices and leadership promote hierarchical ministry which excludes the involvement of the laity. Secondly, the researcher aims to investigate whether the traditions of the people had an influence on the biblical principles of church leadership and offices. Thirdly, the researcher aims to investigate whether the culture of the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) people influenced structures of church leadership in any way.

2.2.1 Old Testament

2.2.1.1 Introduction

Throughout the Old Testament, kings, priests and prophets appear as constant features in the lives of the people of Israel. However, the place and function of these officers varied in relation to changing social and political realities. In this section, the places and functions of the above-mentioned officers will be considered.

2.2.1.2 The office of the king

In the Old Testament, there is little direct evidence of the religious function of the king, but there are many hints that the king was very important. Some historical reconstructions make him central (Grabbe 1995: 20). The Old Testament text has an ambivalent view of the kingship and as such reflects differing contexts or hermeneutical stances.

Hutton (1994: 74) argued that Israel was definitely and constitutively stamped by its nomadic past and its tribal organisation. The eventual development of the state form of government was therefore a foreign invasion. He regarded the charismatic leadership principles as essential to pre-monarchic Israel's self-understanding and argued that Saul's monarchy was faithful to this charismatic ideal. Saul's rule was divinely appointed and non-dynastic, based on his war leadership as commander of the popular militia.

But with David however, there was a radical departure from Israel's indigenous charismatic ideal. David was a career soldier whose basis of authority was not that of a spontaneous charismatic appointment of God ratified by popular support, but rather that of personal conquest. With the transition to the monarchy of the Davidic dynasty, Israel assumed a typically Canaanite form of state administration, which was antithetical to its Yahwistic (charismatic) roots (Hutton, 1994: 72). David's authority, on the other hand, has often been viewed as based on the power of his private army and his personal conquests; his rule regarded as entirely dynamic, non-charismatic and characteristically non-Israelite (Hutton, 1994: 74).

2.2.1.3 The king as a cultic figure

Although not a major topic, there are a number of references to the king as a cult official. This is especially true for individuals like Saul, David and Solomon. Other examples of kings

who officiated at the altar happen to be “wicked” kings such as Jeroboam 1 and Ahaz of Judah. Yet they are not criticized for their cultic activities and the only clear criticism of a king attempting to participate in the cult does not occur until II Chronicles 26:16-21 (Uzziah). The impression is that the king’s role in the cult was a major one and taken for granted (Grabbe, 1995: 35).

2.2.1.4 The religious gestalt of the king

From the biblical text, we get more than one opinion about the place of the king in the cult. The dominant view in those parts of OT usually thought to be priestly or Deuteronomistic (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings), is that the king had no cultic functions different from those of any lay Israelite (Grabbe, 1995: 39). The king was responsible for the well-being of his people, and this was done under the eyes of Yahweh whose ‘son’ was the king (Psalm 2:10). The authority of the king needed to be charismatic and institutional since he was working in religious and state political affairs.

Putting the OT passages together with parallels from kingship elsewhere in the ancient Near East, the following points, drawn from Grabbe (1995) seem to be apparent:

- The king was responsible to God for the people. He was their shepherd and guardian. He was not just a secular ruler but also the important figure of religious entity in Israel.
- The king was ultimately responsible for the cult. Some kings, such as David and Solomon, were cult and temple founders.
- The king exercised a variety of forms including cultic acts such as offering sacrifice on behalf of people.
- The Israelite and Judean kings were much like their counter parts in the other areas of the ancient Near East. The one exceptional OT tradition is that Israel once had no human king. This is one area where Israel seemed different from the nations around it (Grabbe, 1995: 40).

2.2.1.5 The office of the priest

According to Yonder (1982: 247) the priest managed the interpretation of nature, whereas the prophet interpreted historical events unique to Israel’s self-consciousness. The bond to this thesis is that for Israel’s self-identity, the priest was superfluous: Israel could have been Israel without the priestly function. Such a tendency to promote the prophet to the visionary centre of biblical faith and demote the priest to clerk or bureaucrat has long been recognised as an

unfortunate part of the Reformation's legacy, with its romantic fascination with the freedom of the "word" against the captivity of "law" and legalistic clericalism. Israel's legal/priestly traditions have degenerated good forms of religious expression (Hutton, 1994: 138).

It is true that whereas the prophet was associated with the 'word' or 'vision' in Israel's social life the priest was responsible for 'instruction' (torah) (Jeremiah 18: 18). The distinction between prophetic 'word' and priestly 'torah', which reflects fundamental social realities, is the way to understanding charismatic and institutional impulses within the priesthood (Yonder, 1982: 248).

2.2.1.6 The priest as professional guild

Exploring the social role and location of the priesthood is complicated in the Old Testament. The biblical materials do not provide a careful definition of the office. However, some descriptions of assorted priestly activities do exist. In the books of Leviticus and Numbers the priest is regarded primarily as an agent of sacrifice and atonement ritual and the arbiter of community purity. Elsewhere, however, the priest is associated with the administration of justice (Exodus 22:7-13; Deut. 17:8-13; 19:16-17; II Chron. 19:1-8). In addition, priests have a primary "teaching" function, responsible for the public rehearsal of Israel's legal tradition (Hutton, 1994: 139). Several studies of the development of priesthood have suggested that Israelite priests were procured through various means such as manipulation of Urim and Thummim and possibly by the inspection of livers of sacrificial animals (Grabbe, 1995: 42).

According to this common reconstruction, over the centuries, the priests' role became increasingly juridical, especially under the reforms of Jehoshaphat, as a result of which their sphere of competency shifted to that of being tridents and preservers of Israel's legal traditions. The distinction between priests and Levites became sharper during the late monarchy. It hit a crisis point and Josiah shut outlying country sanctuaries. The teaching and juridical function then shifted increasingly to Levitical circles and priests gradually became specialists in sacrifice, particularly those involving expiatory blood rites; the hallmark of postexilic temple cult (Aelred, 1969: 80).

This traditional legal function of the priest in the OT has filtered through generations so that even today, its influence can also be seen to affect the RCZ leadership.

2.2.1.7 Socio-economic structures of the priesthood

As in nearly all human societies, the Israelite priesthood appears to have been a privileged guild; its members were granted considerable status, compensation and material security in exchange for their professional competence. The socio-economic position of the priesthood is suggested by the very term of their 'ordination' expressed in Hebrew by the phrase 'filling the hand'. The priesthood, therefore, enjoyed marked stability based on its economic resources, material holdings, and favours granted through royal patronage due to this ordination (Brueggemann, 1982: 20-21). Overlaying these material political considerations was a sophisticated ideology that not only promoted the priesthood as divinely selected and set apart for the realm for the 'holy', but also reinforced the social position of favoured families by granting them full power to make atonement for private and cooperative sin, thereby maintaining the equilibrium of the community (Hutton, 1994: 149). The priesthood was also given institutional stability through a bureaucratic structure characteristic of national ecclesiastical cults through ancient Near East (Chris, 1982: 33).

The temple staff were under the leadership of the 'chief priest', who in turn was assisted by a 'second priest' (2 Kings 25:18; 23:4). The book of Jeremiah alludes twice to a priestly chief officer (Jeremiah 20:1; 29:26-27), who apparently was a subordinate official whose duty it was to supervise the temple prophets and give guidance to the king concerning the legitimacy of the prophetic oracle (Amos 7:10-13). In addition, the priests certainly must have regulated internal matters through a council directed from the 'elders of the priests' (Jeremiah 19:1).

With the priesthood enjoying such a relatively secured economic base tied into state and royal revenue, with such thoroughly institutionalised channels of authority and accountability and with such a sophisticated and ideological program, it is not surprising that the distinction is made between 'charismatically' inspired individual prophets on one hand and 'institutionally' grounded office-holding priests on the other hand (Hutton, 1994: 151). All in all, it is clear that priesthood had strong institutional support structures.

2.2.1.8 The social role of the priest

Social roles do not stay frozen or static over long periods of time. The emergence of distinct contemporary forms of ministry exercised by twentieth-century members of the clergy, forms that vary considerably from those of former centuries, proves this. The Israelite clergy experienced similar shifts in the ways in which their areas of professional competency were

practiced, understood and exercised (Hutton 1994: 151).

This fact should be realised by the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership in order to accommodate other players in the church structures at all levels. It is unwarranted to presume that a shift from oracular agent to specialist in Torah and finally to sacrificial expert on the part of OT priest was any more required fundamental a shift in basic self-understanding than the shift in contemporary ministry from guardian of the sacraments and creeds to “community enabler” (Grabbe, 1995: 130). Such shifts in and self-awareness naturally take place but are not necessarily the result of radical redirection or of conscious ideological reprogramming. Such shifts come slowly and are nearly always understood to be consonant with ideological structures, and not in open revolt against them (Grabbe, 1995: 130).

2.2.1.9 The office of the prophet

In the OT, the concept of a prophet has become difficult to define. The concept has various meanings, which could not be pursued in this study. Only a few scholarly definitions will suffice in this study. The important issue in this section is to understand the role and function of the prophet in the OT period.

Brueggeman (1982) defined the prophet as “a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment”. We also use the term “prophet” in everyday language primarily to mean someone who is able to predict the future. Biblical prophets have certainly influenced this image. The English word “prophet” comes from the Greek prophetess meaning “interpreter (of the divine will), predictor of the future” (Grabbe, 1995: 99).

Prophets were important in the Israelite religion. They were the originators of ethical monotheism. The uniqueness of the Israelite prophets, especially the “classical prophets”, lies in the fact that rather than mere predictors of the future, they responded to specific contextual situations with appropriate messages of social criticism (and occasionally, encouragement). They were not foretellers but forth tellers (Grabbe, 1995: 99).

2.2.1.10 Prophets in the Old Testament

In traditional societies, religious specialists may be differentiated on the basis of gender. Prophecy in Israel seems mainly to have been a male domain but not exclusively. There are

several references to female prophets. One of the most important is Hulda (2 Kings 22:14-20). Evidently the wife of Shallum a temple official she was consulted about the message of the book of law found at the time of Josiah. Her message and decision was taken seriously by King Josiah. Two other women are labelled prophetesses: Miriam (Exodus 15:20) and Deborah (Judges 4:4 10).

These reports of prophetesses are all brief, which makes it difficult to draw major conclusions. Nevertheless from the little that is known, the only difference from the male prophets seems to be their sex. The behaviour and messages show no significant difference from those found among male prophets. Although there may have been many more prophetesses than suggested by the few mentioned in the text, the same is also true of prophets. No special bias against female prophets is indicated in any of the passages where they are mentioned (Grabbe, 1995: 143).

2.2.1.11 The gestalt of the prophet

The definition of a prophet is one which covers not only Israel but prophetic figures in the ancient Near East, in later Judaism, and in other pre-modern societies. The prophet must be defined by his/her functions and role in society. In considering the various functions and roles of prophets, the following points and characteristics need to be considered:

- They receive messages; taken to be from God, by a variety of means: for example visions, auditions “angels”, the spirits or “hand” of Yahweh. Although one or more of these might be favored over others in a particular culture, there is no evidence that Israel or any other society rejected any of these outright. (Grabbe, 1995: 116).
- They delivered the messages received to the required recipients; this is often the king or ruler, but it can be an ordinary individual. To convey the messages, the prophet could use symbolic action, oral delivery, or even writing.
- The message may be positive or negative. It may support or tear down social institutions. The type of message does not distinguish one prophet from another, since prophets may well utter one type of message on one occasion and one on another.

- Many prophets have the reputation of an ability to call on God's power to accomplish supernatural deeds: to perform signs and wonders, to benefit friends or harm enemies, to see the spirit world and even into the future. This aura of supernatural power is not characteristic of all prophets, but the choice of an individual by a divinity itself apportions a certain sense of power to the recipient (Grabbe, 1995: 117).

2.2.1.12 Conclusion

Examination of this section on biblical views in the Old Testament has shown that the social context of the OT was male dominated. With regard to the function of the kings, prophets, priests and royal dynasties, there is interplay of traditional, legal-rational and charismatic impulses. An examination of the social matrixes of ancient Israel with respect to each of these leadership types shows that in a certain sense they all exhibit aspects of the charismatic type.

The generally presupposed antithesis between charismatic and spiritual in the Hebrew bible seems to be a false dichotomy. In spite of some other foreign cultural invasions, Israel in a way maintained her Yahwistic religious principles or identity.

The context of the Old Testament is for several reasons appealing to Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. From an analysis of the three offices in the OT, the king, priest and prophet, some facts are clear. First, the offices are male and adult domain except for a few women mentioned. The offices are also adult domain. The youth seems to be conspicuously absent. This corresponds with the Shona traditions where the kingship, prophecy and priesthood were all male domains. The only place given to the women was that of representing a man if they were possessed with a man's spirit.

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe seems to take cue from these structures. Any challenge to the church hierarchy is usually justified by reference to the structures of the Old Testament and *Shona* traditions. This selective application of OT sections and *Shona* culture has effectively prevented a major section of the church from playing its rightful role.

2.2.2 New Testament

The previous section on the Old Testament confirmed that the context of OT world, the offices of the priest, the king and prophet were male domain. However, women, though few,

played a role in those offices. The present section aims to analyze the NT situation of church leadership structures. The researcher hopes that by analysing the major trends in the NT, one finds clues that judge and shape our understanding of the church office in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The section tries to see whether the NT documents promote hierarchical structures which are male dominated and exclude the laity from all the levels of the church structures.

In the examination of the NT documents, the historical, social and theological situations of some documents will be considered. Guidelines concerning leadership titles as Apostles, prophets, teachers, bishops, elders and deacons are to be considered to see how they functioned in their contextual situation.

2.2.2.1 Guidelines

When considering the role of lay people in church leadership, it is important to realistically assess the leadership situations found in the churches of NT times. Does the NT present a guideline concerning leadership structures? The reader will find, however, that guidelines are hard to establish, except in the most general way. Although written well after the establishment of the early Christian communities, the Gospels give little indication as to how those communities were organised.

In the gospels Jesus evidently chose the twelve to be his inner circle of disciples (Mark 3:13-19). They were the particular recipients of his teachings (Mark 8:27-33). Among these, three of them, Peter, James and John, were singled out at various times (Mark 9:2-13; 14:33). Occasionally, Peter alone received special commendation (Matt. 16:16-19). Luke's gospel refers to a wider group, the seventy-two, who were divided into teams of two and were sent out to proclaim the message of Jesus and to heal (Luke 10:1-16).

The book of Acts presents a slightly different situation, mentioning "apostles", "elders", "prophets" and "teachers" in connection with local communities (Acts 15:2; 13:1). Paul, in his missionary tours, appointed "elders" in several towns (Acts 14:21-23).

Some NT letters are curiously silent about the leadership structures of the church. For example, in Corinthians, a very personal letter from Paul to a church, which he himself established, there is no reference at all to any official leader. This is all the more surprising in view of the special nature of the problems in the Corinthian church. Even Paul advises that a

special church meeting be called to deal with a serious matter of discipline. He addressed his comments to the whole church and makes no mention of a specific person whose responsibility it might have been to take action (1 Cor. 5:8-11) (Howe, 1982: 67-68).

The letter to Hebrews does mention church leaders, although only briefly. “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account” (Hebrews 13:17). It is Peter who first includes a special exhortation to “the elders among you”. They are to “tend the flock of God that is their charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not domineering over those in their charge but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2). Comments such as these give some insight into the nature of a church leader’s responsibility, but they are not at all specific concerning either office or function (Howe, 1982: 69).

The Pastoral Epistles, the only canonical letters to a church leader, reflect a more structured situation. Timothy has been left in Ephesus to supervise the church there, and Titus has been given a similar task with respect to the churches on the island of Crete (1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5). Instructions are given to these men concerning the appointment of church leaders, and titles such as “bishop”, “deacon” and “elder” emerge as referring to some particular church office. But the instructions given are more concerned with the qualities required of a person appointed to such office with specific function, so that once again the leader is left to surmise the content of the office (Brink and De Ridder 1980: 109).

Howe (1982: 69) argued that at the outset it is important to note that there is no clear pattern for church leadership laid down in the NT documents with the respect to either title or function. Various people are described as “apostle”, “prophet”, “teacher”, “bishop”, “deacon” and “elder”, but the exact nature of their duties is in no way spelt out. At most, these titles can be examined to establish their significance, and the passages referring to each can be explored for some indication of function. A strong possibility remains that there was no standard practice of leadership in the early church and that initially title and function varied from place to place. The needs of the individual community determined the nature of the leadership function. Awareness of this fact is important. It suggests that the church of today should also feel free to exercise that same creative influence. The office of church leadership is not static, prescribed by sacred decree, and definitely not unchangeable. It is a service centred office, which must always remain flexible enough to adapt to changing needs and changing opportunities.

2.2.2.2 Titles / Offices

(a) Prophet

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul states, “God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers” (1 Corinthians 12:28). The context of the statement deals with charismatic activity, and it is not a pronouncement about ecclesiastical structure. It could be that in the early years of the church, when itinerant messengers of the gospel were essential, this was the nature of church leadership, while at a later stage, resident leaders such as bishops and deacons came into being (Howe, 1982:70). The prophets of the New Testament communities, like the prophets of Old Testament times, fulfilled a two-fold ministry: the proclamation of God’s message both in word and action. According to 1 Corinthians 14, the gift of prophecy was widespread to men and women and was indeed a gift to be coveted.

The book of Acts shows that some individuals were endowed with this charisma in a special way and received recognition as prophets and prophetesses. The ministry included perspective foresight and direction concerning the future. The prophet Agabus, one of a group of prophets in Jerusalem, informed the church at Antioch that there would be a famine (Acts 11:27-30). He also warned Christians about Paul’s impending imprisonment (Acts 21:10-11). In Caesarea, Paul stayed in the home of Philip whose four unmarried daughters were known as prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9). The church of Antioch was also led by a group of prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1).

(b) Apostle

Who were the apostles and what was the nature of their ministry? The Lukan writings, particularly, show much interest in this office. Jesus, after a night of prayer selected from his circle of followers a group of twelve who were named “apostles” (Luke 6:12-16). They followed Jesus and received his special teaching. They were commissioned to preach the Kingdom of God and carry out a ministry of healing (Luke 9:1-6). The apostles were also the recipients of the post-resurrection teaching of Jesus (Acts 1:3), and they were at the time commissioned to be a ministry of witness that was to embrace the whole world (Acts 1:8) (Judge, 1960:4-5).

The writings of Paul reflect a wider understanding of apostleship. It is no longer limited to the Twelve. Paul speaks of himself as an apostle, and claims that his vision of the risen Christ, his mission to the Gentiles and his constant sufferings, validate his apostleship. Paul names Barnabas, Andronicus and Junias as apostles (1 Cor. 9:5-6; Rom. 16:7) and constantly assumes the existence of a wider group of apostles than that of the twelve, both in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 15:5, 7) and elsewhere (1 Cor. 8:23). It was Paul who carried effectively the apostolic witness; “to the end of the world” (Acts 1:8). In doing this he was accompanied by people who had not been recipients of the original commission and not necessarily in touch with those who had originally been recipients (Barret, 1972: 79).

The NT documents, then, reflect some diversity in the understanding of apostolic function. Tension existed from time to time between those who were “reputed to be pillars” in the early church and those who were also apostles (Gal. 2). This issue scholars argue that to overlook this in the early stages of the church’s development is to do a disservice to the church of today and tomorrow. Office and function of such a significant office as that of the apostle were not clearly defined (Howe, 1982: 72).

Was the apostolic office passed on to other leaders in the church? In a concise volume, *Priest and Bishop, Biblical Reflections*, Brown Raymond (1970: 47-49) a Roman Catholic scholar, addresses himself to the question, “are the bishops the successors of the apostles?” He argued that, little if anything is said in the NT concerning the sacramental powers of the apostles. Although it is known that they baptised, it is not conclusive that they presided at the Eucharist or that they forgave sins. Nor is there any evidence that such sacramental powers were passed on to the Christian in direct lineal contact with the apostles.

Brown (1970: 77-78) argued that the task of the apostle differed from that of the bishop. While the apostle was a theological innovator by necessity, the bishop tended to become a preserver of established tradition. The gifts needed for an itinerant ministry of evangelism also differed from those needed for the pastoral supervision of a pastoral congregation. Indeed, Brown claims that in the modern church some of the principle activities of the Pauline apostolate, especially with regards to leadership to face new religious problems, have been taken over functionally by men and women who are not bishops but by theologians, enterprising priests and perceptive laity with their manifold competence (Brown, 1970: 78).

Brown (1970) confirms the fact mentioned in the section outlining the problem statement of this study, that in any ordinary congregation in the RCZ, responsibility should be shared among evangelists, lay preachers, youth and women who are not clergy.

In support of Brown, Hans Kung (1971: 354-359) asserts that apostleship *per se* can never be repeated. What remains are a task and a commission. The church as a whole is called to fulfil the task originally assigned to the apostles. Each member of the church must witness to a faith that is true to scripture and must serve in submission to Christ. Kung (1971) concludes: “As an individual I must hear their witness, believe their message imitate their mission and ministry” (1971: 358).

(c) Bishop / Presbyter

Although the two distinct titles of “bishop” (*episcopos*) and “presbyter” (*presbyteros*, elder) occur in NT documents, it is not at all clear that it represents different offices in the early church. Paul, on his last visit to the west coast of Asia called together the presbyters of the Ephesians church (Acts 20:17) and reminded them that the Holy Spirit had placed them over the congregations as bishops (Acts 20:28). The presbyteries addressed in 1 Peter 5:1 are exhorted to act as bishops in exercising oversight (1 Peter. 5:2). In the Pastoral Epistles Titus is instructed that his duty is to appoint presbyters and is then given guidelines concerning the qualities one should take into consideration in appointing a bishop (Titus 1:5-9).

The question always asked by people is: were these terms always used interchangeably, or did two originally distinct offices become merged into one? Scholars have suggested that the concept of presbyter emerged from the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem and that the designation bishop shows a Greek environment and of Gentile world. Christians borrowed the word bishop (*episcopos*) from the secular world. In non-biblical Greek it describes an onlooker or protector. When used to describe an official holder, it has a reference to quite an ordinary position, usually with technical or financial responsibilities (Howe, 1982: 75).

In the New Testament the noun *episcopos* occurs six times. In 1 Peter 2:25, it is used with reference to God and is linked with the concept of a shepherd. The same symbolism is found in Acts 20:28. In Philippians 1:1 the bishops and deacons of the church are named among the addressees of the letter. It is notable that this one congregation had several bishops as well as several deacons.

The Pastoral Epistles are more specific in their use of the term. In 1 Tim. 3:1-7 (Titus 1:5-9) Paul describes the qualities required of a person appointed to this office. It is assumed that the bishop will be married. His family will be the testing ground for his aptitude in caring for the church. But little is said concerning the nature or duties or offices in these passages since more of its character is at stake.

The presbyter is mentioned more frequently in the NT. Within the Jewish communities there were elders in the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66, Acts 22:5) and in the synagogue (Luke 7:3). In the Christian community, the representatives of the Jerusalem church were called elders. Barnabas and Paul took gifts to Jerusalem and gave them to the elders (Acts 11:30). When problems arose in the church of Antioch, Barnabas and Paul again went to Jerusalem to discuss issues with the apostles and the elders (Acts 15:2). On a later occasion, Paul conferred with James and all the elders in Jerusalem (Acts 21:18).

In the Pastoral Epistles, this title also features. In 1 Tim. 4:14 references are made to a council of elders that appointed Timothy to a particular ministry. Exhortation is also made to elders who rule well. They are to be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who preach and teach (1 Timothy. 5:17).

Elders are also mentioned in the general epistles. They are to minister the sick (James 5:14-15). They are not, however, designated to hearing confessions, for that is seen as a community responsibility (James 5:17). Peter, writing to Christians in Asia Minor addresses an exhortation to elders and calls himself a fellow elder. It is clear that Peter sees their function as one of pastoral care with some responsibility for financial matters, as well as to guard against the abuse of their powers (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Vischer (1992: 75) states that it is not possible to say with certainty whether bishop and presbyter were two distinct offices in the New Testament period. All that can be inferred is that the offices had considerable overlap. It was in the patristic period of the church's history that each was given a distinct identity. The content of the offices is only vaguely delineated in the NT. Although similar titles or offices can be identified in the synagogue, in the pharisaic circles, and in Jewish sectarian life, this does not necessarily imply that the early church patterned its leadership after such models. In this office, as is in other areas the primitive community was innovative. Latter Christian communities fashioned the office to accommodate their own specific needs.

(d) Deacon

The word transliterated as the deacon, “*diakonos*” is only one of several Greek words describing service. It does not carry the idea of degradation one would associate with the service of a slave. Rather, it depicts the voluntary service that springs from a relationship with a master who is well respected. It is a service of love, such as when a person offers hospitality to a guest.

The word “*diakonos*” was used in a more technical sense in reference to a special office within the church. Mention is made of “bishops and deacons” as though these two officers were coordinated (Phil. 1:1). The same conjunction of two offices is found in the Pastoral Epistles. After dealing with the qualifications of bishop, the writer gives instructions concerning the kind of people who should be appointed as deacons and deaconesses. They must be men and women who have a serious outlook, who are temperate in their speech, and who exercise control over their personal lives. A married deacon (and, by implication deaconess) must be successful in caring for his or her own household, 1 Tim. 3:8-13 (Kung, 1971: 394).

Phoebe, in the church of Cenchreae, was a deaconess who helped not only Paul but many other believers (Rom. 16:1-2). In the NT, many scholars take Acts 6:1-6 to be the basis of office of the deacon. The seven were chosen to supervise the “ministry of tables”. These seven represented for Irenaeus the beginning of an order of church officials that differentiated from those responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church. While bishops (the Twelve) should concern themselves with prayer and preaching, deacons (the seven) should be responsible for secular matters such as finances and food. Since the times of Irenaeus, this has been for many an accepted pattern of church leadership (Howe, 1982: 79).

Kung (1971: 396-397) argued against the idea of Irenaeus, that among the chosen seven deacons, there were men like Stephen, “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5). In no sense did he confine himself only to the spheres of service mentioned above. He “did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8) and spent much of his time proclaiming the Christian message (Acts 8:4-13).

Philip was also named among the seven. He too carried on a ministry of preaching. In Samaria he brought “much joy” to the people through his ministry of preaching, such as that both men and women responded to his preaching and were baptised (Acts 8:4-13).

Howe (1982: 80), in support of Kung (1971) added that it was Philip who presented the Christian message to the Ethiopian who, after worshipping in the temple, was travelling home on the Jerusalem-Gaza road. Philip's exegesis of Isaiah's prophecy led the man to faith in Christ and Philip baptised him (Acts 8:26-39). Travelling along the coastal regions, Philip preached the Christian message from Azotus to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). Clearly he was concerned with the "ministry of the word."

Echlin (1971: 71-74) sees in this historical perspective a challenge to the church of today, by implication to the RCZ in particular. It is within the power of the present-day church to structure or restructure offices in such a way that they fully represent and fully serve the human condition. In the absence of biblical guidelines, as in this instance, no divine law binds the church to any structure of any past generation and tradition. Structure that may have been adequate at one time is not necessarily adequate for the present time.

2.2.2.3 Conclusion

An analysis of the New Testament documents indicates that leadership structures in the early church were diverse. Some elements of male domain are still a problem like in the OT world. Title and function are not clearly delineated in the NT documents. Transition took place from one leadership pattern to another, sometimes without conflict and friction. The criterion for leadership was evidently not in conformity to other churches. Rather, leadership title and function were geared to meeting the needs of the particular situation. Hans Kung (1971) comments: "A frightening gulf separates the church of today from the original constitution of the church" (1971: 413). The researcher suggests that in this case a clearer understanding of the original diversity in the constitution of the church will enable Christians and Christian leaders in the RCZ to face the future with more realism and more creativity.

Like the church of the New Testament, the RCZ needs to mould its offices to meet the needs of the Zimbabwean community, where youth, women guild, lay preachers and evangelists play a big role in all congregations. The lethargy that has kept the RCZ in a holding pattern can no longer be tolerated. An argument on the basis of "adherence to tradition and *Shona* cultural influence" is a weak one. Tradition should be seen as a record of the church's efforts to preserve and communicate its treasured message and experience in the most effective way.

It would be a shame if the RCZ rests on the laurels of the past to not affirm the role of women as leaders of Christian communities. The NT documents have shown how the church

creatively reformed offices to deal with contextual challenges. The same principle should be applied in the RCZ.

2.3 ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS' VIEWPOINT

2.3.1 Introduction

The position of the Roman Catholic Church on leadership falls under the institutional model. In this model, the pyramidal leadership, the leader (Pope) poses the total authority in the church. The official church teaches, sanctifies and rules with the authority of Christ (Dulles, 1987: 37). This model resembles the clerical paradigm, which had little room for lay participation. This church identifies itself with the governing body or the hierarchy where power flows from the top downwards. The final say in matters of church decisions are finalised by the higher authority.

2.3.2 The Roman Catholic point of view

The Roman Catholic standpoint is the Episcopal system carried to its logical conclusion. The system pretends to comprise not only the office of the successors of the apostles, but also a successor of Peter who is said to have had the primacy among the apostles and whose successor is now recognised as a special representative of Christ. The Roman Church has the nature of an absolute monarch, under the control of an infallible Pope, who has the right to determine and regulate the doctrine, worship and government of the church (Berkhof, 1948: 580).

Hall and Hall (1994: 4-6) allude that, under the Pope, the lower classes and orders, to which special grace is given and whose duty is to govern the church in strict accountability to their superiors and the supreme pontiff, is highly honoured. The laity has absolutely no voice in the structures of the Roman Catholic Church. The church is clerical in essence; it views the clergy, especially the higher class as the source of all power and initiative. The decision-making power is conceived as descending from the pope through the cardinals, bishops and the priests, while at the grassroots, the faithful laity plays a passive role and seems to have a lower position in the church (Dulles, 1987: 39). This system is in conflict with scripture which is a clear indication that no such supremacy of Peter exists as that on which the system is built. It distinctly recognises the voice of the people in ecclesiastical affairs. Moreover the claim of the Roman Catholic Church that there has been an unbroken line of succession from

the time of Peter down to present day is contradicted by history. The papal system is both exegetically and historically untenable (Berkhof, 1948: 580).

The Roman Catholic Church's emphasis on tradition and continuity of power from that of apostolic church influence the present church to maintain the higher degree of authority. The researcher, being accustomed to less rigid structures, differs from that of the Roman Catholic Church. This study argues for another approach of leadership structures. The researcher acknowledges that the church of Christ cannot perform its mission without some stable organisational features. It cannot unite men and women from nations into well-knitted faith communities of conviction, commitment and hope. And it cannot minister effectively to the needs of many kinds of people, unless it has responsible officers and properly approved procedures. The researcher does not support the view of the few officers who load it onto the rest of the people.

2.3.3 Conclusion

The Roman Catholic theologians' standpoint does not support the view of this study but supports the institutional church model of church leadership, which is the problem statement addressed in this study. The institutional model leads to some unfortunate consequences in Christian life, both personal and corporate. Its clericalism tendencies tend to reduce the laity to a condition of passivity, making their apostolate a more of an appendage to the hierarchy. Its juridicism tends to exaggerate the role of human authority and thus tends to turn the gospel into a new law (Dulles, 1987: 39). Hence, the stance of the Roman Catholic theologians is not an acceptable one.

2.4 THE VIEWS OF EARLY REFORMERS ON THE CHURCH OFFICES

2.4.1 Introduction

The early reformers' views of church governance stand in principle as the bedrock of existing structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The reality, however, is that the early Reformers interpreted leadership in line with their own social situation and biblical interpretation. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has uprooted the structures of the European world and transplanted them uncritically into its own context. The structures developed by the reformers in the 16th century were suited to their context and were aimed at solving particular challenges peculiar to their churches. The principles behind their structures

can be used today if they are applied in such a way that they address the current situation.

The four model offices established in the Reformation Church are still unchallenged in the church until today. But early reformers seem to differ with the RCZ in some of their viewpoints, such as Luther's doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" and their understanding of "laity as people of God". In this regard the early reformers' point of view seems to answer the problem statement of this study, namely that the clergy are given all the platforms in the church structures. Hence, the aim of this section is to investigate the views of early Reformers as compared to the present practice of the RCZ, which claims its roots from the Reformers. General views of the Reformers and few selected early Reformers views will be considered.

2.4.2 The reformed stance of church government

According to the Reformed understanding, the church lives because it "hears the voice of its Lord". The early Reformers, therefore, placed emphasis on the fact that in the church must be an office for the proclamation and administration of sacrament. However, in the reformed churches, the pastor or shepherd never stood alone. They were always surrounded by collegiums of elders who shared in the governance of the congregation (Coertzen, 1998: 17; Vischer 1992: 10).

The early Reformers believed that the power of the church resides primarily in the governing body of the local church. It is one of the fundamental principles of the Reformed or Presbyterian government. The power or authority of the church does not reside first of all in the general assembly of any church. It receives its authority only secondarily and by derivation from the governing body of the local church. The original seat of authority is in the consistory or session of the local church and is transferred to the broader assemblies, such as presbyteries and synods or general assembly (Berkhof, 1948: 584).

If this principle that the power and authority of the church is in the local congregation where all members are involved in the church activities had been honoured, there would not be a problem of the marginalisation of youth, women, evangelists and lay preachers in the RCZ. But the problem comes in the transference of authority and decisions to the so-called broader assemblies where the rest of the leadership groups are not allowed to participate in the RCZ.

2.4.3 John Calvin's views on church offices

Calvin held that the pastors and the elders together formed the consistory, the authority responsible for ecclesiastical discipline. In theory, as well as in practice, he held the view of four offices: those of pastor, teacher, elder and deacon. The pastor fulfilled the mission of the proclamation of the word and administration of sacraments. The teacher fulfilled the task of teaching the Gospel in schools. The elders were charged with discipline and deacons were the stewards of the church (Vischer, 1992: 39).

There is a close connection between the office of a teaching elder and that of a ruling elder in Calvin's thought. They are both presbyters in the biblical sense of the word and the office that has been entrusted to them is fundamentally identical in more than one way. For this reason they are seen and understood as collegiums (Hall & Hall, 1994: 66).

They are nevertheless also distinct from one another. Whereas the pastors are entrusted with the proclamation of the word, the administration of sacraments, the ruling and discipline of the community, the elders are responsible for ruling and discipline. Pastors are ordained by laying on of hands for their ministry. The elders and deacons are laymen who fulfil an ecclesiastical mission. They are not ordained, but they are blessed for their mission in a solemn service (Kung, 1971: 406).

2.4.3.1 Calvin's view on women on church leadership

The argument of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is that church leadership is based on Calvin's view on women rather than on scripture. The church holds that Calvin never allowed women in church leadership structures. Opposed to this view, some theologians argue that Calvin's understanding of women in church leadership is somehow different. The usual image of Calvin was that of a rigid, patriarchal tyrant who saw society and especially women as part of a divinely order of hierarchy from which rebels and sinners seek to escape (Vischer, 1992: 40-42). In fact, although he was certainly socially conservative in practice, the Geneva reformer's theory had been considerably more flexible than popular doctrine. He believed in the freedom of every Christian in the church. He allowed women in church offices, especially in the deaconate ones (Douglas, 1985: 43; Njoroge, 2005: 9).

Calvin considered women's silence in church (1 Corinthians 14:34) as "indifferent things" (*adiaphora*), things that are good or bad depending on how they are used (McKee, 1989: 79).

Calvin considered women's subordination as right according to the order of nature, and regarded a context in which women spoke publicly as disorderly. However, Calvin did acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is a higher authority than the order of nature and that idea of order and decorum might change. Thus Calvin alone among many mainline Protestants put the question of women's leadership in the church in the category of 'indifferent things' from the first edition of the Institutes to the last (McKee, 1989: 79).

Another reason for Calvin's subordination of the female deacons (Phoebe and the widows) to the male administrators may have been influenced by the passages of the New Testament. The seven deacons in Acts six are clearly ordained by laying on of hands, something not done to widows of first Timothy. The cultural factor was also more critical than the biblical interpretation (Douglas, 1985: 104).

On the other side of the question, McKee (1989: 81) argues that Calvin was the only protestant who gave women a place in the regular ministry of the church. Other reformers especially Anabaptists, allowed inspired women to speak, but Calvin appears to be the only one who gave the women a role in the offices of ministry not based on charismatic gifts. It was certainly a subordinate role in the regular ministry, not on ordained office, but it was nevertheless a place in the church structures.

In conclusion, it may be said that Calvin's theory was less culturally conditioned than his practice. One cannot say what Calvin would have done if he lived in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, but it is possible to point out the way his thoughts could be developed in accordance with his interest tendencies. Driven by the biblical texts of Romans and (1 Timothy), Calvin included women in his regular ministerial offices, though for cultural and biblical reasons he made these deaconesses subordinate to male deacons (McKee, 1989: 81). Explaining Paul's injunction for women to remain silent in the church as an "indifferent thing", a question of order which might change with new ideas of edification and decency, Calvin at least, theoretically opened the door of reconsideration for women leadership of every aspect in the church (McKee, 1989: 82).

2.4.4 Theodor Beza's view of offices

Theodor Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, was an important link in the further development of church office. He introduced a church order. Beza's order differed from the Episcopal order in that the guidance of church was now carried out cooperatively with the

pastors, elders, and deacons. It had an explicitly anti-hierarchical tendency; individual and arbitrary decisions were to be avoided. His order was characterised by the fact that laymen could occupy ecclesiastical offices. The elders as well as deacons were laymen who had been called in ecclesiastical services (Hall & Hall, 1994: 67). The researcher supports this view, as it seems to promote the freedom of sharing ministry in a flexible way, although within a world that did not recognize women.

2.4.5 Early reformers' views of offices as the priesthood of all believers

The views of the early reformers developed as a criticism to the medieval Catholic tradition where the spiritual leader had generally more power and authority over those whom he led. Luther's doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" served as the foundation for this criticism of the practice of giving high status and function to the spiritual leader over and above others. Luther believed that every Christian was a priest on account of his/her faith and baptism. There was no fundamental difference in status between the ministers of gospel, by whatever name they might choose to be known and the ordinary believer (McGrath, 1994: 34).

Medieval Catholicism recognised a fundamental distinction between the clergy, priests, bishops and popes to all other lay people. Luther declared this distinction to be null and void; he considered this as a human invention rather than an ordinance of God. All Christians are truly of the same estate by faith in Christ, and there is no difference among them except that of function as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (Ogden, 1990: 10).

Caution should be taken here because Luther's doctrine of all believers did not entail the abolition of professional ministry, neither does it necessarily imply the rejection of spiritual direction done in full biblical understanding. Luther's fundamental principle is that all Christians share the same priestly (stand) on account of the unit and baptism. They may, however exercise different functions within the faith community reflecting their individual God given gifts and abilities, and where new structures developed (Ogden, 1990: 30).

2.4.5.1 Early reformers' view of all people as people of God

In the sixteenth century the early reformers worked hard to reclaim the notion of the laity as the people of God. They believed that spiritual leadership is a resource to be placed at the disposal of the entire church, rather than a specific section of their membership, such as its

clergy dominates over others. While acknowledging the practical importance of the clergy and other church leaders in developing the spiritual depth of their communities, the reformation tradition located this role in their function as educators rather than in their status as persons. Most of the early reformers held the view that God considers all men and women the same. Women were encouraged to read scripture in order to understand and interpret their Christian faith for themselves (McGrath, 1994: 53).

2.4.6 General views of the early reformers

The following are the fundamental principles held by the early reformers on church offices:

- They believed that Christ is the head of the church and the source of all its authority. While the Roman Catholics consider the pope as the head of the church, the reformers maintained and defended their position in opposition to the claims of the papacy, that Christ is the only head of the church (Berkhof, 1949: 581).
- Christ exercises his authority by means of his royal word. The reign of Christ is not similar to that of the earthly kings such as Solomon.
- Early reformers did not believe in any one-man rule, be he an elder, pastor nor bishop, neither did they believe in popular government. They chose ruling elders as their representatives and these together with ministers formed a council or consistory for the government of the local church. They promoted the ministry of all believers, whether lay or ordained male or female, young or old, in principle not in practice (Ogden, 1990: 11).

In this study the researcher wants to understand what form of offices the Reformed church in Zimbabwe should have in the present time. We need to recognise that our contextual setting has completely changed from that of the early reformers. There is a need to understand the new order of the reformation which was established in a society where society and state is not separate. They are in a situation where servanthood leadership would be the better model.

The role of the congregation as whole is the basic unity of Christian witness. It is the vital instrument for the fulfilment for the leadership vocation of the church. It is the place where all members need to participate together in God's presence. Hence the congregation should act as the base of church leadership to be accepted by the broader boards of the church.

2.4.7 Conclusion

The leadership in the early reformers period was very rigid and male dominated. Although they proclaimed the doctrine of “the priesthood of all believers”, a sound biblical teaching, it was not implemented practically. The culture of their time dominated the biblical principles because of people like Calvin and Luther. They were outspoken biblical theologians, but could not categorically challenge their own society on the position of women and youth in the church.

In theory the early reformers articulated the biblical understanding of church offices rather than practicing it. In practice, the Roman Catholic hierarchical practice of leadership still had the influence in their function. Development in offices favoured only the clergy who had a prestigious desk similar to that of state rulers. This influence still has its characteristics in the churches, in particular the RCZ. Women are disadvantaged in many areas of church life despite being a strong evangelistic wing in many congregations. They also provide strong financial support for church activities.

But on the other hand the reformed principles, rules, and regulations are biblically sound but not implemented in the context of the congregations. In most cases the implementers of the rules and regulations do not consider their present situation in order to maintain their traditions. Though the structures are biblically based, they are profaned by the cultures and traditions of the people who practice them. Hence, there is need to revisit scriptures in a more sensible way. If this is not done in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, it will soon fall back into the Roman Catholic pyramidal institutional model of leadership which historically influenced the early reformers and whose teachings later influenced the missionaries who founded the RCZ.

2.5 VIEWS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THEOLOGIANS

2.5.1 Introduction

In the previous section it is seen that the problem of Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership is influenced by the institutional model. There was small room for lay leadership participation in broader leadership structures. In this section the researcher will aim to prove that lay leadership needs to be co-opted in the RCZ structures. The researcher first gives a brief historical contextual overview of the early reformers and the twentieth century

theologians. He argues that structures of any organization changes with the passage of time. The church at large, even the RCZ is affected by these changes. The effects of modernity have resulted in the change of roles in society at large, and the church is not an exception. Men, women and youth are able to share equal opportunities and the church cannot keep on resisting these trends. Equality of office bearers is also faced with this challenge of change (Schillebeeckx, 1985: 195).

2.5.2 Contextual changes between early 16th and late 20th centuries

In assessing the lasting contributions of the early reformers to the offices of the church, it is necessary first to note briefly a number of changes in the context between the early sixteenth and late twentieth century. One is the separation of church and state, and the development of a secular, pluralistic culture. Another is a new approach to the interpretation of scripture and a general question of religious values. A third point is the individualistic, non-communal character of much of the modern society (Oberman, 1994: 67; Vischer, 1992: 132). Although these changes are stronger in the industrialised West, they have also affected the more traditional cultures of the world to a greater or lesser degree. The above-mentioned shifts or changes have affected leadership structures in many institutions and organisations of which the church is part and parcel (Schillebeeckx, 1985: 261).

2.5.3 Views of 20th century theologians

The changes stated above have affected the twentieth century theologians' view of church offices. They upheld the importance of laity in the leadership of the church, which has been a key Protestant contribution to the debate on the church offices (Oberman, 1994: 69). The twentieth century theological tradition strengthens this emphasis structurally by its insistence on lay ecclesiastical offices clearly established and distinct from the ministers of the word and sacrament, the congregation as a whole and the civil rulers (Kotze, 1951: 14-15; Kung, 1971: 342).

Twentieth century theologians believe that ecclesiastical rule can never be the sole prerogative of an individual – it is a community activity – nor can it be restricted to the clergy in the narrow sense of the word. They argue that in their contextual modern era, men and women should be equal in God's sight (Stott, 1968: 49-50; Vischer, 1992: 132). The theologians differed with one another due to their tribal and cultural backgrounds and norms. Their view has grown out of purely spiritual interpretation of the priesthood of all believers to

a much more global context. Debates are still continuing to persuade the church to understand the concept of the priesthood of all believers in theory and practice (Kotze, 1951: 74; McGrath, 1994: 64-70). Perceptions of the appropriateness of women leadership in the church have altered in significant ways – alterations which might not be as far from what Calvin would allow as many people think, and thus it is right that women as well as men should be admitted to leadership and other offices in the contemporary church (Douglas, 1985: 170; Ogden, 1990: 74-75).

2.5.4 Some viewpoints held by 20th century theologians

Twentieth century theologians hold the view of equality of congregations and office bearers in particular in the reformed tradition:

1. Equality of churches/congregations:

They believe that no local church shall in any way lord it over another local church. This is illustrated in the sessions of classis (presbyteries) where each church delegates a minister and elder to the presbytery. If the church is without a minister, or the minister is for any reason prevented from attending the meeting, two elders will be delegated to represent the church (Coertzen, 1998: 15).

2. Equality of office bearers:

The offices of the church differ from each other in mandate and task and not in dignity and honour. No office bearer shall lord it over another office bearer.

a) Equality of all offices:

All the offices of the church are to be on an equal level. No office is to be regarded as higher than the other. Ministers, elders, deacons, and evangelists differ only in the task assigned to them and not in authority or dignity of the office itself. The minister may not lord it over elders and elders over deacons, for example. Each office is distinct and responsible in its function. But unfortunately in practice this is not implemented in the RCZ because the evangelists and other church leadership groups are locked out (Coertzen, 1998: 69).

b) Equality within the offices:

Within the offices too, it must be reciprocal. One minister should not have official pre-eminence over another, nor should one ruling elder over others, nor should one deacon or evangelist over deacons and evangelists. Each has equal authority according to his mandate and assigned task (Brink & De Ridder, 1980: 32, 332; McKee, 1989: 39-42).

3. Equality of office and special mandates:

From the beginning, reformed synods have maintained that certain tasks require authority to carry out their mandates. It was judged, therefore, that a person serving as chairman of an ecclesiastical assembly who exercises certain prerogatives and authority in the assembly is not violating the spirit of church order when he officiates in that capacity. In this regard the twentieth century theologians, in their view of church offices, treasured the reformed principle of essential equality of all local congregations and of all office bearers in Christ's church (Brink & De Ridder, 1980: 132-333).

In analysing the viewpoints of the twentieth century theologians, the researcher discovered that their viewpoints support the communion model of church leadership as has been reflected in the first chapter of this study. Leadership is shared in this model. It reacts against an excessive emphasis on the hierarchical elements of institutional leadership. The church is viewed as the people of God or the body of Christ, growing to the final perfection of the kingdom of God (Dulles, 1976: 83, 154). There is strong emphasis on the gifts of all members in the church (1 Corinthians 12; Romans. 12). This model shares many qualities of the church paradigm already discussed in the first chapter of this study.

2.5.5 Conclusion

According to the standpoint of the researcher, the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe's problem is that the leadership is still bound to most of the hierarchical, institutional model (clerical paradigm) elements, which leave no room to equip the laity (Mead, 1994: 61). The viewpoints set by the twentieth century theologians who base their arguments on biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5), and the doctrine supported by Luther who believed that all believers are united by Christ himself in faith, seem not to be fully

implemented (McGrath, 1994: 46). The RCZ will do well to adopt and adapt to these views. It will assist the church to move from a leadership style dominated by the institutional model towards a style of leadership where the communion model plays a more important role. This model suits the present contextual situation in the RCZ. The following section focuses on the liberation theologians' point of view on church offices.

2.6 VIEWS OF LIBERATION THEOLOGIANS

2.6.1 Introduction

In the previous section it has been established that for the RCZ to overcome the problem of excluding lay leadership from the broader structures, it needs to implement the views of the twentieth century theologians, based on the biblical principle of the priesthood of all believers and the church as the body of Christ. In the current section, the study proceeds to analyse the views of the liberation theologians on the issue of hierarchical structures of the RCZ. The following points are highlighted: the reinvention of the church, ways of being a church, and growing beyond current church structures.

2.6.2 A brief overview of how liberation theology started

Liberation theology started in the 1950's and 1960's, in the Latin American countries especially Brazil, with the lament of a poor woman and a few lay catechists (Boff, 1986:3). They longed for freedom of worship and release from oppressive, hierarchical bureaucratic, rigid ecclesiological church structures. They lamented for recognition as individual Christians to be allowed to participate in decisions of the church in the presence or absence of the priests.

This came into being because throughout the previous centuries, the church had acquired an organisational form with a hierarchical framework and a judicial understanding among Christians, thus producing mechanical inequalities and inequities (Boff, 1986: 2).

The longing of recognition by the lay people in church structures spread to many churches over this period. It is the same longing that has spilled over into the RCZ for the women, youth, evangelists and lay preachers to be considered as full participants at all levels of the church. Hence, in this section the researcher discusses liberation theologians' viewpoint on the exclusion of the laity from decision-making structures.

2.6.3 Views of liberation theologians

The church in the modern society paradigm is influenced by new modern leadership styles. Liberation theologians hold the view that it needs to rethink and restructure its leadership models. Church offices established in the institutional and organisational churches need to be revisited because they are too rigid and oppressive for present democratic communities. The church needs structures that allow people to relate with their church officers and to each other as human beings in a world that has freedom of expression and decision-making (Hennely, 1989: 19).

To further argue their case for reinvention of the church structures and offices, the liberation theologians singled out two important points: the ways of being a church and growing beyond present church structures. The arguments are explained and illustrated in some points in simple diagrams (see Figure 1a & 1b on page 65, Figure 2 on page 67 and Figure 3 on page 67).

2.6.4 Ways of being a church

Boff (1986: 23) argues that the church can be considered from many viewpoints. There are as many ecclesiologies as there are basic ecclesial structures. There are those who consider the word/sacrament structure, so that they have pre-eminently a prophetic-cultic picture of the church. There are those who articulate the church from the figure of the church on a journey, and then there are those with a pre-eminently historical-salvation vision. All these ecclesiologies have their sense, their meaning and their values. But each is limited and must be open to other forms of theoretical tantalization of the mystery of the church. Otherwise we have an oppressive ideology of categories which makes faith communities suffer (Macquarrie, 1975: 37-38).

Liberation theologians view the church as “the basic community of faith”, the church born at grassroots, born at the heart of God’s people. Christ is the centre of this church. The relationships between Christ and the church are formulated on the model of the relationships of a society with its founder (Hennely, 1989: 32, Boff, 1986: 23-24).

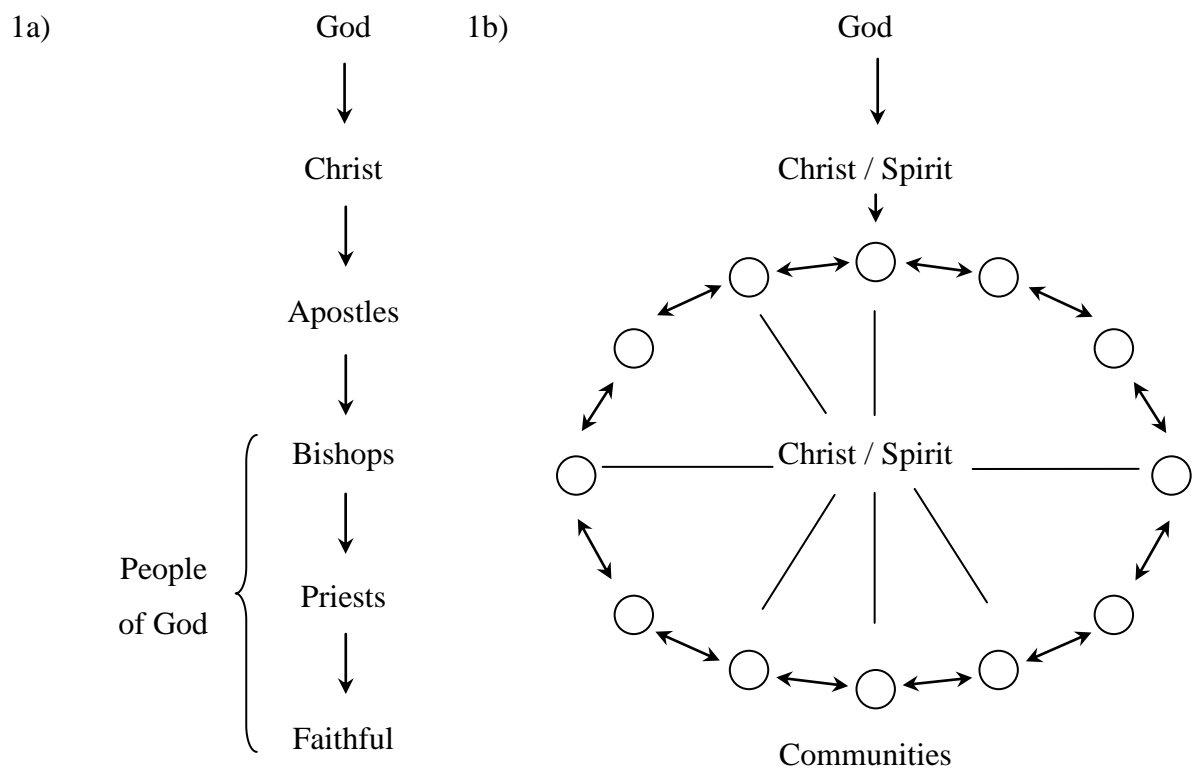
Basic church communities help the church to consider itself from the viewpoint of a basic reality. That reality is faith, the belief in the presence of the risen Christ and of his spirit, at the heart of every community. This divine activity acquires a special density in the church. It excludes no one. This view modifies the manner of being a church. The clergy moves into the

middle of the people already activated by the Spirit, which before the arrival of the institutional church was in place, shaping an anonymous church by His grace and forgiveness (Boff, 1986: 127). Hans Kung (1971) argues that this is not a matter of “transplanting” the church deductively but “implanting” it inductively. “To ‘implant’ the church is to enter into dialogue with the culture and religious practice of the country. The object of this dialogue is to gradually move towards the presence of God’s Spirit which transforms and penetrates human beings’ lives (Boff, 1986:59-60).

The church that is implanted explicates, purifies and prolongs the already existing latent church. The base church communities were born out of the Spirit that manifested and organised among God’s people. The recognition of the presence of the risen One and of the Spirit in the hearts of human beings leads to the conceptualisation of the church from the foundation up and not from the steeple down. It means accepting the co-responsibility of all in the building of the church, not just of a limited number belonging to the clerical institution (Boff, 1986: 25; Boff 1981: 127-128).

The two conceptualisations of the church are illustrated by Figure 1a and 1b (Hennely, 1989: 85-86).

Figure 1a and 1b: Conceptualisation of Church



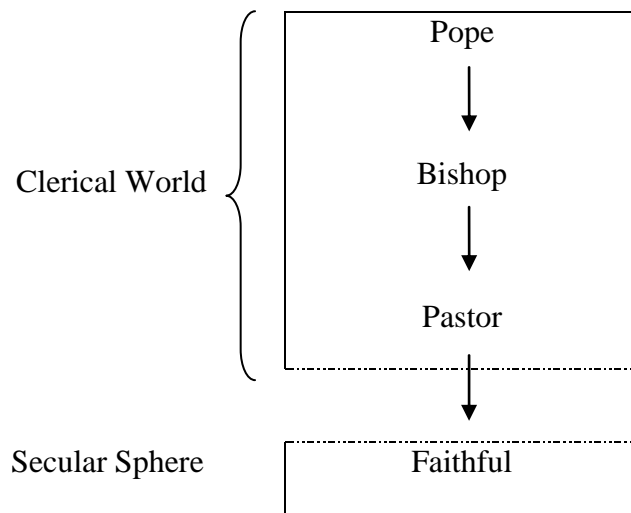
In Figure 1a, the category “People of God” arises as the result of the institutional organisation. The power in this organisation is concentrated along the axis of bishop/priest. The laity just receives. They do not produce in terms of organisational structure, but only in terms of the reinforcement of the structure. The question we might ask is if it is really the organisation that creates the church? Or does the organisation arise, as a second act, because the community that is the people exists as first act? According to this conception, Christ and the Spirit pose no direct immanence. The ordained ministry mediates their only immanence. Hence, it is the hierarchy that occupies the centre of interest, rather than the risen One and the Spirit with its charisma. This conceptualisation is less theological and more judicial. The power in question is defined only in its origin. In its exercise, it follows the mechanisms of any profane power with its mechanisms of coercion, security and control (Boff, 1985: 34).

In Figure 1b, the reality is that God’s people emerge as primary instance; its organisation is seen as secondary, derived, and at the service of the primary. Christ’s power resides not only in certain members, but also in the totality of the people of God as a vehicle of Christ’s triple ministry of witness, oneness, and worship. This power of Christ is diversified in accordance with specific functions, but it leaves no one out. The laity emerges as creators of ecclesiological values (Hennely, 1989: 86).

2.6.5 Growing beyond current RCZ structures

The form in which basic communities are organised and the praxis that develops from it, can make a great contribution when it comes to overcoming the fundamental obstacles to communitarian life: the current structure of participation in the church - in particular the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The church is structured rather, in a schematic rigid form as diagrammed in Figure 2 below.

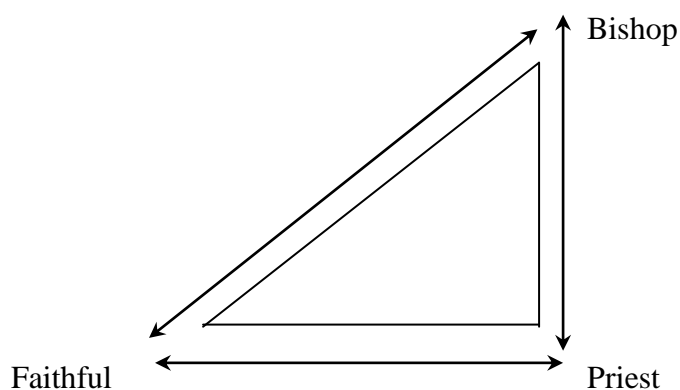
Figure 2: Traditional structure



In terms of decision-making in this church, participation of the faithful is totally mutilated. Decision-making is restricted to the pope-bishop-pastor axis. A community in which the root participation is cut off in all directions cannot be called a community with freedom of worship. In a good church community equality must prevail in conjunction with a face-to-face communion of members. This model portrays the Roman Catholic structure throughout church history. It has influenced the present structure of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

The researcher shares the viewpoint of the liberation theologians that the base community should promote participation of every member in the community. It supports the methodology of this study on doing theology as defined by points one, two, three, and four in Chapter 1 where correlation of hermeneutics of the present situation can take place. It enables Christians to discern God's will in the church. This concept is explained better by the diagram in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: A new church structure



In Figure 3, all the offices establish a network of relationship with one another. The liberation theologians hold the viewpoint that if a church does not include the laity in its network of structures of leadership, it is not yet established for the present paradigm. All three components are responsible for the entire reality of what the church is. Collegiality is no longer the monopoly of the episcopate and clergy. Now it belongs to the people of God (Bonino, 1975: 86).

This is the way the basic communities function. Their triangular model created a new style of priests and bishops. They are working among the people using the principles of animation and inspiration and universal unity. At the same time the communities have developed the laity to emerge as genuine vehicles of ecclesiological values, whether as coordinators or moderators of the community or in the discharge of the community service (Hennely, 1989: 87).

On the level of theory in the church, theology has gone beyond the old pyramid model. But it is not enough to know that a new praxis (reflective action) must be implemented. This is what the basic communities are saying. They are helping the church to reinvent its way of doing theology in the ministry. The experiment is gradually confirming the theory and inspiring the church as institution with a confidence in the viability of a new way of being a church in the world.

The basic church community models introduce a new social structuring of the church. This new structure will include more than just basic communities. The communities constituted a renewal substance for the whole church (Boff, 1986: 33).

2.6.6 Conclusion

The views of the liberation theologians are provocative and challenging to the present reformed churches, in particular the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The views of liberation theologians on reinventing church structure from bottom up wards, challenges the RCZ's current practice. Their idea of the basic community church is a radical and biblically centred, though motivated by a different context. This resembles the practice of the early church in the book of Acts. The researcher is challenged by the methodology of implanting the church inductively, i.e. having dialogue with the culture and religious practice of each country. This would assist to challenge the hierarchical, traditional *Shona* culture, which is almost a carbon copy of the RCZ leadership structure. The challenge of the liberation theologians for the

reinvention of the church structure is viable, though it will be hard to implement.

After exploring the views of church offices from the Old Testament and New Testament, Roman Catholic theologians, Early Reformers, Twentieth Century theologians, and Liberation Theologians, this chapter concludes by analysing the views of the WCC, Baptism Eucharist and Ministry (document). The document balances the arguments from the other viewpoints.

2.7 WCC BAPTISM, EUCHARIST AND MINISTRY (BEM DOCUMENT)

2.7.1 Introduction

The problem addressed in this study is the exclusion of laity and women in church structures within a clerical paradigm hierarchy. The researcher has up to now explored the inclusion of laity in all broader leadership structures. The question in each section up to now has been why the lay leadership is not presented in the broader leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. In this section, this question is further explored. It has been affirmed that the church should re-evaluate or rethink its leadership structures in order to develop structures that will combine the clergy and the lay leadership with the aim of bringing unity to the church. It concurs with one of the overall aims of the study, which is also to try and find means and ways to remove the barriers between church leadership and the laity, and to see the development and implementation of unity in the present contextual situation for the church.

Therefore, in the last section of this chapter, the researcher will examine the WCC Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry document, compiled by different theologians from different ecclesiological backgrounds. The aim of their research was to break barriers and promote unity and co-operation between Christians to work together in God's ministry. Their wise and well-guided principles on unity and church leadership will be of great use if utilised by the present RCZ leadership.

2.7.2 Analysis of the WCC Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Document

The document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM), written by the commission of Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, is an attempt to provide "theological support for the efforts the churches are making towards unity" (BEM, p1). The document is

the result of a fifty-year process of study and consultation. This text on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry represents the theological convergence that has been achieved through decades of dialogue and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental purpose of the document is to promote unity. It is appropriate and commendable that the study finds in the New Testament and church traditions those insights that might provide a basis of agreement. The purpose of the document is not to underline the radical differences in the application of the gospel that led to radical differences in the church structures of the middle Ages where the position of women deteriorated (Paas, 2006: 237). The viewpoint of the document is to find in scripture and church tradition, some guidance for the church on which Christians in our present contexts might agree (Bartlet, 1993: 6-7).

The section entitled “ministry”, spells out in great detail a vision of the role of ordained persons in a united or a uniting church. The document begins its discussion of ministry by insisting that God calls all His people and gives to all Christians the gift of the Holy Spirit. With the understanding that all God’s people are called and the Holy Spirit’s gifts are equally given to all, the document seeks to understand the particular role of the ordained ministry and lay-people without marginalisation.

Three reasons are given for the necessity of ordained ministers: First, the ordained ministers are “publicly and continually responsible to point to (the church’s) fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ”. Secondly, ordained ministers provide a focus for church unity; not dividing it. Thirdly, “the church has never been without persons holding specific authority and responsibility” (BEM, 2A, 8, 31).

The document supports the last claim by reference to the role of the apostles and the twelve in the NT. It suggests that on the one hand the apostles “prefigure” both the whole church and its designated leaders; while on the other hand, the apostles – as witnesses to the resurrection of Christ – were unique figures. Today’s ordained ministers are not apostles, but ministry is founded on that of the apostles (BEM, “ministry”, 2A, 10 and 32). The role of ordained ministers is to serve as proclaimers of the gospel, leaders of the community, teachers and pastors in a servanthood spirit (BEM, “ministry”, 2A, 11 and 32).

The commentary on the sections that relate to contemporary ministry of the apostles is suggestive if not altogether compelling: “the basic reality of an ordained ministry was present from the beginning ... the actual forms of ordination and of the ordained ministry, however,

have evolved in complex historical developments. The churches therefore need to avoid attributing their particular forms of ordained ministry directly to the will and institution of Jesus Christ” (BEM, “commentary” in “ministry”: 32-33). What the passage implies is that the church can legitimately trace ordained ministry itself “directly to the will and institution of Jesus Christ”.

The document then discusses the role of the clergy, especially in the proclamation of sacrament. It claims the necessary interrelationship of clergy and people. Though all Christians depend upon each other, the clergy also apparently represent Christ to (and over against) the people; their presence reminds the community of the divine presence of Jesus Christ who is the source of the church’s mission and foundation of unity (BEM “ministry” 2A, 12, 33).

The succeeding commentary attempts to clarify the relationship between the responsibilities of the ordained person and the gifts of all Christian people: “any member of the body may share in proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, may contribute to the sacramental life of that body. The ordained ministry fulfils these functions in a representative way, providing the focus for unity of the life and witness of the community” (BEM, “commentary” in “ministry”, 2, 33).

2.7.3 Authority of ordained ministry

In the document, the section on the authority of the ordained ministry suggests that ministerial authority comes from Jesus Christ, but should be acknowledged in the community of faith. Those who are ordained hold their authority not for their own sakes or to misuse it, but for the building up of the community. Here the document seems to support the basic view of the Liberation theologians of basic communities of faith. Therefore, ordained ministers must not be autocrats or impersonal functionaries. Although called to exercise wise and loving leadership on the basis of the Word of God, “they are bound to the faithful interdependency and reciprocity” (BEM, “ministry”, 2B, 15, 16 and 34).

In section 3 of the document, the forms of the ordained “ministry”, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry argues that churches should recognise the threefold form of ministry – bishop, presbyter and deacon. The document acknowledges that there were a variety of patterns of church leadership witnessed in the New Testament; that the threefold pattern ministry did not emerge until the second and the third centuries, and that the responsibilities of those three

offices have evolved from early centuries until now. It does state, nevertheless, “the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also as a means for achieving it” (BEM, “ministry”, 3, 22, 38-39).

This argument holds water as far as the main purpose of this study is concerned. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe needs to understand the importance of the variety of patterns of church leadership from the NT perspective, and the patterns that emerged in the second and the third centuries. They are important, but they were coloured-in by their own contextual situation and practice quite different from the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Variety of patterns means that we co-opt other people in church leadership from the biblical perspective.

The document makes suggestions concerning the functions of the three forms of ministry. Bishops are to have pastoral oversight of a large jurisdiction, while at the same time they preach the word and celebrate the sacraments. Presbyters preach the word and celebrate the sacraments with a local community of faith. The document does not seem to be quite clear about what the deacons are to do, but their responsibilities will certainly include service and their attitude be marked by loving kindness (BEM, “ministry”, 3c, 29-31).

2.7.4 The view of the document on ordination

In its discussion of ordination, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry acknowledges that the meaning of “ordination” or “appointment” in the New Testament is not clear and may in fact differ from passage to passage. Nonetheless, the document does claim that ordination becomes a sign of the tie between the person being ordained and Christ and his apostles. It is this recognition of the call that the new minister has received from God and affirmation of that call by the church (BEM, “ministry” 5A; “commentary”, 46, 5A, 3a, 45; 5C, 45, 48).

2.7.5 The view of the document on the ministry of man and woman

The document calls for a comprehensive ministry, drawing on both men and women: the stand being, where Christ is present, human barriers are being broken. The church is called to convey to the world the image of humanity. “There is in Christ no male or female” (Galatians. 3:28). Both women and men must discover together their contributions to serve Christ in the church. A deeper understanding of the comprehensiveness of ministry that reflects the unity of men and women needs to be more widely manifested in the life of the church (BEM, “ministry” 2 D, 18, 36-370).

In examining this document, the researcher discovered that it is a gift to the church as it seeks to grow in unity and understanding of one another. The document does not support the idea of barriers among the Christians, though it values the important role the clergy play in the church. The viewpoint of the document is interdependence, where both clergy and lay people work together, but each knowing his role or place in the body of Christ. The document has made a strong affirmation against the ordained ministers being autocratic and impersonal functionaries in the exercise of their leadership, though this is an ecumenical document with viewpoints from different theologians of different backgrounds. The RCZ would do well to take into consideration some of the good points that promote the unity of the office-bearers and lay members in the RCZ.

2.7.6 Conclusion

This chapter investigated different standpoints concerning church leadership structures. Its purpose was to prove or disapprove the hypotheses of the study that because of a number of reasons lay leadership is not represented in the broader leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, as it should be.

All the view points discussed, claim biblical support; they all have their supporting texts in the Bible. It has been proved that through different ages, different structures developed because of different contexts. Not one of the viewpoints is absolutely wrong. There are however, certain basic principles in which the BEM is favoured according to the researcher's viewpoint. It balances its arguments from the biblical basis. It also considered the views of some church traditions. Both the Reformation and the Liberation theologians pointed to the faulty lines and negative implications of the Roman Catholic type of institutional system. But the point is that the institutional model is manifested in different denominational traditions. This has been affirmed by Avery Dulles (1984) in his book "Models of the church". He presented the strengths and weaknesses of the viewpoints argued above. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has been influenced by some of the viewpoints on leadership as discussed in this chapter.

The fact is that our deliberation is hermeneutically formed. Hence, in the Zimbabwean context, the typical institutional approach is negative. The RCZ is struggling to implement the principle of the priesthood of all believers as argued in section 2.4.5 of this chapter. We know that being reformed means that one has to keep on reforming. Taking into account the

methodology of doing Practical Theology this would mean that reforming means keeping going back to Scriptures to discern our identity in the image and likeness of God. It means to learn more about doing theology and about God. We also need to reform more of our identity in the image and likeness of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. We need to do theology by focussing on the centre of the cross, where we aim to understand God in our present situation as men and women, clergy and laity. In the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, contextual situational leadership needs to incorporate the women's guild, youth and evangelists in the church structures.

The viewpoint of the World Council of Churches' document (Baptist, Eucharist and Ministry) is that we need to strive towards a balance. This viewpoint supports interdependency, where both clergy and lay people work together - each knowing his/her role in the body of Christ. The document also values the function of the clergy in the church. It has proved to actively hold the four tension points active in a hermeneutical and correlation dialogue as a way of doing theology. The world and the Word should be kept in dialogue, focusing on our present identity and what we should become in the future. Where the tension points cross each other in the middle of the cross, one finds a faith community in prayer: listening and discerning. In the case of the RCZ, the faith community is the clergy, women's guild, evangelists, youth, lay preachers and the whole church membership.

CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND OF THE SHONA CULTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, different views on church offices and how to structure leadership have been discussed. The purpose of Chapter 2 was to highlight the way leadership structures developed contextually, from biblical to modern times. In doing that, the essence of biblical principles on the church offices and the involvement of lay people in leadership, could become clear and implemented in the RCZ leadership.

The hierarchical structures in the *Shona* culture, which the missionaries embraced as strategy in evangelisation, still influence the leadership structures of the church in Zimbabwe. The leadership of the *Shona* people runs top-down and is rigid (Mukanya, 1999: 87). The pattern of *Shona* leadership structure prevents the involvement of women, youths, evangelists and lay-preachers in decision-making boards. In many areas of church life, this pattern is still practised though it does no longer match the present contextual situation of the church and society.

This chapter discusses the background of the *Shona* culture and its influence on the leadership of the RCZ. It provides brief history of the *Shona* people, the family and the leadership structures. The chapter again discusses the position of the women in these structures and the attitudes of men towards women. It will further discuss the relationship between the *Shona* sons and daughters, the manners of the *Shona* people and the influence of the coming of Christianity and the Western culture. This is done to prove or disapprove part of the hypothesis of the study, namely that the *Shona* culture has influenced the leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. Also that the missionaries who were men of their time adopted the patriarchal approach to their flock; often displaying indirect racism and leadership hierarchy the same as that of the *Shona* people (Weiss, 1994: 103). The influence of the early reformers' leadership was also influenced by the Roman Catholic institutional model and filtered into the RCZ leadership.

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, a daughter church of the Dutch Reformed Church (Cape) in South Africa was born in the *Shona* culture in 1891. The Dutch people, who arrived from the Netherlands at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, initiated evangelisation in the southern part of Africa and formed the DRC Cape (Paas, 2006: 66, 88). The first synod of the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape started in 1824. This church became the parent body of the Dutch Reformed Churches on the continent, predominantly south of the Sahara, with the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe as one example (Van der Merwe, 1981: XI).

The Dutch Reformed Church Cape evangelisation entered Zimbabwe (then called Mashonaland) through reaching out to groups of people such as: (1) kings, (2) headmen, (3) young men, and (4) women.

The king was the door through which missionaries had to pass. Using any other channel, often led to suffering and failure. The headmen had to support the centrality of the kings and chiefs who rule the villages and regions with no large scale political structures (Paas, 2006: 90-91). The RCZ started primarily as a youth movement. This was because of the strategy used by Andrew A Louw to spread the Gospel to the *Shona* people by using young men who could be trusted by the headmen, chiefs and kings. Paas (2006: 221) echoes that “AA Louw the founder of the RCZ right from the beginning cooperated with African evangelists who have been hunters in Zimbabwe. They were people like Jozua Masoha, Lukas Mokoel, Jeremia and Petrus Morudu, David Molea and Izak Kumalowho who were trained by Stephanus Hofmeyr”. These evangelists contributed much to the missionary work of the DRC in Zimbabwe and influenced the Shona culture to accept Christianity and influenced many youth.

Women were the most marginalised category in the society and culture. The coming of Christianity in this regard gave them a position that they never had before. In family structures, religiously, and even in society they were struggling to have full participation. However, the hierarchical Shona culture and the attitude of men towards the position of women still harbour strong powers that counteract the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in the church (Paas, 2006: 24).

This is the culture in which AA Louw operated. He lived his life in communion with and obedience to God. The mission he founded strongly grew into a bigger church, because he

emphasized evangelism. In 1920, the first church council was formed, so that this council could lead and organize most of the administrative issues in the congregation under the leadership of AA Louw. It comprised of men who were appointed as both elders and deacons. From that time until the hand-over of the church to the indigenous on 4 May 1977, leadership in the church was a male domain (Mutumburanzou, 1995: 24). This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The researcher now turns to the brief discussion of the *Shona* culture and the attitudes of men towards the position of women in the church and society at large.

3.3 CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE SHONA

To understand the background of *Shona* culture, a general definition of the concept “culture” needs be understood.

According to Nida (1954: 281), culture is learned behaviour which is socially, acquired. It is the material and nonmaterial traits that are passed on from one generation to another. It can mean everything people do, every realm of human creativity behaviour. Dearman (1992: 2-3) states that “culture” may also be defined as “all learned and shared human behaviour”.

In its broadest sense, culture (as used by anthropologists) includes the way of life or “designs for living” employed at any time by humankind. However, one can also speak of a culture as being the ways of life, characterised by a single society or a group of closely related society (Nida, 1954: 29). In *Shona* culture, males dominate in power, status and leadership roles in a hierarchical manner that has been passed on from generation to generation.

According to Paas (2006: 236), the term “culture” includes that of which humanity is built up of, using the means given by human capacities and by surrounding nature. Traditions and customs belong to it, also traditional religions. He added that culture is related to the term philosophy, referring to man’s love of wisdom. Through this philosophy human beings can organise their thinking on culture and their knowledge of it in an orderly way (Paas, 2006: 236).

Culture in this study will mean the human attempt to respond and conserve their way of living and an expression of their divine values. The perception is that *Shona* men’s view on the position of women is influenced by African culture at large even in some way by Western culture in the present generation. The leadership culture has been passed on from generation to generation as historians can tell from the era of king Mwene Mutapa’s (the captor)

kingdom (Garlake, 1973: 174-175).

3.4 THE SHONA PEOPLE

In Central Africa, between the Zambezi and the Limpopo Rivers, lies the land that is high in the middle and slopes both north and south to meet the rivers that bound it. Great Zimbabwe is the climatic centre of this land. Shona people live in the north, south, east and west of Zimbabwe. They are believed to have settled there since the tenth century (Gelfand, 1973: 101; Mukanya, 1997: 87).

The *Shona* people never called themselves *Shona*. They are called the *Shona* because they speak one of the dialects of what linguists call the *Shona* cluster of Bantu languages. These are Karanga, Korekore, Ndau, Manyika and *Zezuru*. Broadly speaking, all *Shona* living in one chieftaincy are members of the same sub-clan. They share not only the same totem, but also the same ceremonial greeting which distinguishes them from other members of the same totem who have different ceremonial greeting forms (Gelfand, 1999: 5).

The rich beauty of the Shona ethical code stands out in sharp contrast to the material individualism of the West. The *Shona* possess much that is worth retaining and the prospects are to save a good deal of it for succeeding generations. They have to devise means of blending their own cultural heritage with what the West has brought to them. The concept of brotherhood, the love of a good family life, with close support for its members and good neighbourliness, are pillars in Shona culture. Zimbabwe has something to offer the world in human behaviour Shona men and women can lead by their fine example (Gelfand, 1999: 5). In keeping their brotherhood, the *Shona* people are known of their three imperative guidelines of 'living together', 'keeping the peace of the group' and 'unity of the group'. These guidelines reach out into every department of Shona life and they find themselves re-echoed and reinforced in another all-pervading element of Shona culture - the familial monotheism of the traditional Shona religion (Gelfand, 1973: 102).

3.4.1 Religion

Forty to fifty percent of the Zimbabweans attend Christian churches. However, like most former European colonies, Christianity is mixed with traditional beliefs (Gelfand, 1973: 132). Besides Christianity, the Mwari cult is the most practiced non-Christian religion which involves ancestor worship and spiritual intercession. Mwari (God) is an unknown supreme

being that communicates with humans through a cave as the Voice of Mwari. According to the spiritual world of the *Shona*, all the other spirits are under the great omnipotent God (Mwari). The spiritual hierarchy of the *Shona* is honoured from the top downwards (Garlake, 1973: 176; Gelfand, 1973: 132).

The religious activities of the *Shona* people from the time of King Mwene Mutapa recognised the importance of women priestesses at the shrines at Matopo hills near the city of Bulawayo, Great Zimbabwe near the town of Masvingo and other shrines all over the country (Garlake, 1973: 176). In this area some women dominated as rain makers at some of the shrines and act as prophetesses (Weiss, 1994: 23).

3.4.2 Language of the Shona

English is the official language of Zimbabwe, though only two percent consider it their indigenous language, mainly the white and Coloured (mixed race) minorities. The rest of the population speak Bantu languages like *Shona* (76%) and *Ndebele* (18%). *Shona* has a rich oral tradition. English is primarily spoken in the cities, but less in rural areas (Wikipedia 2006).

3.4.3 Leadership structures of the Shona people

From their paramount king Mwene Mutapa (the Captor), the *Shona* people established a highly centralised government in the country of Zimbabwe. This was because they came into the country as one family and one unit, surrounded by enemies. For their survival, they had to remain united and militarised, ruled by one king (*Mambo*) who was believed to have divine powers. His ancestors who operated through *spirit* mediums assisted him (Garlake, 1973: 176).

Below the king were able nobles and elders who formed his advisory council. They assisted him at his courts and helped him to interpret tribal law and custom. The king had regional and provincial chiefs or rulers. Regional chiefs appointed district chiefs who in turn appointed kraal heads (Mukanya, 1997: 88).

According to Sibanda and Moyana (1982: 53), the chiefs headed the legal system and distributed the land to the people, but advisers and advisory councils limited the power of the chiefs and the king. The chieftom was passed to an elder who had to be an able leader. It did

not always pass to the son of the chief. This limited the powers of one family over others.

Nida (1954: 67) also echoes that Mutapa's political structure was the same as present day Shona societal structure. It began with the hut (*imba*), and then came the family head (*saimba*), the neighbourhood (*mana*) and its head (*samusha*), the region (*dunhu*), sub-chief (*sadunhu*) and chiefdom (*nyika*). At the top was the chief (*ishe*). The mambo or king and his courts were above the chiefs. The mambo ruled with the help of a council called *Dare*. Members of the *Dare* included priests, military leaders and provincial governors.

Some scholars argue that in theory, King Mwene Mutapa had absolute power but in practice this was limited by custom, dependent on popular agreement and shared with an oligarchy of priests, officials, and relatives. Amongst the relatives his mother, sisters and wives often held particular authority and influence to some decisions of life. Nevertheless, the kingdom was always dependent to a considerable extent on the character of its ruler, and this was always a factor in the choice of which son should succeed the king (Garlake, 1973: 176; Weiss, 1994: 24-25).

3.4.4 Family power structures

In Shona culture, family power processes include both power and authority. Power is considered as ability to change or exploit the behaviour of others among the *Shona*. Authority is one type of power that is based on norms which clearly legitimise the person's position and requires that difference and respect be accorded to that person. People may also derive power from control over economic resources rather than norms (Kanyongo and Onyango, 1991: 27).

In Shona culture, there are two closely related power processes in the family: decision-making and authority structures. The man makes decisions that affect daily life. The woman can make some suggestions, but the man makes the final decision. Authority structures here refer to the type of leadership positions in the family and types of resources from which the power in the family derives (Kanyongo and Onyango, 1991: 27).

In families, the typical positions of authority include: the normative 'head', the emotional leader, the support, and the expert. All of these four positions derive from somewhat different resources. In Shona culture, the normative head is the father, his position being given to him by African tradition. Thus, even if he is unemployed and poor, he is still respected and referred to in most families (Nida, 1954: 36). In reality this normative position is strongly

related to the head's control over land inheritance and traditional rites. A woman in this case needs to be under the control of a man no matter how wealthy and popular in the community she might be (Gumbo & Sibanda, 1982: 18).

3.4.5 Shona attitudes towards a woman

An observer might easily see that in *Shona* society, a woman is not as highly considered or respected as a man. She is very much under the thumb and must obey his every command. Outwardly, this may be so but if one studies the situation more closely, one usually finds that peace and happiness reign in a *Shona* family unit. In the understanding of the *Shona*, the male is considered undoubtedly superior in many aspects, but not in everything done in the home (Gelfand, 1992: 45).

Mukanya (1999: 65) argues that in the understanding of the *Shona*, differences in male and female positions spring from their psychological and physical make-up. The nature and strength of man is in his desire to protect the woman who is the weaker sex. Women in their make-up are obliged to seek the man's protection. Gelfand (1992: 45) supports this idea that a man must not submit to the decisions of a woman in public but privately. In essence, the reality is that in many families decisions are initiated by women (Gelfand, 1992: 88). In decisions on marriage, aunties play an important role to the daughters of their brothers. Men cannot pass decisions without consulting them.

It is believed in the *Shona* culture that when they are walking along the road, the man walks in front of his wife as a sign of authority, leadership and power. Usually, the most senior man leads the way unless he is too old. He will then take up a position in the rear. A son going along a path with his mother should lead the way, assuming the position of his father (Weiss, 1994: 46).

In *Shona* way of thinking, a good woman is blessed with the following virtues:

- She shows respect to men and to all elderly and senior people.
- She obeys her husband and, even if he happens to be wrong, does not argue with him or challenge him in public.
- She maintains good relations with her neighbours and does not quarrel with men.
- She prepares her husband's meals and provides him with the needs a man expects.

- She is loyal to the man (Gelfand, 1999: 34).

3.4.6 The relationship between sons and daughters

The status of a son is given a higher place in Shona culture than a daughter. A boy must be respected by his sisters in society, even if he is younger than them. Girls are bound to respect their eldest brother because when their father dies his name is transferred to the eldest son and never the daughter (Gelfand, 1973: 44-45).

After the father's death, the eldest son assumes responsibility and authority over his sisters and becomes their protector. Sometimes, if the boy is sufficiently grown up, the father may ask him to receive the bride wealth when his sisters marry. This has influenced the power of men in decision-making in Shona culture. The son is allowed to share family issues with his grandparents, his father and uncles at the *dare* (clan court) but has to respect the decisions of the elders (Gelfand, 1992: 45).

3.4.7 Manners of the Shona people

The *Shona* people believe that manners make a man or a woman. *Shona* villagers extol the virtues of solidarity, fraternity and equality. In their traditional environment, they are deeply attached to their faith, firmly worded to the way of life and to the virtues approved of by their ancestral spirits. The *Shona* have a deep-seated loyalty to their kin, elders, kraal heads and chiefs. They condemn all forms of violence among relatives and leadership structures. They place great stress on harmony and tranquillity (Gelfand, 1973: 11-12).

Within *Shona* society, collateral relatives enjoy a high status and great affection. This is extended to members of the same lineage which contribute towards solidarity and strength of the societal hierarchy. Gelfand (1973) points this out well when he states that in a patrilineal society, a father's brother is usually thought of as a kind of father and receives the respect with the status of a father. He also alludes to the paternal role which women (for instance the father's sisters) may assume in such a society. The father's sister may be called a "female father". She can resolve some family issues between her brothers and their wives as well as her children in a respectable manner. However, only the male in a lineage possess an inalienable claim to a share of land within their clan area, which a woman cannot be allowed. Every man has a permanent place where he may reside with men of his own totem (Gelfand, 1992: 11).

3.5 WINDS OF CHANGE REGARDING WOMEN POSITIONS

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and the hierarchical Shona cultural leadership style needs to take into account the winds of change which are blowing over Africa. Cultural changes are taking place in the world regarding the position of women in leadership, for instance in political, economic and social matters. This is changing leadership status at an alarming rate. The famous African woman theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye (1983) is of the opinion that the way forward is a “new community of men and women”, with no discrimination (1983: 254).

Consideration needs to be taken of the fact that not only colonisation started influencing Shona and African culture, but that the process of globalisation of the world and the influence of the Western dominated (USA) mass communication media also played a role in the paradigm shift of leadership (Moyo, 2000c: 8). The church in its world-wide ecumenical bodies and human rights organisations are also realising and emphasising that the Bible, though written in patriarchal times, seems to point out that women should not be seen as inferior creatures to men and discriminated against when it comes to leadership (Houten, 2000: 8-9).

3.5.1 Influence of Western culture on position of women

According to Paas (2006), the position of women in the Western Culture has changed based on two strands namely the Biblical line focusing on God, which led to the formation of God’s Church, through Paul, Augustine, the Reformation and the Evangelical or Reformed. This line led from and to the Cross of Jesus Christ, through whom there is salvation for anyone who believes in Him. The other strand is the wisdom of pre-Christian Greek and Roman Culture that focuses on man and nature. This on the one hand, through Humanism, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, Positivism and Emancipation, contributed immensely to the development of science and technology. On the other hand, it undermined Christian life.

It is not in the scope of this study to go into detail but only to note that it contributed to change of the position of women in Western society, the world at large and Zimbabwe in particular. Paas (2006) states that “the position of women in Western Culture changed as history continued. In Jewish-Biblical climate women were respected and were not always completely dependent on men. But in general they were under the authority and leadership

men. This was particularly the case when it came to marriage” (2006: 237). This is also the case in the Shona culture. The New Testament, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, indicated that discriminatory differences between men and women fade out when people are living in Christ.

The Reformation also influenced the position of women which has later influenced the Shona culture through the arrival of Christianity in 1891. Paas (2006) argues that the Reformation as a back-to-the-Bible, tried to restore the Biblical pattern of the relationship between men and women. The Reformers re-appraised family life as the cornerstone of society. In the family, the wife played a key role, so indirectly her position in society was elevated. In the churches of the Reformation, women received room for various activities, especially diaconal work. In marriage, church and society, men were considered to be the leaders, having final authority. However, a Biblical reform of man and woman relationships, taking into account equality, similarity, and difference did not take place (Paas, 2006: 237). This is the influence that has impacted on the Reformed Church of Zimbabwe for decades.

3.5.2 Changes in the position of women brought about by the modern era

Changes in the position of women in the Modern Era were the result of views that revived in the periods of Renaissance and Humanism, then taken over by the movements of Enlightenment, Romanticism and Positivism. These movements were not necessarily anti-Christian. They took their criteria from earthly realities without the Bible or God (Paas, 2006: 237). Western society became secularised and so did the view of the relationship between men and women. Two positions on the situation of women were brought in by the philosophical revolutions. The first was the emancipation of women, influenced by the French Revolution. Its aim was to remove all the differences between the two sexes. The second was a reaction against the first one. It was aimed at women in the agrarian and early capitalist societies that had started to erode (Paas, 2006: 238). That influenced a culture that was for a long period dominated by men.

The above situation was strengthened by the technological and industrial revolutions of the 19th century, which changed the rural lifestyle into modern urban life. It again strengthened the movement for the emancipation of women. To many Christians, the emancipation of women seemed to have anti-Biblical objectives (Hadda, 2003: 433). The churches in theory accepted women’s equality but defended the contemporary situation in which there were

practically not similar responsibilities for men and women. But in actual fact women had influence in most activities done in the church.

Paas (2006) argues that “European and American missionaries who came to Africa were very much aware of the cultural situation in their countries. They brought with them not only Biblical views, but also Western cultural perceptions on the relationship between men and women” (2006: 238). Among them some were on the progressive side but most of them were conservative. Some were influenced by liberal thought, most were children of the evangelical revivals and awakenings. No uniformity on the position of women existed (Paas, 2006: 238; Weiss, 1994: 103). The racial influence brought about by some of the missionaries and some of the African cultures, influenced the negative attitudes of men towards women. This was the experience in the Reformed Church of Zimbabwe. In the church services there were places reserved for missionaries and their families, then places for African men on their own and women on their own (Weiss, 1994: 104). It strengthened the hierarchies in the Shona societies.

Theology in this case was done in the clerical paradigm associated with the Western and dominating hierarchical Shona cultural structures. The missionaries interpreted the Biblical teaching on leadership and relationships between men and women, basing it on the traditional Shona perspective. It honoured kings, chiefs and headmen and forgot that the Church had to proclaim its message of submission to Christ as Lord and of doing the will of God. But we need to appreciate that they were men of their time and situation which made it difficult for them to reform.

3.5.3 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to prove part of the hypothesis of the study that the hierarchical Shona culture adopted by the missionaries has influenced the leadership structures to exclude laity and women in decision-making positions of the church. The missionaries used hierarchical Shona structures as the strategy for evangelization which ended up dominating the Biblical normative discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. The negative attitudes of Shona men towards women have also been influenced by the conservative Western attitudes and racial discrimination brought into the church by some of the missionaries. The influence and changes brought about by the modern era led to the emancipation of women. It may seem to be under the influence of the secularization process in society. It led to more equality between

men and women. The RCZ needs to react to these contextual changes by being hermeneutically sensitive to both modern society and the Scriptures. This, according to the methodology of doing theology in this study, will assist transformation in the church in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEADERSHIP: IT'S HISTORY IN THE RCZ

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The challenge in this study is to apply the biblical principles in a proper way. The leadership of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe needs to understand that contextual factors played an important role in the way Practical Theology was viewed and implemented in the past. Initially, Practical Theology was basically the application of Biblical and Systematic Theology in the ministry. The focus was primarily on the role and work of the office of the minister, and this position became known as the “clerical” paradigm (Hendriks, 2000: 9; Dingmans, 1996: 84). At present, due to contextual changes, it seems important to emphasise the role of the faith community and the role of the laity who constitute the church.

The present chapter focuses on leadership in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe by analysing leadership patterns in the church from its inception in 1891 to the present.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the leadership patterns set in each of the RCZ's historical periods discussed in this study. These are discussed in relation to the normative biblical leadership patterns discussed in Chapter 2. It addresses the problem of leadership patterns set by missionaries when the church was founded. The patterns are still haunting the leadership structures of the RCZ today.

The Council of Congregations was formed in 1920 to form the constitution of an autonomous Synod, since the leadership of the church was controlled by the Mission Council which was a subordinate of the DRC (Cape). Although the Shona Reformed Synod was founded in 1952, it was only in 1961 that the first black moderator was elected. Thus, for the first nine years, the leadership was composed of white male ministers only (Napata, 1979: 20).

The church grew gradually and eventually in 1975, only Black ministers were elected on the moderamen. In all these years, those elected to the moderamen positions were all male clergy. During that period woman, youth, evangelists and lay preachers were excluded in church leadership positions (Van der Merwe, 1981: 164).

The Synod of 1984 brought a bit of flexibility to leadership positions when male church elders and deacons were, for the first time, elected to key positions in the moderamen. At that synod the women guild leadership representatives brought forward their proposal to be appointed as church elders and deacons in their respective congregations and to be given permission to be trained as ministers (Mutumburanzou, 1995: 24). After motivating their proposals, the women representatives were asked to leave the synod session. They returned to the hall next to the church where the synod was meeting. They had to wait for the men to decide their fate. That synod passed the resolution that women could be church elders and deacons and could be trained as ministers (Synod Minutes 1984: 631/21). The decision by the Synod was partly put into practice. Women were elected as elders and deacons in the RCZ congregations, but no women were trained as ministers. Due to *Shona* cultural influence the male church elders' discouraged female members who showed interest in training.

To investigate this problem, the researcher commences by giving an overview of the historical background of the RCZ from 1891 to the present. The researcher then proceeds to reflect on the four major divisions in the history of the church's leadership. The first period to be discussed is from 1891 to 1952. This is the period predominantly influenced by missionary leadership, combined with a rigid *Shona* cultural leadership hierarchy. The second period to be discussed is 1953 to 1975. During that period, influence of the white missionaries declined, while the influence of the indigenous *Shona* people gained prominence in the context of the political change which started influencing the country.

The third period to be examined is from 1976 to 1980. During this period, the political struggle for independence intensified and the indigenous *Shona* culture influenced the church leadership structures profoundly. The fourth period to be discussed is 1981 to the present where leadership patterns of the church were influenced by political independence and modern contextual changes in society.

The researcher aims to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of leadership during the periods mentioned. The question posed in every period is whether women, youths, evangelists and lay preachers were involved in broader decision-making positions in the church.

The chapter aims to prove part of the hypotheses of the study that the leadership of the RCZ still function in the clerical paradigm, a paradigm that took bureaucracy and rigidity in the church structures to a norm of leadership.

4.2 POSITION OF THE LAY PEOPLE: 1891-1952

4.2.1 Introduction

The period between 1891 and 1952 is known by scholars as the pioneer era in the leadership of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (Folk, 1979: 193; Pheko, 1982: 46). The researcher argues that leadership structures of the RCZ in this period were dominated by white male clergy. Women and laity were not considered for church leadership. They worked hard at the grassroots in the church, but could not be involved in decision-making processes. The position of the laity, in terms of leadership, was inexpedient in this period. White male missionaries occupied all key and prestigious leadership positions.

The researcher argues that church offices and structures in the RCZ are still hierarchical and functioning in terms of the clerical paradigm copied from this period.

To describe the situation in this period, the following leadership structures are explored: the DRC Mission Board leadership, the Mission Council, the Church Council, the Council of Congregations, the Moderamen and the Synodical Board. These are explored to find out the position of women and laity in leadership structures. They are also explored to prove how the identity of the above laity who constitutes the church has been recognised by the church leadership during this period.

The researcher will also explore how the missionaries dealt with the gender hierarchy of the *Shona* culture, which promoted the exclusion of women from public ministry - how they at that stage discerned the world and Scripture in their faith communities and in their faith seeking understanding.

In this chapter onwards, terms like “mother Church” and “daughter Church” will be used often. “Mother Church” refers to the DRC (Cape) and “daughter Church” to the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 The DRC mission board leadership

The leadership of the RCZ today has passed through various stages. Some of its strengths and weaknesses relate to the “mother Church”, DRC (Cape), which has been in control for a long period. The Mission Board of the DRC (Cape) initiated unique mission work among the *Banyai (Shona)* people. It was unique in that initially it was a joint undertaking by white, coloured and black missionaries, a spirit which ought to manifest itself even in the leadership structures.

This congregational mission was also unique because it was sustained by the continued intercession and financial support of a group of women and youth groups of the Stellenbosch congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church (Cape). It was a striking manifestation of missionary fervour and joint missionary action at congregational level of both men and women (Van der Merwe, 1981: 35). The concerted and joint efforts of these pioneer Christians need not to be forgotten today. Their way of doing theology concurred with the methodology of doing Practical Theology as described in point 1.7.4.1 of Chapter 1.

Through faithful prayers of men and women in the congregation of the Stellenbosch Mission Board under the instruction of the DRC Synod, the missionaries launched their first project in Mashonaland (Zimbabwe) in 1891. The mission’s task was under the leadership of Andries Adriaan Louw (usually called Andrew Louw), who by that time was not yet qualified as an ordained minister. Before his departure for the mission field, he sat and passed the examination for Teachers of Religion (Van der Merwe, 1981: 48).

In 1894, three years after he had started the mission work, he was examined and ordained as a missionary. In 1921, 30 years after AA Louw had been in the field, the Cape Synod decided to give him full status as a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. The commencement of his missionary career was therefore a humble one, and certainly a step taken in faith (Van der Merwe, 1981: 48). For the years mentioned above, the leadership of the RCZ was under the supervision of the DRC (Cape) through the Mission Board. Andrew Louw had no authority and power to make final decisions. The Mission Board had jurisdiction to make final decisions for the church in Zimbabwe (Van der Merwe, 1981: 124). The clerical paradigm that promoted a hierarchical style of leadership is proved here by the way the Mission Board executed its leadership.

4.2.3 Mission council leadership

In the previous section, the researcher chronicled the work of the Mission Board, which was responsible for leadership activities of the then Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe on behalf of the DRC (Cape). The present section intends to investigate how the Mission Council was formed and constituted.

Since the commencement of the Synodical Mission of the DRC (Cape) in Zimbabwe, supervision was done by means of correspondence from the Mission Office in Cape Town. Rev AA Louw, the founder of the mission field in Zimbabwe, acted as the spokesman. The expansion of the work provoked the need for the local organizational structure in the mission field. This initiated the constitution of a mission council supervised by the mission secretary, Rev J du Plessis. The constituted council met for the first time in 18 April 1905. Rev AA Louw was elected as chairperson and Rev PHA Fouché as secretary. In 1906, Rev GS Murray was elected secretary. Louw and Murray served in their respective offices until their retirement (Van der Merwe, 1981: 72).

The case above consolidated the power and authority of the male missionaries in leadership. They became regarded as the “Church fathers” of the young church. They served the church faithfully but dominated the leadership structures (Napata, 1979: 2-3).

Rev AA Louw retired in 1937. By then, he had served in the leadership position for thirty-two years. One may wonder why leadership could not been shared with other capable ministers of his time. Hierarchy remained the order of the day as the laity feared to challenge the system. Theology was done in a clerical paradigm model.

The DRC (Cape) applied the principle used in the Livingstonia mission in Malawi (Nyasaland) in constituting a Mission Council in Zimbabwe. There its pioneer missionaries were members of the Mission Council of Livingstonia for a longer period. Applying the same principle, four Dutch Reformed missionaries constituted a Mission Council on 24 October 1898. Andrew Louw corresponded with his cousin in Malawi, Rev AC Murray, and the Mission secretary, Rev J du Plessis, acquainted himself with developments in the Dutch Reformed Mission in Malawi (Van der Merwe, 1981: 72-73).

Membership of the Mission Council leadership was as follows: ministers of religion, doctors serving as missionaries, the principal of the Teacher Training School, representatives of lay missionaries serving as teachers or in other capacities and representatives of the ladies serving as missionaries. Women doctors were *ex-officio* members. They were non-voting members, but honoured and respected for their academic status (Napata, 1979: 15).

The Mission Board of the DRC (Cape) had the right to appoint additional members of the council. Members of the council were permitted to cast a vote in meetings after being in the mission field for one year. The resolutions passed by the Mission Council were to be approved and altered or vetoed by the Mission Board. This approach to leadership gave the missionaries in Malawi and Zimbabwe partial powers in the planning and administration of their missionary work (Van der Merwe, 1981: 73).

The position of laity was one-sided as in that only white missionaries were considered in the council. The black evangelists, who accompanied AA Louw and established a number of the mission outposts, were not included in decision-making positions. They were in charge of the rural outposts reporting to the clergy at the mission posts. The work of the evangelists produced a good harvest of Christians in the church.

A good example came from *Madzivire* outpost where the evangelist, Lukas Mokoele was posted, where Laura Mokoele and John Hungwe, who assisted in translating the Bible into the Karanga dialect, came from. The outposts started by the evangelists later became fully fledged local churches. It is disheartening to learn that evangelists and lay preachers received little recognition in the church (Napata, 1979: 2-3).

The researcher acknowledges and respects the founder of the mission work in Zimbabwe, AA Louw, who lived his life in communion with and in obedience to God. He placed strong emphasis on evangelism. He did much for the African community as a whole, paying attention to its women, its sick and its outcasts. He approached the Africans in their own vernacular and produced literature in their language and tried to approach them in their world of ideas and expressions of thought (Van der Merwe, 1953: xiii). However, the question remains why a man of such great concern preached up to his retirement without producing one African minister or helping the evangelists with which he started the ministry to become ministers?

4.2.4 Formation of a young indigenous church leadership

God uses His Church for the edification of believers and witnesses. He calls men and women to faith and repentance, to be gathered as witnesses. However, eventually they grew into an independent self-governing church. The movement of the Spirit in calling men and women together in Christ started during the early days of the DRCM, when it established a young indigenous church in Zimbabwe in 1891. It wished to uplift the young native, coming into being (Van der Merwe, 1981: 78) and to quickly assist its leadership to grow to maturity.

4.2.4.1 The constitution of a council of congregations

From the inception of Mission work in Zimbabwe in 1891, the church was under the leadership of the DRC (Cape). The ordained missionaries of the DRCM administered the sacraments. The Mission Council laid rules for church discipline and empowered the local ministers to appoint supervisors (*vakuru*). It was done under the instructions of the Mission Board. In co-operation with elders (*vakuru*), the minister exercised church discipline in accordance with the rules laid down by the Mission Council. In certain cases, church members were consulted before *vakuru* were appointed. In 1909, the Mission Council discussed the installing of *vakuru* by reading a formula and in part, conferring on them authority of elders and deacons. It was emphasised, however, that the *vakuru* could not take a final decision on any issue (Van der Merwe, 1981: 79).

The first Dutch Reformed congregation among the *Shona* people was established at Morgenster Mission. The other mission posts were subsequently established all over the southern part of the country and was controlled by missionaries based at Morgenster. In 1917, the Mission Council decided that congregations could also be established at other mission stations. The idea took three years before being implemented because the members were too few to constitute the needed number of 300 members. Then in 1920, the Mission Council decided that congregations could be established if they could serve at least 50 members. The following regulations were formulated for the local church council (*rangano doko*) or congregation (*chiunga*):

- That it should consist of a local male missionary and one or more elders depending on the needs of the congregation.
- The elders should be elected only by and from older male church members of the congregation who are married.

- The task of the Church Council was to be similar to those of the “mother Church”, but adapted to suit local conditions.
- The Church Council was to meet quarterly or as often as necessary (Van der Merwe, 1981: 79).

In the same year the Mission Council constituted a council of the congregations called *Rangano Huru* (Presbytery) to act as the co-ordinating governing body with more authority than the Church Council. Its rules and regulations were outlined as follows:

- It should consist of a male missionary who is in charge of a mission station or minister of the congregation and a male elder for each congregation.
- It should meet two days before the meeting of the Mission Council, which was the supreme body at the same venue.
- It had to discuss matters such as pastoral work in the church, report on the work in the congregations, church discipline and other issues pertaining to the life of the church.
- It had to meet yearly to elect its own chairman and secretary (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 52)

The meeting of the Mission Council held on 9-14 July 1917 was considered to be of paramount importance. A delegation representing the “mother Church” in Cape Town attended. Prof J du Plessis (who drafted a constitution for a Council of Congregations in Malawi in 1903), Rev AC Murray (Mission secretary), Rev JC Pauw (ex-Moderator of the oldest Dutch Reformed “daughter Church”) and Rev DT Theron (Mission secretary of the DRC in Transvaal), all sat as voting members (Van der Merwe, 1981: 80).

After the approval of the Mission Board, the Presbytery commenced to function in 1918. It had legislative powers and the supervisory task of a synod and a presbytery combined. The Presbytery was, however, subordinate to the Mission Council and the Mission Board. Its resolutions were to be submitted to both bodies for approval. In most cases, they were passed without alterations. The constitution of the Presbytery was a development towards building a young autonomous church leadership (Paas, 2006: 221-22).

The first forum of the Presbytery in 1918 allowed evangelists and lay preachers to attend the meetings as observers and non-voting members of both church council and presbytery. Women and youth were excluded because even the newly elected male elders from the black communities would, due to *Shona* culture, not allow a woman or a young person to sit on the same council with male elders.

4.2.4.2 The leadership of the *Rangano Huru* from 1918-1952

From the establishment of the presbytery in 1918 until 1952, white ministers held leadership positions. From 1918 to 1925 Rev AA Louw was the chairman of the Mission Council, as well as the presbytery. The fact that he was a gifted and talented spiritual leader cannot be denied, but the researcher argues that he monopolised leadership in the church. The domination by the white male clergy in leadership during this period continued. They remained in the broader leadership positions for 46 years from 1891 to 1937. Rev WH Murray took over the chairmanship of the Mission Council when AA Louw retired in 1937.

The indigenous ministers in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe were considered unable to hold high policy making posts (Napata, 1979: 43). This stigma influenced church elders and ministers in the RCZ. Some did not want to be voted out of office, even when their term of office was over. Some argue that the example of Rev AA Louw's leadership influenced them.

4.2.4.3 Development of indigenous church leadership

To build a strong indigenous Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, a strong well-trained leadership is needed. The presbytery was well established but this did not change the position of the laity in the church. The development of indigenous church leadership was necessary. The leadership was still in the hands of the white missionary and male dominated:

- During 1925, the training of evangelists and black ministers was initiated. Training of evangelists started at Morgenster on 22 June, 1925 with AA Louw Jr, being the first lecturer. A two-year course was planned for the candidates. The first trained evangelists were Jeremia Matanga from Gutu, Ezra Shumba from Chibi, Shadrack Shumba from Chipinge and Josiah Chipadza from Makumbe (Mandebvu, 1976: 11). However, African evangelists were not adequately trained academically and theologically for a long period. They were used to uphold the interests of the clergy and the white missionaries (Cronje, 1982).
- The evangelists and lay preachers rendered valuable service in Evangelism, Pastoral Care and Catechism instruction, but never participated in decision-making positions (Pheko, 1982: 98). The son of Rev AA Louw, born years later in the mission field, grew and became educated to the extent of training evangelists who had started the ministry with his father (Van der Merwe, 1982: 103).

Despite the late development of African leadership by the missionaries, in 1932 the Mission Council suggested to train two of the seven untrained evangelists who entered Zimbabwe in

1891 with AA Louw. Izaka Kumalo, because of his intelligence and maturity in the knowledge of the Lord, was mentioned (Van der Merwe, 1981: 113). The Mission Board, however, did not favour the ordination of men not formally trained in theology. These evangelists laboured for the Lord for 41 years without being empowered for church leadership. The present leadership in the RCZ inherited this spirit of suppressing the evangelists. The clergy still do not support the office for the evangelist (Napata, 1979: 45).

The training of African ministers commenced at Morgenster in 1936. HW Murray was appointed as their lecturer and AA Louw (senior) assisted him. Two candidates were selected for the ministry by the *Rangano Huru* from the first group of evangelists who had completed their training in 1927. These were Ezra Shumba and Shadreck Shumba. When they completed their studies, Ezra Shumba was ordained as minister at Morgenster congregation on 27 August 1938 (Cronjé, 1982: 131). The leadership development for African ministers came 47 years after the church had been initiated among the *Shona* people.

Since 1936, the courses for ministers and evangelists were offered alternately, but in 1953 the training of evangelists discontinued, the reason being that African ministers were trained to fill outpost and rural congregations that used to be manned by the evangelists. This was a drawback to the development of the lay people because only sixteen black ministers were trained between 1936 and 1956 (Merwe, 1981: 114).

Another leadership development in the *Shona* Reformed Church came in 1947 when a black minister, EN Ngara, who completed his theological studies in 1943, was elected chairperson of the *Rangano Huru*. In 1948, his classmate, A Makombe, was also elected chairperson. Gradually, *Shona* ministers started to share in the leadership of the indigenous Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (Napata, 1979: 17). They were however puppet leaders, as they had no power to make lasting decisions on what affected the life of the church.

4.2.4.4 The position of women, youths and evangelists in this era

The argument of this section is that the participation of women, youths and evangelists in leadership structures of the RCZ should be more adequate. The argument is based on the fact that the group which initiated mission work in the RCZ were women, evangelists, and youth from the congregation of Stellenbosch in South Africa (Merwe, 1981: 113-114).

Van der Merwe (1982: 49) states that two youth organisations and the women's missionary association of the congregation at Stellenbosch undertook to support the three evangelists from the Zoutpansberg financially and spiritually in order to start mission work among the *Shona* people. The project strengthened the position of the groups mentioned during the period 1891-1952. The current church leadership need to take cognisance of the contribution by laity from the "mother Church". If the RCZ can create similar opportunities for leadership development, and also empower and encourage organisations to come with similar initiatives, it would definitely enhance church transformation.

i) The position of women during the period 1891-1952

In the 1930's a stronger urge to witness was discerned in the young *Shona* Reformed Church. The stirring of a new missionary spirit was prepared in various ways. In 1933, congregations were established at Jichidza, Alheit, Makumbe and Pamushana missions and a local church was formed at each of these mission stations of the DRCM. The majority of the members of the new church were women. Ministers and evangelists did not meet the demands of teaching these women.

In 1933, a women's association called "Sungano Yamadzimai" was formed by Mrs AA Louw and was later taken over by Miss Joubert, who subsequently organized a similar association at Chibi in 1935 and at Morgenster in 1936 (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 59). They became involved in the church leadership in many activities of the church.

Thereafter, similar associations were started at every congregation which was established. The main objectives of the women's guild were to preach the Word of God to all the people and to visit the sick and the backsliders (Van der Merwe, 1981: 120).

As stated in Chapter 1, women's guilds had their own leadership structures. They became the cornerstone of the church, financially and spiritually. They did all the duties needed in the church to make congregations strong. Their exclusion in the church structures encouraged them to develop a strong women's desk in the church. They were under the control of the church council, though they didn't have any representation in the church council appointed by their guild.

ii) The position of the youth

The RCZ categorised its youth into three groups: Sunday school 3-11 years, Catechumen 12-14 years and Chiedza Chenyika youth movement 15 years until marriage. This section focuses on the Chiedza Chenyika youth movement group.

During this period 1891-1952, the church leadership was made up of adults in terms of decision-making. The youth participated in attending church services and their youth fellowship. Their group activities were under the supervision of appointed church elders. They started a group called *Varwi Vakristu*, meaning the Christian soldiers of Christ. Miss Hugo of Copota School started it for the blind youth in 1936 and it spread to all groups in congregations. The objectives of this group were to organize prayers for the church and to hold Bible studies and evangelistic campaigns (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 63). The leadership of this group was taken over by the clergy and church elders.

(iii) Evangelists and lay preachers

The evangelists planted the church with the ministers during this period (1891-1952). They assisted ministers in preaching, teaching Sunday school, Catechism and house visitation. They were not allowed to serve in leadership positions of the church. They attended church meetings as observers. The reality in the RCZ is that the evangelists and lay preachers worked hard to build up the church to where it is today. Evangelists were the heroes of the RCZ mission work. They worked and prayed daily among *Shona* people (Van der Merwe, 1982: 45).

They assisted the pioneer missionaries with the interpretation of the language to the *Shona* people. They also worked hard in the translation of the *Shona* Bible.

4.2.5 The formation of the synod of the RCZ

The previous sections discussed the constitution of *Rangano Huru* (presbytery) in 1918 and the establishment of some congregations at the Dutch Reformed Mission stations in Zimbabwe. Congregations at Jichidza, Alheit, Makumbe and Pamushana were established in 1933. It took long for *Rangano Huru* to function fully in accordance with the reformed policy. The officers needed time to understand the constitution and function of the new form of church-government. In theory, they had the powers and functions as a synod but in

practice a separate synod from the presbytery was needed (Van der Merwe, 1981: 122).

In 1950, elder CA Napata, a delegate from Morgenster congregation, tabled a motion at the *Rangano Huru* that a constitution for the synod of the African Reformed Church (it was named ARC since leadership was changing to the local African people) was to be considered. It implied giving the local church full leadership autonomy and authority. The *Rangano Huru* approved the motion in principle and appointed a committee of Rev SK Jackson, Rev Amon Makombe, Dr Van der Merwe and elder CA Napata to investigate the matter because the white male clergy were not interested in the proposal (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 52). But two white clergy actually served on the committee which proposed the change at the next Synod meeting.

In 1951, the Committee submitted its report to the *Rangano Huru* who then decided the new synod be constituted in May or September of 1952. It also decided that the *Rangano Huru* be divided into two presbyteries, namely Morgenster and Gutu (Napata, 1979: 11).

On 9 September 1952, all the congregations that composed the *Rangano Huru*, constituted the first ever synod of the Shona Reformed Church. The new governing body became autonomous since its decisions and regulations were no longer subjected to the approval of the Mission Council, as had been the case with the *Rangano Huru* (Van der Merwe, 1981: 124).

The turning point in the leadership of the Shona Reformed Church came 61 years after Rev AA Louw and his party planted the Church in Zimbabwe. Elder CA Napata commented that: “It was not easy to come up with the formation of an autonomous synod. Tempers, tensions and emotions flared in the meetings between the white missionaries and the black ministers, but respected elderly men of God, like Dr Van der Merwe, EN Ngara and Rev SK Jackson could diffuse the situation by the grace of God” (CA Napata, 1999: interview).

The first synod of 1952 was significant in that it set in motion the gradual transfer of responsibilities from the Mission Council and Mission Board in South Africa to the young indigenous church. This was in conformity with the vision of Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr who, in 1873, had envisaged an indigenous African ministry to prevail in new evangelized areas. In this regard, he had said: “If the Lord should afterwards appoint one out of the black nationals as an ordained minister, then he could take the place of the white missionary and the latter could proceed to another national” (Van der Merwe, 1981: 38; Mutumburanzou, 1999: 53).

However, even though this vision started to develop, the young synod elected only white clergy in the moderamen. The ministers elected were Dr Van der Merwe (Moderator), Rev SK Jackson (Vice-Moderator), Rev JP le Roux (actuary) and Rev GS Murray (Synod secretary) (Synod Minutes, 1952). The fact remains that change did not come overnight. It was a significant development for a new synod to be born in the mission field. The inclusion of the indigenous members in the leadership structures, however took time to be attained.

4.2.6 Conclusion

The leadership positions during the pioneer period of the RCZ were dominated by white male clergy. The position of the women, youth, evangelists and lay preachers in leadership structures was not considered. The “mother Church” took some time to equip the “daughter Church” in leadership development. Inclusion of laity in leadership structure developed at a slow pace. The male clergy were considered as the capable people to lead the church. The clerical paradigm dominated in this period. The following section elaborates on the fact that even when black ministers emerged in leadership positions, the clerical paradigm of leadership continued to dominate the leadership structures.

4.3 POSITION OF THE LAY PEOPLE FROM 1953-1975

4.3.1 Introduction

Part of the problem addressed in this study, is that the leadership patterns set by the missionaries are today still crippling the RCZ structures. The patterns have promoted the hierarchical gender domination of the *Shona* culture in church. The previous section analysed the development of church leadership in the RCZ from the pioneer stage in 1891 to the institution of the constitution of the autonomous young indigenous synod in 1952. The analysis proved that laity was excluded in decision-making structures.

The present period under discussion continues to explore the issue of lay leadership development. The section discusses the period between 1953 and 1975. It investigates to what extent the new autonomous indigenous church recognized the plight of the lay leadership groups. Did it make progress compared to the period of the missionary leadership? How did the political changes which took place in the country during this period influence the young church?

4.3.2 Change in leadership initiated by political conflicts

In the 1960's a great tide of nationalism swept over southern and central Africa with increasing racial conflicts and tensions. The Federation of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Nyasaland (Malawi) was established in 1953 and ended in 1963 (Weiss, 1994: xv). Malawi and Zambia became independent states but repeated attempts to reach an acceptable agreement with Great Britain on the independence of Southern Rhodesia were unsuccessful. Then, from December 1972 onwards, acts of terrorism were committed. Nationalist guerrillas infiltrated Zimbabwe across its eastern, northern and western boundaries and there was an escalation of bloody conflicts (Zvobgo, 1996: 161).

The spirit of nationalism was not good because it provoked war, which claimed many lives, and in a way, facilitated premature leadership changes in the RCZ and other churches in Zimbabwe. In the church, lay people were afraid to challenge the suppression by the white missionaries. But during this period the raise of nationalism gave them courage to face the white people boldly (Napata, 1979: 19).

4.3.2.1 Impact of nationalism felt by the DRCM

At this stage, it became clear that mission work in Zimbabwe and the rest of southern and central Africa had turned a corner and entered a new stage where nationalist thought, racial tensions and conflicts became prominent (Zvobgo, 1996: 140). Within the DRCM, the policy of delegating greater authority and responsibility to black colleagues was expedited. In 1961 the Missionary Board stressed that black workers needed to shoulder greater responsibility in the mission stations. They sensed danger ahead due to political tension, which could not be avoided by the church structures (Van der Merwe, 1981: 137-138).

The DRC (Cape) felt that joint missionary work was necessary and eventual transfer of administration to the "daughter Church". In 1965 the Mission Board recommended to the synod: "that the Synod approves in principle the transfer of its mission work in Southern Rhodesia to the Africa Reformed Church in Rhodesia" (Van der Merwe, 1981: 139).

The policy was implemented by delegating authority and responsibility to the black staff in most departments of the church. In 1963 Alheit Mission was put under black leadership with immediate effect. A proposal was submitted that by 1977 leadership at the following stations be handed to blacks: Jichidza Mission (1967), Makumbe (1969), Pamushana (1972),

Nyashanu (1973), Chibi (1976) and Zimuto and Gutu Missions (1977) (Mandebvu, 1976: 22).

It was arranged that effective handover of leadership authority be done in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and sincere co-operation. It was a tremendous challenge to white and black members of the church in a period when the country at large was in tension and conflict, with much racial hatred in the air. It challenged Christians (Van der Merwe, 1982: 139).

The fact is that political tensions that challenged the church leadership structures pose a great challenge to leadership today. Should the church of Christ merely adapt to pressures from society or should it not initiate action based on the mature methodology of doing theology of leadership? Should leadership not engage in trying to discern the will of God for our present situation?

Napata (1979) stated that “in this period God put the spirit of unity, togetherness and effective witnessing for Christ among European and African Christians in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) to control the church and its leadership”. (1979: 45) In 1966, the Mission Council where only white male missionaries sat as voting members was dissolved and replaced by the General Administrative Board (GAB). Heads of mission stations and heads of mission departments (black and white) sat together as voting members.

After the constitution of GAB, a Station Management Council (SMC) was constituted at each of the mission stations. The SMC succeeded the Station Council, which operated for years, composed of white male missionaries alone. The formation of the SMC brought all heads of mission departments together in spite of race and gender (Napata, 1979: 46).

The above-mentioned changes were important because they ushered healthy relationships between missionaries and the black clergy. However the tradition of only male clergy into policy leadership positions remained a thorn in the flesh for the development of the church. The mindset continued that only ordained ministers are to chair the departmental meetings, head the mission stations and run affairs of the congregations.

4.3.2.2 The black clergy in key leadership positions

The policy of the DRC (Cape) stated that its “daughter Church” should become autonomous and indigenous leaders should fill the key positions. The policy was clear on paper but took long to be implemented. Up to 1956, the mother church had authority over the young RCZ synod. But in that same year it was decided that their representatives should only act in an advisory capacity.

During the 1960s and 1970’s, black ministers were elected as moderators due to the rise of the spirit of nationalism which had swept the country, reminded the church of its mission policy that Black ministers should take over. The following were elected: Rev EN Ngara (1961), Rev DP Mandebvu (1963 and 1966), Rev CJ Chikasha (1969 and 1972), Rev HP Mashamba (1975), Rev S B Ndamba (1978). In 1975 only black ministers were elected on the moderamen (Mandebvu, 1976: 23; Van der Merwe, 1981: 164).

The pendulum of development had swung gradually to the leadership of the black ministers who had experienced the pain of being excluded in leadership by the white clergy. However they also fell into the same trap of marginalizing the laity.

4.3.2.3 The ARC takes over leadership from the DRC

In 1975 the African Reformed Church (ARC) held a historical and crucial synod at Njube Township in Bulawayo from 26 to 30 August. The synod was unique because of a number of factors: It was the first synod to elect only Africans on the moderamen. Rev HP Mashamba was elected the Moderator, Rev PC Madangombe the Vice-Moderator, Rev RC Maunganidze Synod secretary, and Rev AV Marima became the actuary (*Mashoko eSinodhi*, 1975: 96/4). Important decisions were passed regarding the future of the church.

This synod made a formal request to the DRC to consider a full hand-over of all mission departments to the ARC.

The ARC request stated:

- That the synod requests the mother DRC that all the work under the General Administrative Board (GAB) be put under the auspices of the ARC synod.

- That the synod gives full mandate to its synodical committee to continue negotiations with the “mother Church” on what should be done if the request is accepted (Synod Minutes, 1975: 98/19 (a) and (b)).

The DRC (Cape), duly aware of the political situation in Zimbabwe, granted the request to the ARC and an amended deed of agreement between DRC (Cape) and ARC was drafted in 1976 (Cronjé, 1982: 132).

On 4 May 1977 the DRCM was officially handed over to the leadership of the ARC by the DRC (Cape). Rev L Moolman, Foreign Mission secretary, handed the Deed of Agreement to Rev HP Mashamba, Moderator of the Synod of the ARC (Cronjé, 1982: 132).

It was noted with gratitude that on 9 September, 1891 the DRCM had started this wonderful work among the *Shona* people with two white missionaries and seven black evangelist-teachers. When the missions were transferred to the ARC after 86 years, the mission staff counted 696 (88 whites and 608 blacks). The ARC was founded in 1891. By 1977 it became a fully autonomous church served by 32 ministers and 33 lay preachers (Van der Merwe, 1981: 192).

4.3.2.4 Conclusion

After considering the period 1953 - 1975 the hypothesis of this study still proves to be true. The church leadership excluded the laity in broader leadership structures. The male clergy, black and white, dominated the leadership positions and authority with a top-down approach. The period experienced remarkable developments in church leadership, forced by the political scenario in the country. The status quo of the clergy remained as in the previous period. The African clergy on their take-over still dominated the key positions and failed to incorporate the evangelists, women and youth. The premature hand-over prompted by the political situation prevented lay leadership development. Hence, one could be persuaded to believe that during this period, leadership was just transferred from one set of clergy to another set of clergy without change in practice.

4.4 POSITION OF THE LAY PEOPLE FROM 1976-1980

4.4.1 Introduction

The period between 1976 and 1980 was called different names by many Reformed Church

members in Zimbabwe. It was called “the Dark Age” or “the silent period”, due to less church activities in the area of evangelism. Some called it “the transitional period of church leadership”, where the hand-over of leadership was finally done amidst mixed feelings of joy and sorrow, due to the intensification and mounting pressure of war in the country (Mandebvu, 1976: 14; Napata, 1979: 12).

The major activities that took place during this period were the drafting of the Deed of Agreement, the hand-over of the entire leadership of church departments, the institution of the post of the General Secretary, the request of the women’s guild for recognition in church leadership and the formation of the Youth Movement Group called *Chiedza Chenyika* (light of the world). The period introduced some developments in the position of laity in the church leadership.

4.4.2 Drafting of the deed of agreement

It was discussed in the previous section, that the 1975 synod of the African Reformed Church (ARC) held in Bulawayo tabled a number of issues towards the hand-over of church leadership by the DRC (Cape). The ARC, due to continuous mounting pressure from its Synodical Committee and the intensification of the war of liberation struggle in the country, requested for a leadership handover to be done. The DRC, because of the war situation, had no choice but to grant the request. Before the hand-over could be done, a document of agreement needed to be drafted.

A committee was set up in 1976 to draft the Deed of Agreement, which refers to the Deed of Agreement which was drafted in 1966 when the GAB was established. The document was signed by the representatives of both the DRC (Cape) and the ARC in 1977 (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 131).

The representatives who signed the document stated: “It is our fervent and united prayer that this Deed of Agreement may form the basis for continuous bonds of unity, love and usefulness between our churches and providing an instrument to undertake unfinished tasks set before every church and every child of God throughout the world” (Rules and Regulations – The RCZ, *Nheyo yomurairo* 1984: 20/1.4).

4.4.3 Hand-over of mission departments

Reviewing the historical leadership development of the pioneer missionaries from 1891 shows that it started by establishing mission stations and larger congregations. The synod that was formed in 1952 achieved partial autonomy because it had no control over departments and finances of the church.

Therefore, there was need for a total hand-over. It is unfortunate that the handover was done during wartime, before the country's independence, because the situation was unhealthy and too unstable for the church to develop.

The handover was done on 4 May 1977. The ceremony took place at Morgenster Mission. The audience of about 2 000 people from thirty-three congregations of the RCZ gathered to witness the occasion. Departments such as the Teachers' College, schools, hospitals, Theological College, printing press, Mabuku (department of church bookshops), Munyai Washe (the Christian church magazine), Penya (the evangelism outreach programme), buildings, farms, water and electricity, cattle and vehicles were handed over by Rev L Moolman, who was the Mission secretary (Munyai Washe, July 1977).

Rev L Moolman officially stated that all the DRC missionaries in Zimbabwe were under the ARC. In response to this gesture, the Moderator, Rev HP Mashamba thanked the "mother Church" for such a gesture of love and for considering the ARC a "grown-up Church" (Munyai, Washe, July 1977).

4.4.4 The institution of the General Secretary's post

The discussion of the hand-over of the full church leadership to the African Reformed Church that started at the synod of 1975 prompted the formation of the office of the General Secretary, the administrator of the church. The appointment of such an office was immediately put into effect at the Bulawayo synod. The church had the post of "scribe." Between 1952 and 1975 only missionaries held this position.

However, due to the strong urge to hand-over the church, many black ministers felt it time for the church to take over the control of the administrative desk. The creation of the post was a major breakthrough in the church leadership. The missionaries, however, were contented with the old system, whereby the Synod Secretary was the correspondent of the church. They did

not welcome the new policy (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 129).

Change is not easy for those used to a certain system of leadership. This is the case in the RCZ today. When people talk about opening opportunities for new leadership in the decision-making bodies it is still hard for most of the ministers to grasp it.

The first black minister to hold the office of General Secretary was Rev RC Maunganidze. He had a hard time to be accepted by the missionaries at Morgenster in 1976, but due to the mounting pressure of war at that time, they later on accepted him. Some of the ministers who worked in this post up to the present day are: Rev CJ Chikasha, Rev HC Chaputsira, Rev RC Maunganidze (re-elected), Rev P Mahere, Rev JJ Zingoni, Rev A Mandebvu and Rev C Munikwa elected at the August 2006 synod. No layperson has ever been elected in this post, although it is an administrative post, which even qualified lay administrators can hold.

4.4.5 The request of women to be part of church structures

From the formation of the church in 1891, women in the RCZ were excluded from church leadership. The first church council formed in 1909 was composed only of male elders and deacons. Despite the fact that women membership outnumbered that of men, reformed tradition at that time combined with *Shona* culture, could not allow women in leadership positions. The role of women in the church was to participate in singing, listening to the sermons preached and contributing in alms giving (Napata, 1979: 46). Church leadership was a clerical paradigm domain of men.

From 1909 to 1977, when the RCZ attained its full autonomy, no woman participated in church leadership structures, besides in the women's guild formed in 1933 by Mrs AA Louw (Van der Merwe, 1981: 97). In 1978, women felt marginalized in the work of the church. They requested through their women's guild leadership that the synod allow them to preach, at least on Sundays when the few men elected to lead them did not attend the services. Considering their plight, the synod allowed them to preach but not to read the liturgy since they were not church elders (Synod Minutes 1978: 242). According to the thinking and understanding of the synod, liturgy was regarded to be precious and sacred, that it should be recited by men, not by women, and yet ironically, the Word of God, central to our salvation, could be preached by women.

The church is not confined, bound or limited to a certain place or to a certain person, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world (Kersten, 1983: 474). The formation of the church council by the DRCM certain limitations were set which were unnecessary. Permitting women to preach during this period was received as a transformative development.

4.4.6 Formation of a youth movement group (*Chiedza Chenyika*)

Before the Synod of 1975, youth activities in the church were organised through various organisations, namely: Sunday school, Girl's Association, Boy's Association, Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade, Boy Scouts, *Varwi Vokunyengereta* (the Christian prayer group movement) and Scripture Union. The *Varwi Vokunyengereta* Movement and Scripture Union were groups of boys and girls who worshiped together. In the years before 1975, these groups were not active because the church leadership did not recognise them.

In 1975, a committee of theological students and youth workers was formed. The members of the first committee were: Ndamba SB, Mutumburanzou AR, Nkomo SR and Zingoni JJ (theological students), Tavaziva T and Rev JL Vos (youth workers). They decided to start a youth movement that could unite all groups of boys and girls to worship together. The youth movement was called *Chiedza Chenyika* (the light of the world). The committee drafted the constitution for the movement. The members of the movement, as stipulated in the constitution, were boys and girls from the age of 15 upwards; all school leavers who were not married (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 135).

The objectives of the movement were: To witness about Jesus Christ to fellow mates, to have competitions in Bible quiz, music, to organize Bible camps and conferences, games, drama, to teach Sunday school and do pastoral work for the church. This constitution was officially accepted by the 1975 synod in Bulawayo (Synod Minutes, 1975: 111/135).

The formation of the group attracted many youths to the church. The youth director worked hard to present the needs of the youth to the church leadership. In 1976 the youth organiser and director, Rev JL Vos, reported to the General Annual Meeting (GAM) that the *Chiedza Chenyika* movement was growing from strength to strength in RCZ congregations where it was launched (GAB Annual Report 1976: 1). The establishment of "Chiedza Chenyika" gave rise to great involvement by many youths in church activities, as well as evangelism. Also, their status in the church changed, even though they were excluded from the church leadership structures.

4.4.7 Conclusion

In spite of some hardships faced by the church in the period 1975 - 1980 due to the intensification of war in Zimbabwe, the period introduced significant developments regarding the position of laity. The women's petition to be granted recognition in church structures was rewarded at least by allowing them to preach in the absence of men. This development concurs with the suggestion that transformation needs to take place in the church for people to work together as the body of Christ. In other words, discerning together about their identity, being created to the image and likeness of God, eventually helped them to reform the old structures and ways of thinking.

The full hand-over of the church leadership to the natives was achieved during this period as well as the acceptance by the synod of the youth fellowship, where boys and girls were allowed to worship together. A significant breakthrough in which the missionary hierarchy in the church leadership was eventually dispelled also took place during this period.

4.5 POSITION OF THE LAY PEOPLE FROM 1981 TO THE PRESENT

4.5.1 Introduction

The previous sections of this chapter stated that the problem of excluding laity and women in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe broader leadership structures was a hard reality. From 1891 to 1952 and 1953 to 1975 the white male clergy dominated broader leadership positions. From 1976 to 1980 the black male clergy enjoyed the same privilege, but the women, youths, evangelists and lay-preachers who constituted the church and worked at congregational level, were to a large extent excluded. The male church elders and deacons did not participate in broader leadership positions with the clergy. Hence, the morale of the laity in the church was low.

In the last section of this chapter, the researcher investigates the exclusion of the laity in the broader leadership structures of the church. The aim is to prove the hypothesis of the study that women and laity are not presented in the leadership structures of the church in the RCZ. Previous sections put emphases on the complaint by natives that missionaries suppressed them. This section seeks to understand whether the indigenous leadership in the church still maintains the clerical paradigm's hierarchical model of leadership.

The analyses of laity involvement in church leadership structures in this section are grouped into the following years: 1980 to 1986, i.e. the period in which the church leadership was influenced by the political independence of the country; the years 1986 to 1992, the period of freedom and the periods 1993 to 1998 and 1998 to 2002, periods affected by modernism and post modernism trends in Zimbabwe coupled with a political and economic crisis.

4.5.2 Leadership developments from 1980-1986

Before the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe the country had experienced much unrest in both urban and rural areas. It was stated in the previous sections that, in the period between 1975 and 1979, the guerrilla warfare intensified immensely, especially in the eastern and northern areas of the country. Thousands of secondary school pupils, college and university students were recruited by freedom fighters or absconded for war, while the remaining masses were mobilised for the escalating war. Both men and women participated in the war in some way (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 165; Randolph, 1985: 43). Such instability and unrest made many people long for peace so that life could be normal again.

Hence, in 1979, when a cease-fire was declared, there was great joy and jubilation among many Zimbabweans. The new Prime Minister, Mr Robert Mugabe, appealed to the people to set aside their differences and pull together in harmony. He said, "the time of retribution was over, it was time of reconciliation, reconstruction and nation building". He further declared that: "our new mindset must have a new love that spurns hate and a new spirit that must unite and not divide since this is the human essence that must form the core of our political independence" (Randolph, 1985: 43).

This declaration was screened on the televisions and announced on radios and written in newspapers. It paved a way for peace, stability and new developments in the state and the church. However, it took the country and the church some years to recuperate. The war in a way forced men and women to work together in all spheres of life (Pheko, 1982: 84-85).

4.5.2.1 The emergency synod of 1980

During the war period, worship in many congregations was disturbed, especially in rural areas and mission stations. Believers were meeting in houses. The leadership of the church was weakened due to lack of communication in the country and threats from the freedom fighters who thought Christianity was used by the missionaries as a means to colonise

Zimbabwe (Weiss, 1994: xiii). Therefore an emergency synod meeting was called on 18 August, 1980 soon after the independence celebrations. This synod attached all the ministers who had been displaced by the war to the vacant congregations; even those working in departments were given congregations to assist as visiting ministers and to re-establish a biblical mindset and values. It strengthened the position of the clergy in the synod, because the number of ministers outnumbered that of the elders who represented the congregations (Synod Minutes, 1980: 368).

4.5.2.2 The 1981 synod

The first proper post-war synod was held at Gutu Mission on 18-25 August 1981. This synod was unique to the RCZ in a number of ways. It was the first synod where blacks were elected into the Synodical Committee, which included male church elders and deacons. It was the first synod since 1952 where all the ministers, including those working in departments of the church, were given full voting rights. The way was paved by the emergency synod of 1980 that insisted that all ministers of congregations should have full voting rights. Among the 12 members elected into the Synodical Committee, 8 were ministers and 4 were lay elders. The moderamen remained the domain of the clergy.

The following ministers were elected into key leadership positions: Rev AR Mutumburanzou (Moderator), Rev HP Mashamba (Vice-Moderator), Rev P Mahere (clerk), Rev L Bwerinofa (actuary), and Rev HC Chaputsira (General Secretary) (Cronje, 1982: 133).

The leadership changed from missionary male clergy domination to black male clergy domination. The problem of this study states that women and laity were (and today still are) excluded from the broader leadership positions. This has not been thoroughly addressed. The women, youths and evangelists still felt marginalized. Little development was experienced and still only male elders and deacons were included in the Synodical Committee the broader board of the church (Synod Minutes, 1981: 348).

The women's guild for the second time, as they did in 1978, requested the synod to be included in church leadership positions. It was an important point to make since they were allowed to preach when men were largely absent during the war. In response, the synod reiterated that they should preach but not be given any leadership position in the church (Synod Minutes, 1981: 432).

4.5.2.3 The issue of women in leadership: synod of 1984

In 1984 the women's guild leadership, meeting frequently with the synod, demanded that the synod reconsider their issue of the inclusion of women in the leadership of the church. They requested to be elected as elders and deacons and be allowed to train as ministers. They also wanted to be allowed to lead church services in the presence of men including doing the liturgy (Synod Minutes, 1984: 631/21).

Their demands were quite in line with the pressure faced by the new government in the country to include the women in leadership roles, because during the liberation struggle, they also took an active part side by side with men. Since the government had succumbed to such demands, the women's guild took advantage of that and demanded their own rights in the church. After a hot debate on the issues, the synod finally yielded to their request. It resolved that the women be allowed to read the liturgy, lead the whole Sunday service, be elected as church elders and deacons and be trained as ministers (Synod, 1984: 631/21).

Although the synod allowed women to join the leadership of the church, some male delegates doubted whether women would perform well in these roles. The main bone of contention was centred on whether the church had done the right thing by allowing the women to train as ministers. The issue of training as ministers was accepted in principle but never put into practice due to resentment by male elders in some congregations. In informal discussions with fellow ministers, the researcher discovered that some ministers blocked recommendations of women to study for ministry. The main reason given was that "it is not acceptable in the *Shona* culture." Women interested to become ministers faced and experienced verbal attacks from some men and ministers.

On the other hand, many women from the year 1984 onwards were elected in different congregations as elders and deacons. Some congregations had more women elders than men on the church council. The majority of the women in the church councils however, felt inferior to men due to cultural views which looked down on them, although their numbers exceed that of men (Mutumburanzou, 1999: 171).

Women were sometimes in the majority in some church council meetings but when electing representatives for their congregations at the presbytery and synod levels male delegates were elected. They were intimidated by verbal threats from male elders and some ministers. They serve the church as well as elders and deacons; but still lacked confidence in themselves to be

delegates to broader assemblies of the church. In the church order of the RCZ there is no gender division between men and women, but it is felt that cultural background, which regards women as inferior to men, play a big role in their status. Men, again, do not back and support these women in their aspirations. The researcher hopes, one day, they will also be able to partake in all decision-making bodies for the transformation of the Church of Christ.

4.5.3 Leadership developments from 1986-1992

The period from 1986 to 1992 was a time of great hope in the leadership of the church because of political, economical and religious factors.

On the political scene, the reconciliation policy that was declared in 1980, created an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in the country. The spirit of men and women working together was created (Weiss, 1994: 7). Mrs Teurairopa Mujuru, who became the first woman Minister of Sport and Youth in Zimbabwe, motivated other women to aspire for top leadership positions. She had been a freedom fighter and was wounded in battle during the liberation struggle. She fought side by side with men in the guerrilla war which liberated Zimbabwe. To her, this proved that there is no position in society in which a woman cannot be able to partake in (Pheko, 1982: 89).

Economically the period opened opportunities on the employment market to many people who had been unemployed for many years and therefore had not been able to support the church. Women became economically empowered as jobs were created for them by the state (Pheko, 1982: 89).

On the religious front, the president of the country made a declaration on the freedom of worship of both men and women without discrimination in worship services. In the RCZ, more congregations throughout the country were formed. More ministers and church elders were needed to care for the spiritual needs of people. This created more opportunities for women to assume positions in the church, especially in rural areas (Synod Minutes, 1986: 774/26).

4.5.3.1 Developments in the composition of the moderamen

The period 1986 to 1992 was unique in that the church restructured the composition of the moderamen. Since 1952, when the first synod was constituted, the moderamen was solely a

male clergy domain. However, at the synod of 1986, the church recognized the role played by the laity in the building of the church and initiated the inclusion of male church elders in the Synodical Committee.

The composition of the key leadership posts were restructured as follows: Moderator (Minister), Vice-Moderator (Minister), Actuary (Minister), and Synod Secretary (elder), and Vice-Synod Secretary (elder), ex officio members: General Secretary (Minister), Treasurer (elder) (Synod Minutes, 1986: 776/47).

The combination gave parity to both the clergy and the laity to administer the church together. This confirms the methodology of this study that seeks the transformative action of faith community members to participate in the up-building of the body of Christ.

4.5.3.2 Synod of 1990: repeal decision of women as ministers

The struggle of women in both the synods of 1978 and 1981 bore fruit at the synod of 1984. At this synod, women were allowed to participate in all levels of church leadership. They were allowed to be elected as elders and deacons and to train as ministers. This crucial decision was reached in the synod session in the presence of a strong women delegation that strongly participated and argued their case in the synod of only male delegates (Mutumburanzou, 1999:206; Synod Minutes 1984: 631/21).

As discussed in the previous sections, the decision was accepted and the women were elected as elders and deacons in many congregations. It has been proved that many women are more committed to their work than some men. However, although the women proved hard working and trustworthy in their duties in congregations and church councils, the synod of 1990, without appointing a committee to study the matter in order to get the proper interpretation from Scripture, repealed its former decision to allow women to be trained as ministers (Women's League Minutes 1990: 289/19). The synod, however, kept its other decisions of allowing women to continue as elders and deacons (Synod Minutes, 1990:936/19; Women's League Report, 1992: 360/29).

Nevertheless, it seems more logical that the controversy regarding women in church office should be resolved: either to exclude them from all offices totally, or to allow them to serve in all the offices of the church if they are part of the Christian faith community (De Moor, 1992: 13).

Regarding this issue, the RCZ needs to give a biblical sound stance on women involvement in church leadership structures.

4.5.4 Leadership development from 1992-2002

During the period 1992 to 2002, the leadership of the RCZ experienced some radical changes never experienced before. In the presbyteries and synod meetings, the male elders and deacons participated in decision making with the clergy in the church. The lay people received a minimal recognition in some of the church structures, mostly at congregational level (Synod Minutes, 1994: 1047/31). The synods held during this period dealt with the issues of women in leadership in a back and forth way.

4.5.4.1 The position of Evangelists

The evangelists' training course had been terminated in 1953. African ministers were considered able to perform their duties. However, in 1994, the training of evangelists was reintroduced. It was done because the church had started the Binga evangelism programme to the northern part of the country. The 1994 synod endorsed that evangelists and lay preachers be trained for two years and allowed to attend presbytery and synod meetings as observers (Synod Minutes, 1994: 1047/34).

4.5.4.2 Position of the women

This period showed some developments regarding the position of women when the synod reconsidered their position in broader leadership structures of the church. The decision of the synod of 1984 whereby women were allowed to be church elders was reaffirmed. In 1992, the Zunga Congregation delegated Mrs Majange to the synod meeting (Synod Minutes 1992: 66/3). She became the first official woman elder in the synod of the RCZ. In 1998, the Chinhoyi Congregation also delegated Mrs Madombi to the synod meeting. She became the second woman elder to attend a synod meeting.

The researcher had the opportunity to discuss with the two women their experiences of synod meetings and the treatment they received from the male delegates. The delegate from Chinhoyi stated that "men are not yet ready to work with women. They want to lead the church of Christ alone as if Christ never shared life with women during His life time on earth" (Synod Minutes, 1998: 48/16). Mrs Majange commented that "it is a good experience

to discuss issues affecting the church with men at this level but we still need more time to get used to articulate our views. In meetings like this, women are in the midst of men who grumble and murmur when you make a point”.

The issue of training women to be ministers was discussed and the doctrinal committee of the church was tasked to do research and present the report to the following synod. The theological staff members at Murray College were also commissioned to do the same assignment at the 1996 synod and report to the 1998 synod. The reports were presented to the synod but were never discussed (Synod Minutes, 1998: 99/14).

During the 2000 synod, the women’s guild leadership again brought the issue to the synod, because there were some women who were interested to train as ministers. The synod again tasked the “Doctrinal Committee”, Rev W Runyowa and Rev R Rutoro who had already started research on the matter, to submit the report at the 2002 synod (Synod Minutes 2000: 39/2).

4.5.4.3 Position of the youth

The youth in the RCZ today are like other youth in the Reformed faith family. They are stimulated to explore and live the Christian faith and also to make a fuller contribution to their own church. Their membership, which makes up 45% of the church, includes Sunday school children, boys and girl’s league, the boys and girls brigade, as well as *Chiedza Chenyika* members (Moderator’s report, 1998: 17/39).

From 1991 to 1998 some progress to youth leadership development were made. A strong youth’s desk was created and a Youth Centre, where their co-ordinator could operate from, was constructed. Youth co-ordinators from every presbytery were appointed to link the youth with church leadership. These developments did not impress the youth much because the people appointed were clergy. Youth co-ordinators appointed from each presbytery were:

- Pamushana presbytery – Rev E Baloyi
- Chibi presbytery – Rev H Matanga
- Bulawayo presbytery – Rev J Machokoto
- Harare presbytery – Rev J Machafa

- Makumbe presbytery – Rev P Chekure
- Morgenster presbytery – Rev D Magodoro (Youth Report, 2000: 19/23).

The youth argued that they wanted co-ordinators to be youth members who would be able to represent them as youth in church leadership structures from the congregation to synod level. The synod could not accept the argument of the youth arguing that if youth are left alone they would bring in the charismatic teachings in the church (Youth Report, 2000: 19/28).

In the 2000 synod, youth leadership forwarded their issues through their co-ordinators to be considered in church councils, presbyteries and synod meetings to work together with their parents as elders and deacons, since they are also full members of the church (Youth Report, 2000: 26/40).

The synod responded that if their church councils elect them, they could come as delegates to the broader meetings of the presbytery and synod (Synod Minutes 2000: 31/15). In a way, the synod passed that the youth could be elected as church elders and deacons in their congregations. Triangle Congregation responded to the need of the youth by delegating JT Rugare, a bachelor, to the 2006 synod held at Morgenster mission (Synod Minutes, 2006c: 54).

During this period, the scenario of clergy dominating the broader leadership positions was a big problem since moderamen and synodical committee were made up of clergy and male elders. Male church elders co-opted in leadership structures seemed to lock out other lay people, holding fast on cultural and unchristian *Shona* traditional customs.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1 of this study, it was stated that one of the purposes of the study is to explore the situation and events that led to the present structures and practice of leadership in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The chapter discussed the leadership patterns set by the missionaries, the core founders of the RCZ. It has been proved that the leadership structures of the RCZ, since 1891 to 1977, were predominantly a white male clergy domain. The laity was excluded from the major decision-making structures. It proved the problem statement of the study that the leadership structures of the RCZ are still influenced by the clerical paradigm model that was hierarchical and bureaucratic. Authority was implemented in a top-down manner and concentrated within the ranks of the male clergy. The hypothesis of the

study which states that women and laity are not represented in the broader leadership structures of the RCZ was proved. It is, however, clear that a slow process of transformation (reformation!) is taking place.

The chapter used the methodology of doing theology in the discipline of Practical Theology. It looked at the leadership history of the RCZ and the contextual realities influencing the church as it struggles to reform. The methodology discussed in 1.7.4.1 helped the researcher to prove that the leadership in the church excludes the laity in participating in the broader structures, not honouring every person's identity in God who is our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

The leadership hierarchy was challenged to change by the intensification of the liberation war in the country. The natives took over leadership after war, but the laity exclusion in the leadership structures remained the same as it was during the missionary period. Their *Shona* culture and tradition, which are hierarchical in nature, influenced their practise in such a way that they could not see the wrong of dominating the leadership positions. This is what the hypothesis (1.4) stated.

The clergy, therefore, from the era of the missionaries and throughout the era of the indigenous clergy, became an elite club of leaders largely cut off from their laity. They failed to promote the vision of the first supporters of mission work in Zimbabwe from Stellenbosch, whose principle included a commitment to participation of women, youths, evangelists and lay preachers in the activities of the church. This ideal is currently not yet practised in the Church. The ministers occupy the broader leadership posts. Progress, however, is visible.

The inability to radically transform its policy and structures has weakened the growth of the church and the relationship between the clergy and the laity. The equality of all believers in the church is on paper in the constitution but not in practice. In such a situation, for transformation to take place, the attitudes of the clergy towards the laity need to change. The attitudes of the male church members towards women need to change. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PRESENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES IN THE RCZ SYNOD

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 explored the history of leadership in Reformed Church Zimbabwe from its inception in 1891 to present times. The focus was on the position of the laity on the leadership patterns set in each of the RCZ historical periods outlined by the chapter. According to the methodology of the study, the chapter dealt with points 3 and 4 of the methodology of doing theology which explain the present reality in the RCZ and the globalised world surrounding it. The chapter proved the problem of the exclusion of women and laity in the four major periods studied.

This chapter examines the present attitudes of church members towards women and lay involvement in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership structures from congregation to synod level. In other words, the chapter examines the attitudes towards women, i.e. point 3 of the methodology of this study. The researcher agrees with Retief (1958: 82) that the issue of attitudes is very important in our lives. All our deeds and words and behaviour are influenced by our attitudes. If there is something wrong with our attitude towards our fellowman [sic], then this must necessarily have an obstructing influence on what we do or leave undone. To know a person, one must know what his/her attitude is towards others.

Since women are almost excluded from decision-making structures in the RCZ Synod, the central question for this chapter is: what are the experiences, feelings and thoughts of women on all the decisions of the church which affect them? At the same time, there is an accompanying question addressed to men: how do men feel about the church's decision on women? The second question is important because the purpose of this study is not simply the liberation of women in the church but a new community of men and women working in harmony. To attain transformative action in the way we do theology of leadership in the church where women and laity will also be theology makers and not theology followers

(Adeney, 2005: 277), both groups need to give input.

5.2 FIELD WORK STUDY

To obtain answers to the above stated questions, informal interviews were conducted with women and men in the RCZ Synod. Sixty women were interviewed. They included ministers' wives, women's guild leaders, widows, divorced and deserted women and women from polygamous families and single women. Sixty men were also interviewed. Among them, twenty were ministers and evangelists and ten were church elders and deacons. The other thirty were church members from different social spheres in society. All the congregations and eight presbyteries were represented in the sample.

The church members were a mixture of urban and rural people. Since three-quarters of the members in the RCZ are in rural areas, only forty people in the sample – twenty women and twenty men – were from urban areas. The age range for both sexes was between 15-80 years. The educational range for both sexes was from a Masters' degree of any discipline to people without education at all. Half of the interviewees were working in different ministries, one-quarter working in the church (RCZ) and one-quarter non-working.

The interviews were conducted at all eight presbyteries namely, Morgenster, Bulawayo, Harare, Highfields, Chibi, Gutu, Pamushana and Makumbe. Morgenster is the first presbytery of the RCZ. That is where the researcher is based. Bulawayo is to the west of the country, Harare and Highfields to the north, Chibi to the south, Gutu and Morgenster on the central, Pamushana and Makumbe to the east.

The researcher conducted all the interviews personally. Informal, in-depth interviews and observations were the main tool used for the research of this chapter. The questions were grouped in three sections. The first section was personal identification. This included age, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, name of congregation and presbytery and position held in the church. This was because in some responses, a correlation was made between the educational attainment of the interviewee and the response given. The second section was on the feeling of the members on the position of women in leadership roles and whether men are threatened by competent women in church leadership. This is a theological education for women and men ordination. The third section was on Shona Christian women and culture. It included *roora* or bride wealth, child marriage, polygamy, widowhood and property and re-marriage. The questions were mainly based on personal experience or

personal opinions of the interviewees. The time spent talking to a person varied. The original plan was to spend thirty minutes to one hour with each person. In reality more time was spent, partly because interviewees also asked a lot of questions as they found the subject interesting.

The first presbytery to be visited was Bulawayo. Some months before the places were visited, letters were written to the chairpersons of the presbyteries for permission to conduct the research. The second were Harare and Highfields, followed by Makumbe, Gutu, Pamushana, and Chibi then ended with Morgenster where the researcher is based.

During these visits, in some presbyteries, the researcher attended presbytery meetings, men and women leagues, and Synod meetings which made some interviews easier to conduct.

At the beginning of each interview, there was a self-introduction of the researcher. He also outlined what he expected from the respondents. Most of the interviews were tape-recorded in order to replay it at home to do the qualitative analysis. Thirty, people requested that they remain anonymous. All interviewees were willing to talk about church issues and with personal and private issues.

At Morgenster, both men and women were interviewed at their homes. Since the researcher lived within the same community, appointments were made in the morning, afternoon as well as late evenings, and sometimes over meals. This community resisted the use of a tape recorder. Some did not mind the researcher taking notes; others just wanted a free discussion without notebook. Therefore after each session, the researcher had to write in a notebook all that was discussed before going to another appointment. Some people preferred writing their responses and sent them to the researcher by hand post.

For all the male interviewees, further discussions took place when the researcher was going out of the house or at bus stops and road junctions. This is a cultural way of chatting between friends. Without cassette recorder, pen and pencils, most of the people were open to talk on any subject which was brought up. The subject raised a lot of interest in that some of the people asked for a second discussion by coming to the researcher's home. Others expressed their disappointment when the researcher failed to book an appointment to hear their views. Financial constraints and time limited the number of people interviewed.

Informal, in-depth interviews were chosen rather than structured questionnaires for this chapter. The research of the chapter has been influenced by methodologies used by a number of scholars (Hendriks, 2004: 211-234; Mouton, 2001: 104,143-175,236; Ammerman et al, 1998: 203-210; Finch, 1984: 24-36 and Phiri, 2000: 108-113). The researcher agrees with argument of Phiri (2000) on interviewing women. She argues that the view that, formal survey-type of interviewing is unsuited to the production of good sociological work on women. She prefers, “less-structured research strategies that avoid creating a difference between the interviewer and the interviewee”. That sort of relationship, she argues, “is inappropriate for feminists doing a research on women, because it means that we objectify our sisters” (Phiri, 2000: 108).

In all the presbyteries the people received the researcher with respect firstly, because he had the permission of the Synod. Secondly, people knew some of his relatives and this made him one of them; thirdly the researcher knew some of the people in each and every presbytery and fourthly, the researcher was known to some of the ministers through teaching them at Murray Theological College. Some of the elderly ministers taught him in primary school and seminary and later ordained him. Lastly he is the first minister in the RCZ to do research on this particular subject. Most of the discussions were conducted in Shona, the popular language of the people in Zimbabwe.

Being a man and minister of religion, the researcher was valued in conducting this field research study.

As someone who himself had grown up and trained in the Reformed faith and Shona culture, it was easy to establish relationships with men and women. For some interviewees it was important to know who the researcher was before they volunteered any information. Others said they felt free to talk because the researcher was a free minister who understood how they felt and who wanted to identify with them. Most women felt that for a long time they had just bottled up their frustrations due to the patriarchal nature of the society and the church. Although the researcher was different from most of the interviewees by being a male minister of religion, the fact that he came with the attitude of wanting to learn from both men and women contributed to the establishment of good relationships.

It was made clear to all those interviewed that there were no right or wrong answers. What was being asked for was how they felt and why they felt that way. Men mostly took a

defensive stand about their views. They preferred to say that what other men said on the issues rather than what they are thinking. In some cases a view was presented as someone else's and only later on in the process of discussion was owned as theirs.

The names of the interviewees are not disclosed. The list of names is with the researcher and one has been handed to his promoter. In the interview entries the initial F stands for female and M stands for Male. Hence in this chapter F1 to F60 represent females interviewed and M1 to M60 males interviewed.

5.3 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The responses of the interviews are divided into categories. The first category deals with the attitudes of men and women toward women in church leadership positions. This is further divided into four sections. The first section is on negative attitudes from men, and the second on negative attitudes from women. The third is on positive attitudes from men, and the fourth is on positive attitudes from women. Here the emphasis is on comparing the attitudes of men and women.

The second category deals with attitudes of men and women towards theological education. The third category deals with attitudes of men and women towards women's guild. A comparison of the attitudes of men and women are made for the second and third categories. The fourth category deals with attitudes of men and women towards women in church and culture (child marriages, polygamy, and widowhood), which weakens their status in society.

5.3.1 Women's participation in church policy positions

There was a variety of reasons given by both men and women as to why women should not be included in church policy decisions and positions. Among men, the responses included church tradition, personal prejudice, and cultural arguments. Among women the reasons given included difference in gender roles and poor self-image held by many women as a result of cultural teachings and verbal attacks from men and other elderly traditional women.

5.3.1.1 Negative responses from women

Two of the sixty women interviewed had reservations about women having leadership roles in the church. Their responses were not much different from the views voiced by men. One argument was based on the gender differences between men and women and the other was on

women's low self-image and prejudice. It was argued that:

- Men and women are different. Women have their areas and men have also their own areas of work. Therefore women in the RCZ Synod should be contented with serving God through their women's guild and managing their homes while men concentrate on leadership roles (F20, 2001).
- Women cannot take leadership positions even if offered to them because women are not aggressive by nature. For a long time women have been silenced by their culture so that even now they do not speak out whenever men are around. Leadership should be done by men whether be it in the home or in the church if we are to respect our culture (F9, 2002).

The two responses reflect the impact of patriarchal attitudes on women. They show what women have been indoctrinated over generations, and they have come to believe that what is said about them is true. They have internalized the prejudice against women to the extent that they do not seek change (Phiri 2000: 110). They have not understood the contextual changes and effects of modernism and postmodernism influences in our society.

5.3.1.2 Negative responses from men

(i) Church tradition

Twenty of the sixty men interviewed gave reasons based on church tradition and conservative theology for not including women in the church leadership. Below are some of the common responses:

- The church does not allow it. In fact, when the missionaries came in 1891 they showed it very clearly to us that women should not hold positions of leadership. They agreed about that with our chiefs who gave them permission to preach in their areas. Therefore, the synod is only following that example. The example is a good one because it is supported by scripture (M45, 2001).
- In the RCZ Synod we have always followed a conservative theology in everything. In this way we protect the church's reputation. I have read the examples of the other synods of our sister reformed churches that have taken a liberal stand by sending women for theological training. The results of those women were not pleasing to the church and the customs of the African people. Having women working in the church leadership structures is not encouraging either (M1, M26, 2003).

- A human being, male or female, was created apart. In this view, I am obliged not to object to the aspect of women aspiring for leadership positions. However, as this question demands my personal feeling, I react or respond to this demand in the following way. The RCZ, as church which must survive on railways of its own doctrines and borders lined by its dogmas, I strongly feel the issue of women in church leadership must be revisited in the extreme depths of the word. The church should not compete with the secular world's gender formulations and campaigns but should extract the true scriptural baselines first. I am not a pessimist, but a reformed conservative (M34, 2004).
- I know of a woman at one synod meeting who after finishing her theological studies started working at the synod's office and twice got in relationship with married ministers working with her. These stories have brought constant fear in the RCZ synod that the presence of women in leadership positions will be a constant temptation to men. Many will lose their faith (M8, 2003).

In such arguments it is noticeable that there is resistance to change. Some of the male interviewees feel secured in preserving what they already know, though it does not represent the majority of members in the church. One also notices that pride are taken in the fact that they are conservative and therefore, not open to any new interpretation of theology especially where women's issues are concerned. There is also the patriarchal tradition that women are morally weak. Men are morally strong but women cause them to sin. Women are viewed as a source of sexual danger to men. In such attitudes the respondents did not want to examine male sexual weakness when a married church minister proposes to a single woman.

(ii) Prejudice

Five of the sixty men interviewed did not want women in church leadership positions because of the division of labour between men and women, the emotional nature of women and their physiological functions, and because they think women have a poor self-image. Most of them started by saying 'yes', God can call a woman to a leadership position but:

- Most women lose their tempers quickly. Church leadership positions require patience and firm character. Most women do not have patience. They can sometimes shout at people in the public for no reason. In a number of ways women are proud and even can show off to their fellow women if given these posts (M5, M6 2004).
- Women cannot stand the pressure of hot debates in some of our presbytery and synod meetings. They will suffer unbearable stress from leadership positions they aspire to have (M57, 2003). Women do not differentiate between incidental biblical culture and the Word of God. Yes, God

can call a woman to a church leadership position, but how is she going to minister when she becomes pregnant? (M7, 2000).

- Most of our women cannot accept the responsibility of leadership. Since 1984, women have been given an opportunity to preach in church and allowed to be elders and deacons but they seem not to do it (M10, 2001).
- Women cannot keep the confidential matters needed in some of our church councils due to their talkative nature (M17, 2002).

Prejudice against women is clearly reflected in the association of patience with men and temper with women. What is being said here is that biologically there is a connection between being a women and irrational thinking, and being a man and rational thinking.

(iii) Biblical basis

The responses were in three categories. Five of the sixty men felt that women should not take leadership positions for biblical reasons. They argued that:

The Bible does not allow women to stand before men and give instructions. There is no need to site the passages of the Bible you know them in some of the Pauline Epistles (M3, M46, M40, M15, M32, 2003).

There were three responses that argued that women could take some positions but not others. For example it was argued that:

Although 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 do not allow women to become ministers and church elders, the Bible is not against women becoming deaconesses. Nevertheless, if women are deaconesses this should be in accordance with what culture has defined as women behaviour For instance, women deaconesses should not have authority over men, for men are the heads of women (M47, M55, M57: 2002)

A third category had the subjection of married women to their husband in mind:

- A woman cannot be a church leader because if she is married, she is under the responsibility of her husband. The Bible says she belongs to him and therefore cannot take an independent decision. It would therefore be difficult for congregations to call her. It could also be unfair to ordain only single mothers and girls because it could look like the synod is saying that women who want to be leaders should not get married (M11, M12, 2003).

Ten responses were based on the Bible and reflected two positions. The first group takes every precept from the Bible as a general command coming directly from God. They do not differentiate between contextual culture and the word of God. They therefore take the stand that the Bible is against women taking positions of leadership. The second group has examined all the leadership roles in the Bible and put them into two sections: roles for men only and those that can be shared with women. Among the leadership roles that are practiced in the RCZ synod, the second group feels that the Bible has allowed the deaconate to be shared with women. Nevertheless, there is a qualification. Christianity gave power to men over women which under no circumstances should be compromised. The other two positions of elder and minister are considered exclusive male positions because they involve authority as their understanding of scripture is concerned. The argument that a woman cannot be called to a church because she is under the authority of her husband assumes that all Christian husbands will not give their wife's professions a priority as a way of showing respect, and consideration to one another in their marriage (Phiri,2000: 13).

(iv) Cultural bias

Fifteen of the sixty men interviewed rejected the inclusion of women in leadership positions on a cultural basis. Some argued that:

- It would be hard for a man and woman to work together in leadership positions. For instance, it would not be culturally acceptable for a married woman church elder to accompany a male minister or female minister to be accompanied by a male church elder in one vehicle when going on house visitation or meetings without raising suspicions from people (M13, M14 and M15, 2001).
- If women are brought into church leadership, there will be more cases of church discipline among the leadership as women will be a constant temptation to man (M16, M17 and M18, 2003).
- Our culture does not allow a woman to rule over a man. We are weakening our culture, compromising with the western culture (M19, M20, and M21, 2003).
- The responsibility of church leadership is too heavy for a woman. If a woman becomes a minister, she has two jobs which are demanding, one of taking care of her home and taking care of the congregation with several preaching posts that will be too much for her. If a woman becomes a minister, who is going to look after the home and children? To me that becomes a problem to see a woman leaving her natural task which I think is God given (M22, M23, and M24, 2003).

When asked why women manage to work in the home and outside in secular employment, the response was that:

- Church ministry cannot be compared with secular employment because sources of authority are different. God's work cannot be mixed with house work (M25, M26 and M27, 2003).

These male stereotypes about women are present in all cultures of the world. What is being said here is that culture decides what women's work is and what men's work is. As girls grow up they are taught at home what women's work is (Ziramba, 2004: 14). Cultural demands are interpreted as God's will for women. The place of the woman is in the home giving birth and rearing children. It is as if God willed it that way. Although God can call a woman to a leadership position in the church, to men, housework is more important for her. If she is faced with two jobs, she should always stick to the home one (Phiri, 2000: 114).

The issues of house visitations and travel to meetings if women are in leadership positions is the one which was used at the August synod meeting of 1992 to reject women taking leadership positions. Patriarchal culture, which is concerned with preserving ruling powers in the hands of men at all costs, is called upon here against women sharing leadership roles in the church. There is also the assumption that in Zimbabwean culture, in particular *Shona* cultures, under no circumstances can women have power over men. Another assumption which is being made here is that in *Shona* culture, like in most cultures, women are responsible for tempting men and not the other way round. This assumption proves that Zimbabwean cultural attitudes towards women are not changing.

5.3.1.3 Positive responses from women

Fifty women out of the sixty interviewed felt that women should be included in church leadership positions. Their reasons were based on their experience in the secular world, the experiences of some women of the Bible and their experiences in their personal faith with God. The central issue to most of them was being called by God. The following sample statements illustrate this:

(i) Secular experience

In view of what is already happening in the world around us:

- In the world wherein women have become qualified teachers, qualified medical doctors,

qualified engineers and several other disciplines alongside men, I do not believe that women are not capable of learning and practicing the same leadership skills as men (F3, F4, F6 and F7, 2004).

- It is a strong contention in me that women who desire to attain leadership positions in the RCZ are in conformity with dynamic requirements of our present society. While I am from a typical Shona background that undermines women's social position, I am personally convinced that women have a crucial role to play in matters to do with leadership positions in the church. The church should be an instrument in God's hands wherein talent and not gender is dominant. It needs to open doors for women in the church leadership (F27, 2004).
- The experience of some women in the Bible, when we read both the Old and the New Testament show that they are replete with women leaders. Deborah led the people of Israel. Priscilla and Lydia were Christian businesswomen. Euodia and Syntyche were noted by Paul because "they have worked hard with me to spread the Gospel" Philippians 4:2 (F10, F11 and F12, 2003).
- Biblically, there is no tangible reason why women should not play leadership roles. Kicking off with Jewish background that undermined women in society, scripture is busy creating a platform that allows full equal participation for men and women in spreading the word of God (F13, F14, F15, 2003). Faced by this kind of mystic environment among Galatians, the apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28 that, "There is neither ... male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ".

(ii) Personal Christian faith

Women argued in the following way on their personal faith:

- As women, when we read the Bible, it certainly leaves us in no doubt that God regarded women highly. The saviour of mankind was born of a woman. Women were the first to witness Christ's resurrection, the core event of Christian faith (F16, F17, F18, 2003).
- In the women's guild we are involved in preaching and evangelization. What is the difference between what we are doing and preaching at a Sunday service? I do not understand the sacredness of a Sunday service and leadership positions when the same God uses us during the week to preach and win people, and strengthen those who are weak spiritually (F19, F20, F21, F22, 2004).
- My understanding is that a woman can be a church leader in any position as long as she has been called by God and she has received the right training for it and is also accepted by the people she works with (F23, 2004).
- I refuse to accept that cultural reasons should be used to bar women from taking leadership positions in the church. Church leaders are aiming at pleasing people rather than listening to the

voice of God. As long as church leaders fix their eyes and minds on people, women will never have a chance in the RCZ Synod. The church will never experience the blessings that women can bring to church life (F24, 2003).

(iii) Women are also called by God

Some women expressed their views that if God could call men and women in other regions of the world he can also call women in the Reformed church in Zimbabwe:

- God calls women to ordained ministry the same way he calls men. At first I was happy with the present set-up of women in the RCZ synod. But when I went to a meeting in Kenya, I met women ministers from Zambia, Kenya and Ghana and I came to realize that God could use women in leadership positions just as He uses men (F25, 2000).
- If one looks at women in church leadership as doing God's work and concentrate in fixing one's eyes and mind on God, there should be no problem in the church (F26 and F27, 2001).

On the question as to whether women have made their desires known to the synod, the responses were that the women's guild national executive had done that several times. But the problem is that women speak through their male church elders who are their male representatives to the decision-making boards. Their case was not well presented and not argued by those who feel strongly about it.

5.3.1.4 Positive responses from men

The positive responses from men were based on what they have seen women doing and what they feel the voice of God is saying. Ten men out of the sixty that were interviewed, support the view of including women in broader leadership positions. Below are some of positive responses they gave:

- A number of women are capable of handling leadership roles in the church if only given chance by men. In my congregation I have women with gifts of preaching and organizing meetings. The congregation is benefiting from their contributions. If these women can be trained and ordained, the RCZ will benefit from their gifts (M39 and M42, 2003).
- Our women are good counselors and care-givers to the people in the community. They can handle people's problems very well if they are given leadership opportunities willingly in the church (M28 and M31, 2004).
- In respect to my social background as a man I am prone to be threatened by competent women in any form of leadership; whether be it in the church or in the secular world. However, I am

quick to admit that scriptural revelations have overpowered my contention for God who so loved humanity that he gave gifts to men and women. When men are given opportunities to lead some can be very good while others can be very bad leaders. Equally so, if women are given an opportunity to lead some can be good leaders while others can be bad as well. The measuring rod in this case should be in what one does for God in his or her duty (M59, 2003).

- In my case I am concerned with the ability of the person who aspires for leadership position. If women are gifted and able to offer the required leadership, opens up all the positions in the church (M33, 2003).
- Your question concerning women in broader leadership positions is directed primarily to men who, since they hold the majority of leadership positions are the ones who are to make a major change in their attitudes. Women need the encouragement and support from men (and other women) to become all that God want them to be. They need to be accepted as equal co-workers and individuals who can think knowledgeable and perform effectively. My view is that, given the opportunity there are many women who would surprise themselves, as well as their fellow workers, at how well they might carry out an executive position (M34, 2004).

These men viewed women as people just as capable as men. Women have the same gifts as men. They stated qualities of leadership and counselling that they have seen in women that can be used to the glory of God. For the Word of God does not exclude women from church positions. The will of God, to them, includes what is in the Bible as well as the views of His people.

5.3.1.5 Evaluation

The number of responses for the inclusion of women in policy leadership positions was equal to the number of responses against it. This does not reflect what happens at meetings of presbytery and synod because when women issues are discussed, those who are against it have been in the majority until 1984. In this sample, the same numbers have come about as the result of the presence of women. A closer examination of the figures shows that 90% of the responses against women in broader policy positions came from men, while 90% of the positive responses for women in leadership positions came from women. This indicates that if women were present in meetings of the church and given equal voting power, the discussions would take a different turn. The voices of women would in all probability influence the decision in their favour. The 10% of men in favour of women in broader policy positions indicates just how small women support is among the men who have power.

An analysis of the negative responses from men shows that the main reason is culture (33%). The second is the understanding of the Bible (28%), and the third is the church traditions (22%). This shows that the majority of men in the RCZ are not interested in women being in policy positions, clearly for cultural reasons. This analysis is in line with the reasons given in the August 1992 synod meeting where the issue of including women in broader-church leadership was discussed and rejected. A close examination of the reasons given by those who base their position on church tradition, show that they are similar to the ones given by those who base their position on biblical views. When the two are put together, they make 50% of the negative responses. This may indicate the strength of the conservative theology on women's issues in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

The negative responses by both men and women are based on people's notions on the image of women in Christianity and culture, both of which have been shaped by a patriarchal culture. Major biblical passages which guide the responses are Genesis 1 and 3, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. Some men and women looked to the New Testament problematic passage-verses in Paul which seem to require that women remain silent, that women not take leadership, that women remain in a position of following, not assuming leadership roles (Ephesians 5; 1 Corinthians 11 and others). A literal approach is taken when interpreting these verses. It is assumed that a woman cannot do the same church work as man because she is inferior. This means women have no authority over men and therefore cannot take a position of leadership in the church, as it would involve ruling over men. They ignore the context and style of Paul's letters and that they were written in a particular situation which may not be applicable to women in the church today (Adeney, 2005: 281).

The other matter brought out is that a woman is rationally and morally weak. Her thinking capabilities are not on the same level with men. Therefore, she would be a constant temptation to man. She would also not manage to cope with men's work. At most, women's sphere of influence is in the home. The fact that a woman becomes pregnant is associated with being unclean and therefore she is unfit to minister during this period. God, who is holy, cannot use a pregnant woman because she is unholy.²

2. There is no biblical basis for associating pregnancy with uncleanness. In Leviticus 12 women are unclean for a period after giving birth.

5.4 WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

In the course of the interviews, the issue of women sharing in church leadership positions was often linked with women in theological education. Twenty men out of the forty-five who were against women in high positions, mentioned that theological education was for those who would be ordained to full-time ministry. If women cannot be ordained, they should not receive theological education, they argued. The other twenty-five men did not mention women in theological education at all. Most of the men that did not mention women in theological education had little secondary education. This suggests that since they did not have formal education themselves, they did not see the need for theological education for women. In the RCZ synod few women are being trained at the theological college.

Five women, namely Mrs Mazenenga M, Mrs Mubwandarikwa N, Miss Masara M, Miss Madzivanyika Z, Miss Tasiya T, and Miss Chakanongwa E who are at present (2005 & 2006) receiving training to become ministers, felt that God had called them to full-time ordain ministry to serve both men and women and hoped that the RCZ synod will not rescind the decision to ordain women as ministers.

The responses of these women show that they feel called to work for the Lord in every situation of their life. They are saying that even if they are not ordained, they would like to have theological education to assist their fellow women in other church ministries.

5.5 SUNGANO YAMADZIMAI (WOMEN'S GUILD)

All the people interviewed had something positive to say about *Sungano Yamadzimai*. However, there were differences between men and women as to what those positive issues were. Men concentrated on what *Sungano Yamadzimai* is doing for the church, while women looked at what it is doing for them personally, as well as for the whole church.

Twenty men rated the women's guild as number one among all the church's sections that are involved in increasing membership and building the quality of church members. Forty men saw the women guild's main purpose as meeting the financial needs of congregations. They appreciated all the development projects in which the women are involved. All sixty women interviewed stated that the women guild's primary purpose was evangelism and fund raising as being secondary. The women mentioned the things that the women's guild is doing for them. Most of the women mentioned that being a member of the women's guild, helped them

to stand firm in their Christian faith. This they felt, is particularly true in the running of their homes and in personal relationships with people. In times of bereavement, they consider it a source of support and strength in their lives. Women's guild has a big hand in assisting AIDS patients in homes and hospitals. While men are busy talking and writing about it, the women are taking action.

On the issue of male elders representing their issues to the church council, presbytery and synod, fifty women interviewed agreed that it is not sufficient. Among women, it was the minister's wives who appreciated male elder representatives. However there were a variety of reasons given as to why they should represent them. The reasons included some of the following: women quarrel a lot and the involvement of males help to keep order. Male elder representatives act like a man in the home to control the situation. The male representatives help to sort out problems among women.

The ten women against the idea felt that male representatives acted like policemen to them. They felt that the synod does not trust women. They also felt that they would like to participate in the meetings of the presbytery and synod so that they can contribute to making decisions that affect them as women. They stated that men should desist from verbal threats and attacks to their wives when they are elected to represent the church at these levels.

The choice of the women's guild leadership was another issue that divided both men and women. Thirty-five men and twenty women did not see anything wrong with the policy that only minister's wives should be the leaders of the women's guild Executive Committee, while twenty-five men and forty women opposed this.

The difference in opinion between men and women on what they think is the greatest contribution of the women's guild, might be due to the fact that some men would not want to give the credit for the spiritual growth of the church to the women because that would weaken their argument of including women in broader policy positions. Secondly, the women were talking about firsthand experiences while the men were commenting on what they saw. The fact that there were only positive responses from women about the women's guild may indicate the emphasis of the guild's teaching to all its members.

5.6 WOMEN IN CHURCH AND CULTURE

All sixty women interviewed appreciated the good values in their culture. They were not happy with some customs practiced which contributed to their suppression by men. Women complained about high charges for a bride prize (*roora*), polygamy, widowhood property and remarriage.

5.6.1 Bride wealth (*Roora*)

Fifty of the women interviewed were against the high price to be paid for a bride. They viewed marriage as the covenant entered into freely between two people. A woman marries out of choice and there should be nothing to tie her down because she is suppressed by men. They felt that parents and uncles are not moderate in their demands for the cost of *roora*. A bride's price takes away the *Shona* cultural women's freedom to escape from abuse in marriage and domination by men. Women felt that the RCZ need to understand the issue of *roora* to help the community not to over charge their in-laws.

During the survey, it was discovered that all women interviewed rejected child marriage (*kuzvarira*). They argued that it takes away the rights of a women, it is also not safe for teenage girls to become pregnant at a young age as it increases problems when delivering babies. A second reason was that when girls get married while very young they are not ready to handle the problems of marriage. There was an assumption that most such marriages end up in divorce and the husband then demands the bride price he paid back. It was argued that even if the girls gave birth safely, they were not old enough to look after husbands and children as they themselves are still too immature.

5.6.2 Polygamy

All the interviewees spoke negatively about polygamy. They acknowledged that although the church is against polygamy, many Christians are leaving the church because of polygamy. The reasons for the increase in cases of polygamy that they know were the same for both men and women. The main reason given was that the traditional chiefs and headmen give it their blessing, and encourage men to take more than one wife as a source of power, pride and wealth in the community. A second reason was that with economic development and affluence, men take a second wife since it is a status symbol.

The woman kraal heads who were interviewed said that:

- Christians are introducing a new type of polygamy. In my village young girls are being made pregnant by some leaders who pay girls money not to mention them as responsible. I strongly feel that this is child abuse and prostitution which devalues the dignity of women and need to be condemned by society. The children are being taken advantage of because of poverty (F36, 2002).

Forty women spoke negatively about polygamy for two reasons, one spiritual and the other economic. Spiritually, it was felt that the mental torture that women in polygamous marriage experience makes it impossible for them to have a clear mind and develop a meaningful relationship with God. Economically, women in a polygamous relationship who have no other source of income, find themselves in a situation of shortage of essentials for themselves and their children. Their husbands do not support them adequately as there are too many children.

The responses show that polygamy is not only a phenomenon of the past, but that it is still present even among some members of the RCZ synod. Women and their children are suffering as a result. What seems to be worse is the unfaithfulness of Christian men which leads to the abuse of young girls.

The low education of the majority of rural women in Zimbabwe makes them vulnerable to polygamy and child abuse. At the same time some women who are in polygamous relations also suffer economically. Economic independence which could come with higher education would go a long way to help women in a polygamous marriage to obtain self-worth and avoid being taken advantage of.

5.6.3 Belief in the supremacy of men over women

Forty of the sixty men interviewed reflected on the history of supremacy of the *Shona* men over women in brief. They said that the married women are included in the *Shona* society's list of special "items". Tradition has strongly itemized women in so gracious a way that men considered their wives as pieces of property to be protected against theft. The following reasons were stated by some of the men interviewed:

- The fact that historical Shona man used to have numerous wives resulted in a huge homestead (nzanga) for the man and his wives and children (M34, M35, M36, 2003).

- In his supremacy, the Shona man judged his riches by the number of wives he had in exactly the same way such riches could be determined by his herd of cattle. In such a situation a traditional Shona woman had no say in matters of life that affected her. This explains why she could be given into marriage without her consent. The traditional Shona girl was not consulted when the family married her off; and as a married women, she could not be involved in decision-making matters. When the first schools were opened in the country it did not occur as mere coincidence that Shona girls were initially not included. Society saw no reason for sending a girl to school. Nothing could be seen in the future of a girl other than growing up to get married and bear children (M37, M38, 2003; M39, 1999).

5.6.3.1 Resentment of equating women to men

Within the modern *Shona* society there are many influential Women's Rights Organizations reaching out in almost every corner of the country, but there is nevertheless still a considerable resentment of the idea of equating women to men. In support of their superiority over women some of the men interviewed supported the following thoughts: The traditional *Shona* society still questions:

- how a woman may be a legal inheritor of property in the event of her father's death or husband's;
- how a woman inherit the chieftainship of a clan;
- how a woman may justifiably lead men in politics as Ward Councilor, a Member of Parliament, Minister or National President;
- how the church may give women the post of elder, deacon, lay preacher, evangelist or pastor; and
- how a woman in her menstruation period may preach in the church, and conduct the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion (M21, M5, M1, M35, M38, 2003).

In the church, the traditional *Shona* man is usually chauvinistic and do not want to hear a single word from a female preacher. This is so not because female preachers are soft in their preaching on the issue. Male chauvinistic listeners dismiss everything by virtue of it having been spoken by a woman. In the Bible, however, we see how women as well as men take part in God's mission. The church has the task to teach people what God's ideal is for women in society.

5.6.3.2 Supremacy of male Christians over women

In conducting the interviews, the researcher discovered that today the average male *Shona* Christian often thinks his wife has no meaningful contribution to make in a social discussion and in the church. Not surprisingly, the church took ages to actively involve women in its overall structures. When it eventually did, the decision became a subject of hot debate. In the churches of the Presbyterian order, some congregations readily accepted female church elders and deacons while others hesitated. The breakthrough in the *Shona* culture's view of women came with the church's decision to appoint female pastors. The political shift of the country also contributed to the breakthrough by recognising women for leadership positions (Ziramba, 2004: 13). Some Christians openly remarked that the church was going wild. Even some female Christians have been downtrodden psychologically by tradition so much that they believe that the church is taking a wrong decision. They do not think that they have the capacity to work side by side with men in the church.

- Co-education was introduced in many schools of Zimbabwe after independence in 1980. It improved the position of women in society who felt inferior to men in the past. It did not include physical power, but only productive potential and development in the church (M41, 2004).

The Zimbabwean women have been taught side-by-side with men since independence.

- Women were trained side-by-side with men in the secular world. Today Zimbabwe is full of female teachers, female administrators, female nurses, female doctors, female drivers, female engineers, female soldiers, female musicians and many more; and this has worked quite well (M41 and M49, 2002).

Perhaps the Christian world thinks women have secular leadership qualities which cannot be employed in the church.

5.6.4 Widowhood, property and remarriage

Twelve of the women interviewed became widows between 1980 and 2000. They identified some reasons for the suffering of widows in large families, i.e. low levels of education, the inability to get jobs and family property taken away by the relations of the deceased husband. They were really suffering economically as well as in other ways.

The twelve widows interviewed, were left with between four and six children. In all the twelve cases, the children were of school-going ages. Three of these women had well paid

jobs by Zimbabwean standards by the time of the death of their husbands. Nine women had secondary school education; five had done some courses where they got certificates. Four were married to RCZ synod ministers. They were all getting little of their deceased husband's pensions. They were given jobs by the Synod within the RCZ institutions after the deaths of their husbands.

Nine of the widows were grateful to the RCZ synod for the support they received after being bereaved. All the women mentioned *Sungano yaMadzimai* as their great helper in times of need. The nine widows working in the church department within the synod complained about the low salaries they receive. They complained about the heavy burden of educating their children. Although there is a decision which says that the synod would help in the education of the children of the deceased ministers, none of them benefited from that decision (Synod Minutes, 2002: 26/53).

Four of the twelve widows interviewed lost all of their property to the relatives of their deceased husbands. All the interviewees understood the loss of property by widows to the relatives of their husbands as part of the *Shona* culture which gives power to the male relatives of the husband's family. The widows involved found the whole experience humiliating because they felt stripped off all the possessions they acquired while they were together. Women do not feel like seeking help from the church on property issues because the church is led by men who are sometimes involved in the taking of property from the wives of their relatives.

The twelve widows were free to remarry, but they have decided not to because of the large number of children under their care. All feel that it is difficult to find a man who would accept them and their children. The widows of the ministers find it hard to remarry because most men do not feel comfortable to marry them. They are feared and respected as women who have been married to men of God.

In the twelve cases of widows studied, those with economic independence were educated and had ability to get decent jobs. Their suffering as a result of loss of a husband impacted on them economically. Large families contributed to the widows' sufferings. This implies that economic independence for women and having a smaller number of children could make lives of widows more bearable.

The church commended the widows of their deceased ministers. However, although it is true that the church is not a profit-making organization and in general church workers are poorly paid, paying widows too small salaries cannot be excused. The decision on what is urgent to the administration of the church is made by men who do not take into account the sufferings of the widows. The widows are voiceless in the church. Those who have complained through writing are labelled ungrateful and troublemakers. This is an example of the lack of representation of women among the decision-makers in the synod. If the church does not provide an example of taking care of the widows of its ministers, then what will the fate of the widow be?³

The interviewees have shown that the problem of degrading widows through dispossessing them of the property jointly owned with their deceased husbands is a reality in the *Shona* culture and even in the synod of the RCZ. The Christian men, especially church leaders, seem to be sending a silent message that they do not care what would happen to their wives and children if they were to die first. In this regard women need to be empowered to argue their case against men who do not respect their humanity in society.

Taking away property from widows should be condemned even though it is considered now as part of culture, because it leads to suffering. Taking away property from widows is stealing (Phiri, 2000: 133).

5.6.5 Conclusion

In summary, it can be noted that women's attitudes towards the synod policy on matters that affect them sometimes coincide and at other times differ. On cultural practices the researcher agrees with the synod on the values and customs which respect them as human beings. The majority of the women agree with the payment of bride wealth as a token of love but it should not be too high. The women rejected child marriage which dehumanized women in society and the church. For the majority of the women the teenage pregnancies worry them most.

It has also been noted that while women agree with the synod's banning of polygamy, experience shows that some Christians are still leaving the church because of it. The interviews have shown that there are Christian women in the church who are suffering from

3. The biblical injunctions on this issue should be taken into account, like James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (Mark 12:38-40)".

the evils of polygamy. At the same time women as well as some men stated that some Christian men are involved in the sexual abuse of girls that result in teenage pregnancies and the birth of unwanted children. The low education of some rural women in the church has contributed to the exploitation of women by men.

The experiences of the twelve widows indicate that the suffering of women in the RCZ is a serious reality. The contribution of the synod to the widows of its deceased ministers has been noted and the cries due to major financial shortfalls have been voiced. While respecting the financial difficulties of the church, it is required that this matter be addressed by synod.

A more serious problem is the superiority of men over women in the *Shona* culture. Women have been victimized by men for a long time and therefore women find it hard to challenge men openly.

The biggest difference between the policies of the synod and the attitudes of the majority of women and some men were on the issues of the participation of women in church leadership positions and theological education. Added to the list is the presence of male elder representatives for the issues of the *Sungano yaMadzimai*, and the choice of leaders in the Executive Committee of *Sungano yaMadzimai*. All the issues of serious contention have something to do with the sharing of power between men and women in the church.

With the results of the interviews and subsequent qualitative analysis in mind, the researcher argues that the inclusion of women in the leadership of the presbyteries and synod could make a major difference to the quality of decisions made, especially but not only, on issues that affect women. The researcher acknowledges the step towards empowerment taken by the church to train women for ordained ministry at Murray Theological College. Systematic empowerment of both men and women on women's issues is necessary in the RCZ synod in order to bring out a spirit of tolerance and understanding.

Empowerment could start at different levels. The theological institution would be one important place. The Theological Education by Extension will be the other. Empowerment of ministers should also lead to a change of attitude at congregational level. Most of all, an alliance of women in the synod would present an excellent opportunity for women to be made more critically aware of issues and speak out for themselves. The mobilization and empowerment of women for this specific purpose and an examination of their theology will form the basis of the next chapter. It discusses the Zimbabwean scenario and its influence on

the leadership structures of the RCZ which almost excluded the laity in its broader decision-making bodies.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ZIMBABWEAN SCENARIO AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CHURCH STRUCTURES AND OFFICE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 discussed the attitudes of different people in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe towards women inclusion in broader leadership structures of the church by means of an analysis of interviews done with men and women in the contextual situation of the RCZ. The findings suggested that men and women hold different views towards women involvement in church leadership. Their views are influenced by church tradition, prejudice, biblical understanding, and cultural bias on women, secular experience, personal Christian faith, and an understanding of God's call of people to ministry, age group and gender.

The present chapter discusses the Zimbabwean scenario and its influence on society and church leadership structures. In view of the methodology of this study described in (1.7.4.1) points 3 and 4 in Chapter 1, this chapter considers a local and a wider contextual situation that affect the events in the country and the church at large and in particular the RCZ. The chapter starts by discussing the influence of two major megatrends, modernism and postmodernism. Then it focuses on the present Zimbabwean political, economic, education and the health crises and the effects thereof on church leadership.

6.2 MEGATRENDS: MODERNISM AND POST-MODERNISM

Mega means great or large. Megatrend refers to trends with considerable influence or shifts (Hendriks, 2004: 20). Transitions or changes from the traditional culture of leadership to modernity shocked the churches in the 17th and 18th centuries (Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 24). The changes were initiated by writers and scientists who began to argue that science and reason were more important than religion and tradition. Modernism devalues supernatural elements. Modernity refers to the promise of rational, science-based progress as a human historical project linked to capitalism and socialist economic engines, with a claim on democracy as the policy of choice, with the nation-state as the primary form of sovereignty

(Rasmussen, 1993: 22-27).

6.2.1 The Modernity megatrend

The modernity megatrend is a major shift or transitional change in society from the traditional way of life to a modern one which stretched from early 16th century to the present (McLaren, 2000: 191; Woods 1996: 5 and Boeve, 2003: 37-38). Modernity is the act of cultural modernisation. “Cultural modernisation” refers to the process of cultural change or shift that went hand in hand with transition from a traditional agricultural society to a modern industrial society (Woods, 1996: 5; Boeve, 2003: 38).

The modern worldview represents aspects of the Enlightenment paradigm. It is humankind in its most self-confident pose, proud of its achievements and feeling in control of its own destiny. It is the self-contained and exclusionary world of the secularist (Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 26-27). Modernity is an understanding of the world through autonomous human rationality. In the modern worldview, there was no place for revelation; such was the confidence in self-evident, universal truths available to all through unaided reason. There was little place for the ‘mystery’ of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Boeve, 2003: 37; Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 27).

Autonomous arenas (referred to as subsystems) such as science, economy, politics, labour, leadership, law, education, etc. came into existence independently of the dominant overarching traditional worldview. The traditional worldview consisted of the transmission of a particular understanding of human life and activity that was legitimated primarily by the authority of customs (Boeve, 2003: 38). Through the emergence of modernity, the diverse subsystems emancipated themselves from the all-embracing religious horizon and rejected every claim towards traditional leadership hierarchies within their own domain (Boeve, 2003: 39).

The modernity megatrend did not share in the plurality of the subsystems of ideologies, which tried each in its own way to oversee and direct the process of modernisation in line with its own specific aims. These ideologies influenced the leadership styles in many organizations in society. This influence has affected the Zimbabwean society and the church and in particular the RCZ.

6.2.1.1 Influence of the modern way of life

The influence of the complex, modern society started in the Western and European societies and has since become a reality for everyone in the Zimbabwean situation. No one has escaped being shaped by its pervasive influence. Guder, (1998) argues that this, in every society, has become the very air that we breathe. He states that the reality of this “air” includes dimensions such as:

- urbanized life with its complex patterns of social relationships;
- multiple tasks and responsibilities that fragment time and space;
- an economy shaped and driven by technology and its advances;
- job, career and identity defined by professionalized roles and skill, but not gender based;
- the pervasive influence of change and rapid obsolescence;
- bureaucratic organizations run by the rules and policies;
- individualized moral values concerning matters such as divorce and sexuality;
- radical forms of individuality producing isolation and aloneness; and
- Hunger for some overarching story to give meaning and structure.

The Zimbabwean context became more modern since the 1890s with the European pioneers who came looking for land to settle as well as the spread of Christianity by the missionaries (Van der Merwe, 1981: 46; Weiss. 1994: 119). The way of life stated by Guder (1998) started to take shape in Zimbabwe. The separation of life into public and private spheres and its compartmentalization into specialized areas resulted in the marginalization of religious faith from society with the rise of nationalism, influenced by urbanization in the 1950s and 1960s (Weiss, 1994: 118).

In some areas of the country such as rural locations, mission stations, farms and small towns, churches continue to minister in traditional African societies, where they still occupy a central place. Churches in urban settings find themselves marginalized by modernity; a mindset represented by self-assertive secular presuppositions that allow no place for the transcendent (Weiss, 1994: 119-120; Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 25).

Church leaders started to find it hard to secure consensus to set the direction of the church. They were not alone, because the cultural shifts represented by the three worldviews namely traditional, modern and postmodern, infiltrated the Zimbabwean society. Leaders in a number of institutions, namely educational, religious, commercial and medical fields started facing similar conflicts of leadership (Weiss, 1994: 119-120) caused by cultural shifts of modernism and post modernism.

The Enlightenment thinkers were the first to challenge the traditional structures for personal freedom. They argued that rather than tying one's personal identity and destiny to monarchs or the church, one's personal identity and destiny should be the self-construction of a rational, autonomous individual. The sociologists call it the "modern self". They established that what is true can be determined based on human reason or rationality (Guder, 1998: 21).

The arguments used by the early modern thinkers to influence the shift of structures in society and church are: rationality and reason, autonomous self, and social contract. These are also influencing church leadership in Zimbabwean churches and in particular the RCZ.

The following arguments have affected many countries world wide and Zimbabwe in particular, and need to be considered:

6.2.1.2 Rationality and reason

The Enlightenment thinkers rooted their approach in the tradition of Greek philosophers, to define what is considered truth in any given society. They challenged the church and state authorities who used political and religious tradition to define the limits of what was considered to be the truth.

Francis Bacon proposed the rational use of logic and scientific methods as the source for knowing (Guder, 1998). Thinkers like Rene Descartes (1596-1650) believed that "truths were innate within the mind" (1998: 22). They focused on the principles of rational logic to discover these self-evident truths (Guder, 1998: 22). The focus spawned the method of rationalism. They believed that truth existed only as if it could be observed and described. They were using empirical research in the study of human experience (Guder, 1998: 22).

The thinking propelled a move away from the notion of truth as embedded within a tradition or revelation to a notion of truth discovered through the use of rational method (Manicas,

1987: 11-13). These thinkers assumed the validity of the Christian faith but before long they developed a new scientific method, with an epistemology that increasingly focused on empiricism, used to cancel out the God-hypothesis (David Hume, in Guder, 1998: 22).

The thinkers believed that they were introducing a liberating conception of truth, but in fact, their methods for perceiving truth reduced the truth that they sought to illumine in three ways. Firstly, their truth tended to become instrumental since they privileged only that which could be experienced. Secondly, they claimed objectivity by privileging scientific discovery as the only sure truth. Thirdly, they validated only what was measurable by privileging facts over values. Examination of these limitations is leading many to reassess the usefulness of the Enlightenment thinkers' confidence in empirical reason as the basis for knowledge (Guder, 1998: 23).

6.2.1.3 The autonomous self

The power and influence of various institutions, including the church, monarchies of various sorts, the feudal system, and the guild, shaped the identity of the individual in medieval Europe. In this context, personal interests and freedoms were submerged within larger corporate interests (Thompson in Guder, 1998: 23).

A primary goal was to formulate a new basis for individual identity as the key to increasing personal freedom. The basic understanding of the individual became that of a rational being and autonomous self. The approach lodged final authority inside the human mind instead of relying on authority from outside sources, such as tradition or revelation as determinatives. Those supporting the approach of empiricism regarded the human mind as a blank slate on which human experience was written. The key for the empiricist was for the rational, autonomous individual to use reason to organise that experience into discernable truths (Guder, 1998: 24-25).

Each of the above approaches fostered the creation of the modern self, the self-contained individual capable of discerning truth and constructing knowledge. The capacity to develop such a truth and knowledge provided the basis for achieving personal freedom. Modern centralized hierarchies were developed. Confidence regarding human ability to manage the present and face the future was created, Feuds which the church is struggling with today. Change was to be initiated at the centre from within centralized hierarchies (Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 30).

6.2.1.4 Social contract

During the sixteenth century, political thinkers formulated conceptions of society based on the application of scientific knowledge to the social realities of life. The conceptions limited individual freedom by tying the social order tightly to the rule of a strong monarch. In time, an alternative to the rule of such sovereigns was proposed in the form of the social contract theory. It was more of a democratic approach (Guder, 1998: 24). The democratic doctrine provided a way to affirm the social reality of life, while preserving the integrity of personal freedom. It recognised that people should make choices out of personal self-interest. To reduce too much self-interest to the social contract politicians, thinkers formulated that the collective effect of individuals chosen out of rational self-interest need to lead to the promotion of the common good in the whole society (Guder, 1998: 24). These principles are influencing the Zimbabwean scenario socially and politically for those in leadership to remain in power (Weiss, 1994: 82).

Underlying the constellation of theories was the basic motivation to free persons in modern society from arbitrary restrictions. When persons enjoyed true freedom, these theorists believed that the full potential of human life could be realised. They considered this notion of freedom as the more natural state of the human condition. The central ideology of modernity was the idea that autonomous individuals should have the freedom to choose and to decide out of rational self-interest to enter into a social contract in order to construct a progressive society. In that lies the foundation for the call to freedom and human rights of the past two hundred years, people waging battle with civil and religious authority structures all the way. Modernity is the story of the struggle to create a society on the basis of objective, scientific truth and the construct of the autonomous self (Guder, 1998: 25). All of this did not leave the Zimbabwean society unaffected.

6.2.1.5 Facets of the modern self

Modernity developed out of the intellectual currents of Enlightenment and emerging patterns in the political, social and economic realms of life. The ideas important to modernity were embedded into the concrete social structures of life. Modernity increasingly put its stamp on virtually every nation of the West, and to one degree or another, all other nations of the world. It has become what Leslie Newbigin called “the most pervasive culture of the world and one of the most resistant to the Christian gospel” (Newbigin, 1986).

At the heart of modernity's emergence lies a confidence in the autonomous, rational self. To understand the Zimbabwean scenario and the circumstances that the church leadership inhabits, it is important to look at the particular forms that the modern self has taken. The identity of people and their institutions, including Christians and churches, is rooted in adapting these notions of the rational self in the conception and structure of society (Weiss, 1994: 59; Guder, 1998: 25-26). Five features of the modern self are offered below as a cluster of facets that form its character, influencing the Zimbabwean society.

(i) The modern self as citizen with rights and freedom

A profound political truth is acted out every time a school child in Zimbabwe stands at attention, with hands placed on the sides and states the allegiance of the flag. This political act symbolises a key institutional development within modernity that took effect in the formation of the modern nation-state. The nation-state as a political construction was a logical extension of rational principles and social construct theory (Weiss, 1994: 110). It is implicit within social constructivist theory that people possess a collective identity that supersedes the family, ethnicity, or cultural tradition. The nation-state guaranteed citizen's personal rights and freedom in exchange for their primary allegiance of the state (Guder, 1998: 26). Every institution has to comply with this (even the church) in order to respect it in their mission schools.

The structures of the modern nation-state need to consider and protect a citizen's rights and the freedom of his/her allegiance and civic responsibilities. The modern self is shaped along the lines of tension to be a loyal citizen in the interest of personal freedom.

(ii) The modern self as consumer

A journey to present shopping centres to buy something symbolizes another factor shaping institutional development within Zimbabwean modernity. The selections confronting the buyer are extensive, including not only the endless choices among styles, colours and fabrics, but also choices about whether to buy at the four major Thomas Meikles stores or in one of the speciality shops. The multiplicity of choices is one of the many end-products of the way the economy took form in modernity. Guder (1998) echoes that Capitalism arose as one of the shaping institutions of modernity and has steadily become the organizing principle of the economics of the modern world (Guder, 1998: 27). The fact is that people in the modern world have the right to exercise their choice.

All developments and the spiral of change are controlled by the capitalist economy. The fuller effects of the capitalist economy are becoming evident in what some describe as the third stage of capitalism: consumer capitalism. This third type of capitalistic economy pressures the consumer to increase consumption, whether such consumption is really needed or not, in order to sustain growth and profitability (Jameson, 1984: 53-92). The modern self as consumer is both pawn and player in this economic game: pawn because each person is the object of the push to consume, and player because each person depends on the jobs of the marketplace that drives the culture of consumption (Guder, 1998: 27-28). The few capitalists in the economy control the events of the society.

(iii) The modern self as constructed roles and identities

When asked to identify themselves today, people commonly refer to their career, job title, employer, or educational achievements. This response illustrates how the culture of modernity roots a person's identity in one's achievements and place in the social order, especially the economic social order. What identifies people is their function – what they do rather than their character or their personal qualities (Guder, 1998: 28).

The issue of personal identity for the modern self is closely related to the formation of the modern bureaucracy. Positions became job descriptions with detailed responsibilities and defined limits of power; policy manuals standardized procedures; authority, delegation and decision-making were structured vertically from top to bottom, using a middle manager in the capitalist economy (Purwanto, 1997: 3-5). The scientific approach to management was used for shaping the life of industrial organizations.

This scientific approach to managing organizations gave birth to a wide spectrum of sophisticated skills and techniques for governing human behaviour in service of organizational goals. Individuals live modern urban life within the milieu of multiple large-scale organizations that shape the roles they play and the identities they carry. For the modern, self-defined in these terms, the constructed identity inherent within modern bureaucratic life often generates a tension between personal individuality and one's organizational role. The modern self, as a constructed set of roles and identities, leaves unresolved issues within the fuller development of modernity (Guder, 1998: 29).

Church elders who operate under this influence at their work places influence church leadership and clergy to run church leadership in the same way. The identity of an individual

member that derived from the image of God and the church as the “body of Christ”, are weakened. Some who are politicians influence church leadership in the same direction of the modern self identity by placing their position rather than the identity of the image of God first. They apply these influences selectively. Women and their role often have to stay out of the equation.

(iv) The modern self as product of technique

Entering the building of a community church conducting a contemporary worship service today can be a moving experience. Most of the arrangements are all part of the arsenal of technological tools and techniques that enhance the desired ambiance of the service. Such an experience illustrates a fourth development in modernity shaping the modern self: the rapid growth of science-based technology with its concomitant application of technique for the manipulation of the social and natural world (Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 22-23; Guder, 1998: 29).

Technological and technique-driven changes have spawned a number of important myths deeply embedded within modernity. One is that the new is somehow better and must necessarily replace the old once it is introduced. Another is that what is efficient is more desirable and must necessarily replace what is only workable. A third is that there is a technique solution to every problem, and science can address any and every problem we encounter if we just work at it with enough intelligence, or long enough (Guder, 1998: 29). Church leadership needs to acknowledge the changes influenced by technology to move with time, but needs to guide it with biblical knowledge.

The modern self is a product of life amid the constant search for the new and the efficient through the employment of technology and technique. Sometimes on the receiving end of another’s technique for social solutions, sometimes wielding the technique oneself, the modern person becomes defined on the one hand as a manipulability piece of the social machine, and on the other hand as the supremely capable master of the social and natural worlds.

(v) The modern self of feeling, intuition and desire

As much as modernity’s development has been driven by its vision of the rational, it has exhibited another side. The side of the human spirit that is emotive, affective, intuitive and

experiential was ignored (Guder, 1998: 30). The world of modernity increasingly produced the iron cage effect, where life is lived amid institutional structures produced by human values, but these structures no longer provide a place for these values. Modernism pushed all the boundaries of convention, principle, and essential forms. It showed that the human spirit, the movement believed, could not be contained within the construction of the modern self as an autonomous, individual, rational choice. The result was a search to find meaning by exploring feeling, experience and desire (Becker and Barnes, in Guder 1998: 30).

Guder (1998) argues that this counter pulse within the larger development of modernity is shaping the modern self as is its rational side. But they produce an inherent tension for the modern person. On the one hand, we are defined by experience and feelings; on the other hand, we are driven to live by rational processes. Here is evidence of yet another unresolved issue within the fuller development of modernity (1998: 31). The church, in doing its leadership theology needs to strike a balance between the three mindsets affecting societies today: traditional, modern and postmodern. Men cannot stay in one mindset and women asked or forced to stay in another.

6.2.2 Conclusion

The modern self is the dominant construct for how people think within the contemporary world. This construct is based on ways of discovering truth and developing knowledge that took form in the Enlightenment period, with its confidence in instrumental reason and scientific knowledge. The modern self exists within a social order structured around citizenship and authority. Its shaping dynamics include the possession of personal rights, perpetual consumption, development of a constructed identity, the use of an efficient technique, and a search for intense experience. Each of these dynamics creates unresolved tension. As with all cultures, modernity creates such a complex web of understandings and impulses that lines of tension are to be expected. But such tension lines are the point at which change and further development takes place. We will have to see how these unresolved issues are fuelling an envisioning of truth, self and society towards what many call the postmodernity megatrend or the postmodern condition. The same fault lines influence and also constitute some of the greatest challenges facing the church leadership of Zimbabwe, as churches seek to witness faithfully to Jesus Christ by announcing and demonstrating the reign of God in their appointed place.

6.3 THE EMERGING POSTMODERN MEGATREND

Postmodernity is a term with different meanings arising out of a variety of contexts. Gibbs and Coffey (2001) say that “it cannot escape becoming a casualty of the fragmented world it seeks to describe” (2001: 28). The very foundations of society have changed and are still changing. The term “postmodern” was first used by Frederico de Onis in the 1930s, but it was the historian Arnold Toynbee who identified the emergence of the postmodern era in Europe following the First World War. It became the mega-shift in knowing and understanding “what is real” and shaping society and the church (Gibbs and Coffey, 2001: 28; Guder, 1998: 37). The term “postmodern” did not achieve prominence until it was used to describe tendencies reactive to modernism in art and literature in the 1960s and in architecture in the 1970’s. Then its meaning in the 1980s stretched to an emergent, comprehensive worldview embracing philosophy, the art, politics and branches of science, theology and popular culture. The “postmodern megatrend” or “postmodern condition”, became a new way of looking at world with patterns such as:

- endless choices made available by technology;
- loss of shared experiences;
- personal spirituality without the necessity of organized religion;
- random violence and clashes between cultures;
- plurality of approaches to leadership in societies and experience; and
- meanings conveyed as surfaces and images (Guder, 1998: 37-38).

This emerging world described as “postmodernity” or the “postmodern condition”, means a shift in mood, style and perspective from what had come to be known as “modernity” (Guder, 1998: 37-38). This mega shift started to affect the Western world and Europe in the 1930s has not left the Zimbabwean society and the church untouched. Confidence in national pride was lost which resulted in the nationalist spirit and the struggle for independence against the British oppression and exploitation during the colonial period. The postmodern condition influenced society as to reconsider the way of looking at relative truth, the decentralised self and the pluralist society of the Enlightenment era.

6.3.1 The relative truth

In postmodernity, it becomes increasingly evident that no one stands outside a particular point of view when it comes to discovering the truth. Claims of objectivity and appeals to falsify are now qualified by context, whether in regard to the chemist working in the laboratory or the biblical scholar working in a library of ancient texts (Guder 2000: 15). It becomes clear that everyone works with basic assumptions about reality. This shifted the focus from epistemology, the question of how we discover truth, to hermeneutics, the question of what assumptions are made in the pursuit of truth. The move recognizes that all people live within particular contexts. Therefore, they possess specific cultural perspectives that are historically conditioned and shape the way they understand, see and experience life (Guder, 1998: 40).

The relative character of knowing does not mean we cannot know God or truth. It does mean, however, that we need to accept that our understanding of truth is always an interpretation relative to our context and cultural understanding. We also need to understand that the emerging postmodern approach to understanding truth is more holistic by pointing at a variety of ways of knowing through rational intelligence, emotional intelligence and intuitive intelligence. This variety dethrones modernity's focus on instrumental reason as the source of objective facts (Guder, 1998: 41).

The Bible leads the church to experience in a similar way a more holistic understanding of truth. For the church to live out an intimate engagement with the narrative of God's action in Jesus Christ that shapes its life and thought, it must use personal and communal ways of knowing to reach beyond the merely rational (Newbigin, 1989: 222-223).

6.3.2 Decentralised self

The Enlightenment period of the eighteenth century sought to promote individual personal freedom by constructing the modern self. During the nineteenth century, European philosophers established the limits of personal freedom on the premise that the individual is rational and autonomous. The bankruptcy of this effort became evident, however, when they failed to secure any normative content common to all persons (Hollinger in Guder, 1998: 41). In this case, personal freedom was just one's "will to power". All that remains is brutal force and domination of others.

The collapse of confidence in the modern self coincided with developments in the social sciences. These developments shifted the focus away from an individual making rational choices to a quite different foundation for explaining human behaviour. The emerging discipline of sociology moved the focus of attention to society's influence and social norms shaping human behaviour (Manicas in Guder, 1998: 42). The sociological developments served to decentre the importance of the individual and to diminish confidence in personal, rational choice as determinative of human action.

The decentralisation of the modern self has left many adrift in the world without clear bearings or satisfactory direction. This situation enforces the pressing problem of conceptualising the nature of personhood in terms that hold together individuality and community. Postmodernity is searching for individuality beyond the empty contrast of Western individualism and for a community greater than the social force that influences it.

6.3.3 Pluralist society

A persistent thread of concern in the current Zimbabwean culture is the increased diversity that is encountered. Globalisation is now leading to multiple ethnic cultures and racial traditions living together in the same neighbourhoods. With increased immigration and migration from all parts of the world, more people now come into direct contact with cultures, religions and traditions other than their own.

Guder (1998: 42) points out that the introduction of media options such as cable and satellite television, as well as video rentals, contributes to fewer and fewer persons sharing common experiences, even as they encounter similar images, icons and story lines. Indeed, the introduction of other electronic technologies such as e-mail, internet and worldwide web has created a new sort of electronic community unfettered by the traditional limits of space (shared geographic location) or time (shared schedule). The social nature of life is still evident, but its foundation and forms have shifted significantly.

The function of community within the social order is changing. The structures that previously shaped such a community have eroded. We see these shifts in the areas of family, neighbourhoods and ideology. The form of community fostered through the strong Zimbabwean extended family during earlier modernity gradually declined in importance as people moved into urban areas and social mobility accelerated in a capitalist economy. The nuclear family that replaced the extended family as a basic social unit is also undergoing

significant change, with rising divorce rates and increases in the number of single parent households (Vambe, 2001: 13-15).

A retreat to ethnic tribalism is seen as a result of these shifts. Forms of a national community, fostered by sharing a common national story and set of values have come under stress as the once familiar meta-narratives of Zimbabwean stories have become pluralized (Vambe, 2001: 15). The church itself is often also trapped in identities formed under the notions of modernity and postmodernity and the social structures pervasive in an earlier era. Frequently, it offers little more than an oasis of memory for forms of community assumed in a former age. But the present context shows that these shifts influence the operation of the church in society. The church leadership needs to be aware of these shifts.

6.4 A NEW APPROACH TO MORAL LIFE

Approaches to the principles of right and wrong behaviour have declined in many sectors of life. Traditional moral values are no longer taken seriously by a new approach to moral life in postmodern Zimbabwe. The Zimbabweans have clear concepts of virtues and vices and they have much to say about the aberration of personality. They have a definite idea of what constitutes correct behaviour in their society and of its importance. Good relations between one person and another are bound to suffer if one should commit an antisocial act (Gelfand, 1973: 52).

New approaches to moral life are engaging in postmodernity and maximizing the opportunities it presents. Before us lies a new world, a new approach to moral life and a world nearly empty of spirituality, which makes it hungry and thirsty for good spiritual leadership, bread and wine. It is a society hostile to dogmatism but ready to be sown with good seeds of vibrant, living faith (McLaren, 2000: 171). This challenges the RCZ leadership's way of doing theology in our present situation because our context promotes individual participation at every level of life.

6.4.1 Core values to new moral life approach

There are many core values to moral live but here only five important values to the approach of postmodernism are discussed that the church needs to be aware of:

6.4.1.1 Postmodernity is sceptical of certainty to moral life

In postmodernity, the analytical and critical rationale of modernity is taken one step further. It critiques not only the objective world and other people's behaviour, but also the self and the self's very ability to know what is right and wrong in society and understand it (McLaren, 2000: 162).

6.4.1.2 Postmodernity is sensitive to context

The new approach to moral life is that something can seem unquestionably true to people in a certain time period or in a certain social group, but those same beliefs can seem silly and laughable to people in other contexts. "Postmodernism gives values in many different contexts and age groups", explains McLaren (2000: 163). "With its assumption 'every point of view is a view from a point', it creates myriads of contexts. Every group of people forces you to find a common point". The church leadership in our current situation needs to be aware of that, since it is dealing with this reality if one looks at the different viewpoints on the position and role of women in the church.

6.4.1.3 Postmodernism leans toward the humorous

McLaren (2000) argues that in the new approach to life, we should not take ourselves or anybody else too seriously. After all, if our perspectives are biased by the groups we belong to, if our understanding is limited by our contexts, if our view is valid only from our subjective standpoint, then each of us is untrustworthy and subjective in knowledge and judgement and none of us can presume to very much authority (2000: 163).

6.4.1.4 Postmodernism highly values subjective experience

In a new approach to moral life, we should not make the mistake of claiming that subjective experience is the truth to everything. That would be transition-zone thinking, more traditional or modern than postmodern. For people on the other side, experience is just experience. For postmodernism, it's better simply to experience, than to turn it into another theory or universalise it and proclaims it as truth (McLaren, 2000: 164). The RCZ should recognize how much this reality is part and parcel of what the youth request of the church.

6.4.1.5 In postmodern, togetherness is a rare, precious and elusive experience

In a world where everyone sees things differently, where everyone lives according to differing theories (“human beings cannot help making them” Thorne says in McLaren, 2000: 164), it is far better to practice tolerance and appreciate diversity than to capsize the boat of life by stirring up controversy.

It is this yearning for togetherness that inspires the often heard postmodernism motifs of pluralism and tolerance. Radical postmodernity rejects the universal truthfulness of every other moral belief, while assuming its own position as the only universally true one (McLaren, 2000: 165).

McLaren (2000) further argues that in his experience, however, most postmodernists are not really that radical, although they quickly sound that way when aggravated by insensitive Christians castigating them for the abandonment of “absolutes” (2000: 165). What most of them want is nothing more than gentleness and non-coerciveness required of wise Christian leaders in 2 Timothy 2:24-25: “The Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him must gently instruct in the home that God will give them repentance, teaching them to acknowledge the truth”. In short, because of their value of togetherness and corresponding fear of disintegration, postmodernists do not want moral truth of life without equality (McLaren, 2000: 166), according to the methodological framework of this study.

6.4.2 The break-up of structures

The pluralist society of postmodernity is influencing the breakdown of family structures. The extended family structure during the traditional Zimbabwe is gradually declining in its importance as people are involved in urban social life. Some are moving to neighbouring countries and overseas. The nuclear family that is replacing the extended family as a basic social unit is experiencing significant change, with rising divorce rates, increases in the number of single parent households, the prevalence of two-income families, busy lifestyles and diverse definitions of what constitutes a family (Gelfand, 1973: 29-32). The forms of community, formerly based on rural geographic neighbourhoods, are pressured to change with new resettlements, mobility, the socio-economic and racial and tribal transitions of communities, and expanding diversity among those living in proximity to one another. This leaves no choice for the church leadership to change the way of doing theology. The

Zimbabwean scenario discussed below, has faced the challenges of modernism and postmodernism that is affecting the way of doing theology in society and in the church too.

6.5 PRESENT SCENARIO IN ZIMBABWE

6.5.1 Background

This section discusses the political, economic, educational, and health scenario in Zimbabwe which have impacted on the leadership of society and the church. Since 1978, Zimbabwe was engaged in turbulent transition. Ian Smith's regime finally came to terms with the fact that white people alone could no longer rule the once fabulously wealthy land. Gold emerged from the ground. Farms exported their bounty throughout Africa and the world at large. Game parks attracted tourists worldwide. Education ranked among the best in Africa and the world over. Transportation, health care, electrification and communication systems were the jewels of the continent. But, in spite of all these accomplishments, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) could not survive while its black population remained disenfranchised. White rule had to end to allow participation of every Zimbabwean in the running of the country. But from Smith's regime to the present, the political leadership has maintained the exclusion of other players (Williamson, 1998).

6.5.2 Current conditions in Zimbabwe

The country's once-thriving economy is now in deep distress. Banks have failed. Farmland that once fed the population and produced major exports lies fallow. The country's electrical and communication systems have fallen into disrepair and are now unreliable (Weiss, 1994: xiii). The prices of basic commodities have risen from 30% to 70% annually between 1990 and 2005. Inflation has become so high that Zimbabwean businesses – and even the government – often refuse payment for services in Zimbabwean dollars. Interest rates in 1997 soared more than 40%. According to government statistics, AIDS has infected more than 38% of the population (Williamson, 1998). The government's "land reform", a program to take land from white farmers and return it to "indigenous people" has resulted in massive grants to few people and the creation of a land-wealthy class whose productivity is practically not viable.

6.5.2.1 Political situation

It is not in the interest of this study to go into the depth of Zimbabwean politics, but only to show how the political situation has influenced the crisis in Zimbabwe and how it influenced church leadership in one way or another.

6.5.2.2 Summaries of the political events

Since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government used anti-colonial legacy and its role in the war of liberation, to build a national platform with a commitment to rectify colonial injustices – a theme that gathers support from many leaders in the developing countries and Zimbabwe's rural population.

The ruling party ZANU-PF has remained in power for more than two and a half decades. This influenced some churches to hold on to church leadership for years (Weiss, 1994: xiii).

A rise of opposition politics came in the late 1990's through the civic-born Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). It influenced the modern and postmodern urban population for leadership change. Violence became a political tool for parties to remain in leadership (Melber, 2004: 40).

Land issues also caused a political crisis in Zimbabwe. The land occupations and farm take-overs, coupled with the government's fast-track reform exercise, were based on the widely agreed need for land reform to address the profoundly disproportionate colonial land tenure system of 1969. Moyo (2001) argues that the land question was used by the ruling party as a "political tool to remain in power" as from 1997 (2001: 313).

Attempts to mediate the political situation in Zimbabwe were made but in vain. The political crisis has caused untold suffering to citizens which include Christians.

The churches in Zimbabwe are trying to influence the political situation but the church leaders are overpowered by politicians. Zimbabwe is a deeply religious country and as such the churches are important social institutions. The churches played a big role in the liberation struggle, and government has considered them an important partner. However, it is oppressing the voice of the church to challenge the political weakness of the government. Therefore, church-state relations in Zimbabwe are interpreted by many observers as

complementary (Weiss, 1994: 71-72).

The largest and most influential church has traditionally been the Catholic Church, partly because of its extensive system of mission schools that educated most of the country's older political and economic elite. It is the church that sometimes challenges the government openly but due to its hierarchical structures the government, ignores this (Melber, 2004: 38).

The leadership of the country's three main bodies – the Protestant Zimbabwean Council of Churches (ZCC), the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC), and Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) – initially took conciliatory positions in relation to government. They failed to influence the government for a participatory leadership style (Melber, 2004: 38).

As political and economic conditions worsened, divisions between a more conciliatory church leadership and more activist grassroots and laity became increasingly visible. In 2002, such divisions were experienced within the Zimbabwe Anglican Church over some pastors' support for the ruling party's policy of leadership. Other church leaders, notably Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube, have been criticized by their own church hierarchies because of his vocal criticism of government leadership policies of remaining in power for more than two and a half decades (Melber, 2004: 38-39).

The political events in Zimbabwe prove the problem of this study, namely the exclusion of the laity from broader leadership structures. This study would not support such a stand because it discourages development. It promotes the clergy in the RCZ to practice the same policy of leadership.

6.5.3 Economic situation

Zimbabwe currently faces a crisis of unimaginable proportions. The economy has collapsed and the majority of the population lives below the poverty line. Shortages of food, pharmaceuticals and petrol, inflation rates hovering between 400% and 600% a year, a drop in tobacco sales, unemployment noted at 80%, human rights abuses and press censorship, are but some of the indicators of Zimbabwe's current economic crisis (Melber, 2004: 7). Many outside observers blame the crisis on an ageing patriarchal leadership since 1980. The Zimbabwean economic situation is at a crisis point (Daily News, 2000).

6.5.3.1 How the economy works: the development impasse

Melber (2004: 8) argues that the economic crisis in Zimbabwe is politically and leadership connected. The inherited problems and structure of the Smith's regime posed difficulties. The combined effect of sanctions and war reversed the upward trend in economic growth of the initial UID period. The present government's use of the Marxist-Leninist approach to the economy emphasizes the dual objective of growth and distribution (Government of Zimbabwe, *Growth with Equity*, February 1981). The 1982, *Transitional National Development Plan* that increased state economic control to be carried out through investment guidelines and public sector investment, aimed at stimulating private investment, improving skills and creating employment. Failing to recognize the role of the private sector, reducing the control industry and commercial agriculture had enjoyed during the colonial period and the period after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), as it was only state ownership of productive capacity that would guarantee the removal of growth constraints and direct growth benefits toward national and collective objectives (GOZ, 1982/3 – 1984/5).

Ambitious plans for an industrial policy and agricultural policy trying to balance the economy and working conditions were formulated which were never followed. After borrowing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1980, Zimbabwe borrowed US \$30 million in April 1981. It borrowed again from the IMF in 1983 and this time the loans were higher and conditions were stricter (Melber, 2004).

The combination of international recession, drought, the opposition of important sectors of the domestic economy – in mining and commercial agriculture – and the vulnerability of the economy to outside shocks, imposed serious limits on economic transformation. Economic problems soon after independence prompted the early intervention of the IMF, whose conditions diverted the government away from the ambitious aspects of its early inward-looking development strategies. The government attempted to exert control through state-led planning with incentives to the export sector and reductions in spending on social programmes. By the end of the decade, the country faced economic stagnation, lack of investment, rising debt levels and a shortage in foreign exchange. Social transformation was replaced with rising unemployment, while real wages sank below 1979 levels, from Z \$2,759 to Z \$2,091 in 1987 (Kadenge, 1992: 9; Mudenge, 1988: 27).

(a) ESAP and neo-liberal policies

In 1990, the government adopted an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), essentially an externally driven ‘development’ model. Tevera, (in Melber, 2004: 34) argues that the economic reform programme, intended to support medium-long term growth by means of economic and commercial liberalisation. ESAP established the abandoning of the welfare policies of the 1980’s – including the land resettlement programme – in favour of the recovery of the “colonial economic model” based on the domination of the white community, which was joined by the new emerging class of black entrepreneurs. Therefore, neo-liberal policies “reinforced broadly undemocratic policy-making practices, and influenced the evolution of land policy towards an elitist agenda”, while “large business, large white farmers, and a nascent black bourgeois [...] supported the resultant of the ESAP programme” (Melber, 2004: 10; Chitando, 2003: 10; Skålnes, 1993: 29).

(b) Crisis created by ESAP

First and foremost, ESAP caused a worsening in living conditions for considerable sections of the population, especially the urban population. The collapse in salaries favoured a serious increase in poverty and increased social and economic inequalities, eroding the legitimacy of the government (Kanyenze, 2003a: 3-12 and 2003b: 15, 19-23). The economic crisis was felt by the weak and vulnerable sector of the population. The socio-economic improvements of the 1980s declined during ESAP (Sachikonye, 2002: 13-20; Kanyenze, 2003b: 23). The government was not able to reduce the negative effects of liberalisation which provided incentives for importing South African industrial products, fostering serious processes of de-industrialisation in Zimbabwe and a worsening balance of payments (Moyo, 2000b: 7; Bond, 1998: 8).

However, the main victim of the economic reforms was without doubt the redistributive land reform. The advantages of ESAP were mainly reaped by the commercial agriculture sector which benefited for a number of years from the export of non-traditional produce between white and black elites on one hand, and the rest of the peasants on the other (Moyo and Matondi, 2001: 9-12; Moyo, 2000a: 1-2 and 2000c: 5-28). While there was emphasis on the growth of agricultural production for exporting, there was no adequate support in favour by the production of small producers.

In the economic crisis of the country, those in leadership are the ones who seem to be comfortable. The ordinary people in the state and church are suffering. The economic crisis forces those in leadership to hold on to the leadership power they possess. This is disapproved by the purpose of this study that aims at including those gifted in order to participate for transformation to take place.

6.5.4 Educational Situation

6.5.4.1 Introduction

This section describes the educational situation in Zimbabwe in general. Education in Zimbabwe was once celebrated as a rare African success story – an example of what committed leadership can do. Education for all was the policy that Zimbabwean authorities pursued diligently for the first decade since independence from Britain in 1980 (Weiss, 1994: 110). The purpose was to extend education to the previously disadvantaged black majority. As a result, scores of schools were built and the training of thousand of teachers. The investment did not take long to bear fruit – by 2000, Zimbabwe had achieved good adult literacy rate of 93% (Johwa, 2004).

6.5.4.2 Primary education

In most primary schools, however, education has declined. The situation is equally bad in most urban schools and worse in rural areas. The classrooms are in jeopardy. Most children cannot afford fees. A government directive says that learners must not be sent home. The poor, including AIDS orphans, who can apply for government help, but such dues, are too little. As a result, most schools are permanently entangled in a never-ending cash crisis.

Parents cannot come to the schools' rescue either. For ten years, economic contraction and increasing inflation have left many unemployed and impoverished. They struggle to buy basic food, let alone pay school fees.

6.5.4.3 Secondary education

Due to political interference in the leadership of schools and economic hardships, the situation in secondary education is not different from that of primary schools. Schools are seeking permission to increase fees from the Minister of Higher Education (Herald News, 1999).

State-run schools in the country are reportedly in a critical condition – with many having classes of around 80 pupils. Due to economic hardship there is a shortage of teachers, textbooks, desks and classrooms. The secondary school sector continues to be crippled by a serious shortage of qualified teachers, with regions like Harare experiencing an increase in the number of untrained teachers (Weiss, 1994: 112; Chronicle News, 1999).

A survey by an International Monetary Fund research group reported that school enrolment had declined by 60% in Zimbabwe over the past five years because of fee increases in both state and private secondary schools. In this case, some parents have had to choose which of their children to educate as the fees to attend even state schools, have risen from 200% to 2 000% (Melber, 2004: 43).

The crisis in the economy is the main reason for the collapse in secondary school attendance. A girl, no matter how bright she might be, is the one to be affected by dropping out of school. So it is not surprising that many girls are getting married at a very young age.

6.5.4.4 Tertiary education in Zimbabwe

Higher education is another casualty of the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Tertiary education was once ranked among the best in Africa, but the achievements of the country's education system are threatened by growing dissatisfaction and under-funding.

Government's educational achievements had extended to tertiary education, where tens of thousands of college and university graduates were poised to run what was once one of Africa's most viable economies. Ironically, that same education has also equipped its beneficiaries with the skills many are selling in neighbouring countries and overseas. Compared to one university at independence, Zimbabwe now has seven state universities. The quantity of institutions has increased, but hardly the same can be said of quality (Johwa, 2004).

The tertiary education crisis has reached beyond class size and staff, pulling at some of the universities' foundations. Thousands of students who completed undergraduate studies at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) the country's oldest institution for higher learning, failed to graduate in September 2003 when lecturers who complained of poor working conditions and low salaries, resorted to industrial action (Johwa, 2004).

The 12 year old National University of Science and Technology (NUST) which had acquired a reputation for producing well-rounded, much sought-after graduates, is now unable to prevent experienced lecturers leaving for better paying positions at universities elsewhere. The movement of lecturers and teachers to other sectors and neighbouring countries has increased over the past ten years. They complain of falling standards and low levels of funding (Weiss, 1994: 113). Tertiary institutions of learning have lost their glamour. According to Mahlaule (in Malber, 2004) this is a result of a combination of factors, chief among them the inability by the government to prioritise the problems that have been dogging universities, teachers' colleges and polytechnic and iron hand leadership which does not allow them to exercise their skills for transformation.

Mahlaule (in Malber, 2004) further argues that, "there is a lot of despondency, caused by political interference in the day-to-day affairs of the learning institutions. However, this is inevitable, considering the funding structures of our establishments" (2004: 40-41). In theory, staff of state universities is employees of each university's council, which should provide the bulk of the funding for the institutions. Since councils do not have independent coffers, in practice, the government provides up to 96% of the learning centre's financial needs, virtually acting as a donor. The institutions are therefore left with no alternative but to follow government directives (Herald News, 2000).

These problems have been forcing lecturers to join the private sectors where better salaries and conditions of service are offered, or migrating to other countries such as Britain, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Botswana and South Africa (Mhuka, 2006: 6).

6.5.5 Gender disparities in the education system

The ideas in this section have been extracted from the "Zimbabwe 2004: Comprehensive Review of Gender Issues in the Education Sector", authored by Runhare and Gordon (2004). The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe can learn how the education sector is dealing with the issues of gender equality and equity in social life.

(a) Background

Zimbabwe's impressive successes in educational development since 1980 remained faced with challenges in realising the goals of gender equality and equity in education, which are critical to the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and representation at all levels of

leadership structures. Stagnation in educational development since 1990 has been a problem. Serious disparities and inequalities persisted in the system with gender being a key contributory factor.

Three distinct areas require attention if equity is to be achieved. They are: a gender-insensitive school environment; a home and community environment that is not adequately supportive; and a policy environment that is insufficient to address the education needs of girls and working conditions of women (Runhare and Gordon, 2004: 12-13).

Since 2004 additional major challenges facing the provision of EFA and the attainment of gender equity in education have risen from the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the problematic economic environment in the country. These factors led to an increase in barriers to girls' education and limitations of the state's ability to respond to the educational needs.

In response to the challenges, in 2004 the Government of Zimbabwe launched a new national gender policy. It was to identify and address gender issues at policy level. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, commissioned a review of gender issues in the education sector (Runhare & Gordon, 2004). According to the purpose of this study which seeks for the inclusion of women in leadership structures, this could be helpful to the church.

(b) Findings of the Commission

The commission found that gender disparity enrolment in urban schools who participated in the evaluation, was not a problem. Heads of urban schools reported that more girls than boys were enrolled in most of their schools (Weiss, 1994: 112). In both urban and rural districts, data gathered from school personnel revealed that:

- There were higher absenteeism and attrition rates among girls than boys, because of economic hardships, negative cultural and socialization factors, HIV/AIDS related factors and burdening household chores;
- While girls had potential to match or even outperform their male counterparts in schoolwork, teachers expressed that the home environment and their upbringing militated against them. Among such factors, teachers highlighted differential attitudes and treatment for boys/men and girls/women in society in general (Runhare and Gordon, 2004)

- Teachers and some parents agreed that some negative attitudes against girls and women, in general, were responsible for girls' high dropout rate and poor performance at school in both rural and urban areas. Gender stereotyping of social roles and activities was cited by most school teachers for the difference in boys and girls' school performance. This was found in rural homes and communities where teachers noted that the belief in the equality of boys and girls is absent (Weiss, 1994:113).

Several in-school factors were found to be gender insensitive and unfriendly to girls:

- In rural districts, primary school pupils walk an average of 10km, while secondary school pupils walk as much as 20 to 25km to school. This creates security problems for the girl who, besides being tired by the time of getting to school, could be sexually abused between school and home.
- Although teachers and pupils confirmed that HIV/AIDS is taught in school as a subject, most rural teachers had inadequate training and teaching resource materials for the subject. They could not handle issues of stigmatization as they taught the subject to affected pupils and among affected and infected colleagues (Runhare & Gordon, 2004: 12-13).

(c) Recommendations to avoid disparities in education system

The commission put forward the following recommendations to avoid disparities in the education system:

- Inclusion of child abuse in the Education Act: One major cause of children's lack of equal access to education is child abuse, especially with regards to girls. It is found in the form of child labor, domestic chores for girls before and after school, selling commodities in the open markets. Early forced marriages, sexual abuse and employment of minors, all of which are explicitly outlawed by the Zimbabwe's Children's Protection and Adoption Act, Chapter 33, Section 10 and 11. The clause on child abuse must be included in this Act which spells out the nature and circumstances under which child abuse can be defined.
- The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture improved the gender Sensitization Act policies. It aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination for equal participation of boys/men, girls/women and persons with disabilities at all levels of educational, training, sporting and cultural activities.
 - a. Promote gender equitable access to available educational leadership, resources and other benefits.

- b. Provide gender sensitive home/community and school environment.
- c. Discourage any traditional/cultural and religious practices that negatively affect the education of both boys and girls and that could limit their access to available information on alternative career options.
- d. Maximize gender sensitivity in decision making with regards to budgeting, infrastructural facilities, human resources development and mobility in order to equally cater for the concerns of both male and female stakeholders in education at all levels (Runhare and Gordon, 2004: 14).

6.5.6 Health situation in Zimbabwe

The political, economic and human crises in Zimbabwe have been discussed in the previous sections. This section focuses on the health service delivery crisis faced by the nation of Zimbabwe. Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not just the absence of the disease or infirmity. Medical care is one of the most intimate areas in the life of an individual Weiss, 1994: 118). The standards have dropped as compared to those of the colonial era. The breakdown of healthcare services affects not only the poor but the entire population, including innocent children and the elderly (Trent & Bate, 2003: 3-4). Life for the average Zimbabwean has become dramatically worse in the past ten years. The unemployment rate is at 80%, inflation is in triple digits and food production has collapsed, leading to widespread malnutrition (Trent and Bate, 2003: 3).

The health system in Zimbabwe has collapsed. The infectious diseases are rampant among the malnourished majority – malaria, once under control, is resurging; tuberculosis is thriving in the increasingly HIV-positive environment. Sexual behaviour is poor given the precarious conditions in which people live. HIV rates could well be the highest in the world (official rates 25%, but could be far higher). Most qualified personnel have left the country, it is impossible to do quality estimations (Trent and Bate, 2003: 4).

6.5.6.1 Political background and historic health care effort

During the first ten years of independence, the government invested significant amounts of money into improving healthcare delivery for all Zimbabweans. Government expenditure on healthcare increased by 80% and stood at 2.3% GDP, almost three times higher than the sub-

Saharan African average of 0.8% of GDP.

During the early years of independence (1980 – 1988), life expectancy at birth rose from 54.9 years in 1980 to 63 years in 1988. Childhood immunisation increased to 75% coverage in 1986, 80% in 1994 and 81% in 1999, compared to an average of 32%, 51% and 48% respectively for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (Trent and Bate, 2003: 5).

Jongwe (2005) argued that the leadership's lasting legacy could have been of a leader that improved the lives of the ordinary people, had it relinquished power several years ago, had the leadership afford Zimbabweans their constitutional right to free and fair participation in the country's leadership. Tragically, however, the strong grip on power is destroying what one sought to create and the people of Zimbabwe are faced with collapsing hospitals, clinics and a crumbling school of nursing.

6.5.6.2 Zimbabwe's health system grinds to a halt

Zimbabwe's healthcare system, once considered one of the best in sub-Saharan Africa, collapsed because of severe shortage of money for salaries, medical equipment and essential drugs. The strikes of nurses and junior and mid-level Zimbabwean became the order of the day. Many doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals are leaving the country for greener pastures in neighbouring Botswana and South Africa and some overseas (Weiss, 1994: 122-123).

The remaining doctors and nurses are overworked. Some rural and mission hospitals are operating without a medical doctor which is a crisis for emergency cases. Medical staff complains of poorly equipped rural hospitals, lack of transport, accommodation and other amenities (Weiss, 1994: 124). If this situation continues, the Zimbabwean health system will come to a complete halt because of poor delivery services.

6.5.6.3 Health services situation

Zimbabwe is confronted with the "triple threat" of HIV/AIDS, of food insecurity and a declining capacity to deliver basic social services. The situation was worsened by the government's operation targeting housing structures and businesses that were deemed illegal in 2005. An estimated 133 000 households were evicted and between 650 000 and 700 000 people were directly affected through the loss of shelter and livelihoods (Shoko, 2005: 24-

25).

The quality of health service has deteriorated as a result of under-funding, emigration of health staff and the impact of HIV/AIDS. These factors have placed enormous pressure on available resources, impacting on access and quality of services. Among the key indicators of deterioration are an increase in maternal and under-five mortality (Shoko, 2005: 25).

HIV/AIDS: With one of the world's highest rates of HIV infection, Zimbabwe's population is disastrously affected. Almost one in five children has been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Overall, this has led to a marked deterioration in all social sectors, severely impacting on children and young adolescents. While the HIV and AIDS prevalence rate among adults is reported to have declined from 25% in 2002 to 21.3% in 2004, the disease continues to cause the death of 3 000 Zimbabweans per week (Trent and Bate, 2003: 12).

In conclusion to this section on health, one could say that the alarming increase in the infectious disease is the consequence of the political and economic hardship and the deliberate policy decisions of government to support the domination of political leaders even in the health sector. As if the increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria were not enough to contend with, Zimbabweans cannot access adequate treatment at the public healthcare facilities, thereby worsening the health situation (Trent and Bate, 2003: 17).

6.6 CONCLUSION

The chapter discussed the Zimbabwean scenario and how it has influenced the society and Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership in a number of ways. The impact of modernism and postmodernism megatrends influenced the Zimbabwean society and the church to consider participation of women in some sectors. But the church leadership remained overpowered by government which has remained in power since 1980. That has caused the political leadership to override most of the leadership sectors.

The political leadership, which remain hierarchical, created a political, economic, educational, and health crisis in the country though the government is shifting the blame on colonial masters. But on the other side, the government influenced the church to include women in broader leadership positions as it has involved them in its sectors. It has introduced the post of a woman vice president (Lyons, 2004: 214). It has also appointed women in higher key posts, such as in education, health, economics and agriculture. This proves the

purpose of this study, namely the inclusion of laity and women in broader leadership structures for transformative action to take place.

In this scenario, when doing theology, one would need to consider one's context and allow the Word of God to interact with the present situation. Transformation is needed in order to influence the society since the ordinary Zimbabwean is in a big crisis politically, economically, educationally and health wise. The church needs to have strong theological strategies to influence its leadership and that of the nation, though it will not be easy taking into consideration the present situation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERING LAY LEADERSHIP

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 6, the influence of modernism and postmodernism were discussed. It influenced the Zimbabwean scenario in different ways, in particular the leadership in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The church is influenced by the effect of modernism and post modernism in their consideration to include the laity and women into broader leadership structures. In some ways it is influenced to remain hierarchical as clergy become politically oriented.

The present chapter discusses the strategies the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe should take into account to attain the goal of this study, which is the inclusion of women and laity in broader leadership structures. Point 8 of the methodology of this study (as discussed in Chapter 1) is used as the key to reach the goal of participation in transformative action in church leadership. The point illustrates the movement from the bottom to the top of the cross (the Alfa to the Omega, Hendriks, 2004: 23) and describes the implementation of a programme, the plan, priorities and training of each member to participate in the faith community.

The strategies to empower lay leadership in the RCZ, should be drawn from sources like the Discipleship Movement, Lawrence O Richards' model; Thomas H Groome's model, and other such as the Lumko methodology and Theological Education by Extension. The researcher chose and discusses these strategies in a descriptive way. It should not be seen as a blueprint. In the present day context where we want lay leadership and laity to jointly take responsibility for doing theology, for discerning God's guidance for the way forward. The material presented gives guidelines about leadership and the issues discussed in the previous chapters. Their applicability to the Zimbabwean situation and the RCZ will be clear as they are discussed. They are not integrated in a model or system for that would deny the purpose of participatory action and a praxis methodology. Lastly, the chapter discusses the applicability of these strategies on lay leadership development in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

7.2 THE DISCIPLESHIP MOVEMENT

The Discipleship model sums up Christ's plan for the world. It aims at presenting every man and woman to mature in Christ. It is the ultimate goal in making disciples. Yet, for all its brilliant simplicity, it is the one approach that most church structures have neglected (Watson, 1981: 18, 92). The discipleship model is the basic strategy for empowering lay leadership in the church if implemented by following the style of Jesus. This is the key model of doing theology for transformative action in any given context. Each person is approached at a personal level as we have been called to be followers or disciples of Jesus Christ (Hendriks, 2004: 33).

The problem addressed by this study is the exclusion of women and laity in church structures and the influence of the hierarchy of the clerical paradigm. This section seeks to address the goal of the study, namely the inclusion of women and laity, which would allow full transformation to take place. The section will start by focusing on the command of the Great Commission, the research will look at the Church as a community of disciples from the perspective of Jesus and Jesus' selection of the twelve disciples for empowerment.

7.2.1 The Great Commission

Discipleship of men and women should be the priority around which our lives should be oriented for any meaningful community transformation to take place (Coleman, 1987: 9).

Jesus Christ Himself said it in His final words before his Ascension into heaven. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ." (Matt. 28:19, 20)⁴. Significantly, in the original text, the words "go", "baptize" and "teaching" are participles. This means that these responsibilities derive their direction from the leading verb, "make disciples", or as it might be translated, "make learners" of Christ⁵. It is an ongoing command. The church should always be making disciples.

4. All Scripture references in this study are taken from the Revised Standard Version of 1971.

5. The word disciple designates a learner or follower, in the sense of an apprentice, "always implies the existence of personal attachment which shapes the whole of life of the one described". Gerhard Kittle, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W Bromiley, Vol 4 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1967), 44.

Coleman (1987: 10) argues that it should not seem strange that the Master Teacher places such a high priority on discipline. After all, Jesus was simply asking His followers to do what He had done with them. That is why they understood it.

As they had freely received, now they were to transmit or share with others the same truth. The mandate was the articulation of the rule by which Christ had directed His ministry. Though slow and not accomplished without great sacrifice, He knew His way would succeed. For as individuals learn of Him and follow the pattern of His life, they will invariably become disciples, and as their disciples in turn do the same, some day through multiplication the world will come to know Him (1987: 10).

7.2.2 Discipleship: as ministry of lifestyle

As stated above, the Great Commission is not a special calling or gift of the Spirit; but a command – an obligation incumbent upon the whole faith community. There are no exceptions be it bank presidents or automobile mechanics, physicians or school teachers, theologians or homemakers to become involved in transformative action in the church (Coleman, 1987: 10). Every believer in Jesus Christ has a part in His work (John 14:12).

Coleman further argues that biblically, we cannot define clergy and laity as mutually exclusive terms. In the bonds of Christ, all are laity (the people of God) and equally share the responsibility to make disciples. This can pose problems in the clerical paradigm and its policy of exclusion of laity and women as addressed by the main problem statement of this study (Coleman, 1987: 10).

Radical distinctions between the pulpit and the pew did not develop until the second century. Professionalism of clergy roles tended to confuse responsibility for ministry on the part of the untrained. The effect has been to discount and to cancel out the conviction that all believers are priests (Coleman, 1987: 11). Unfortunately, many Christians feel quite satisfied with the situation, content to allow paid clergymen and staff to do all the work. Those more sensitive to their callings, who want to be involved, experience a sense of frustration as they try to find their place of service. “After all”, they ask, “If I am not a preacher or missionary or something of that kind, how can I be properly engaged in ministry?” (Coleman, 1987: 11-12; Watson, 1983: 71-72).

The answer lies in seeing the Great Commission mentioned above as a lifestyle encompassing the total resource of every child of God. Here the ministry of Christ and its leadership comes alive in the day-to-day activity of discipleship. Whether one has a “secular” job or an ecclesiastical position, a Christlike commitment to bring the nations into the eternal Kingdom should be a part of it.

7.2.3 The church: community of disciples

The roots of the discipleship model can be traced in the New Testament to the earthly ministry of Jesus. It supports the idea of the church as a Community of Disciples (Dulles, 1987: 4). Avery Dulles (1985) in his book *Models of the Church*, more specifically addressed the problem of finding a model that would harmonize the differences among his five different models of the church. In short, these models are:

- 1) The institutional model, which dominated the Roman Catholic ecclesiology from 1550 to 1950 (Dulles, 1985: 31; Hendriks, 2004: 45-46), described the church by analogies taken from the political society that defined church in terms of its visible (hierarchical) structures and the rights and powers of its officers.
- 2) The proclamation model: this emerged in the sixteenth century onwards. The reformation was a reaction against the Roman Catholic dogma. In the Catholic Church’s liturgy, the sacraments were central. In Protestant Churches the Word became central. This ecclesiological model confronted the hierarchical and institutional rigid authority of the Roman Catholic. The type of ecclesiology that developed centred upon Jesus Christ and on the Bible, as the primary witness about him (Dulles, 1985: 71; Hendriks, 2004: 46). Preaching the word became central.
- 3) The Body-of-Christ model: this model emphasized the community life of the church. Their emphasis was on the communion of the members with one another and with God in Christ. The work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit play an important role in this rediscovery of old biblical truths.
- 4) The transformational model: Dulles (1985: 82-96) calls this model “the servant model” and explains the contextual shift in the Roman Catholic Church and in the intellectual world to some new perspectives. It is imperative to understand

this shift, because it explains the major theological activity that gave rise to a new style of doing theology that called for transformation. This transformation that was called for addresses a wide range of issues that is going awry universally, such as political, economic, leadership in the church, gender and ecological issues, etc. (Hendriks, 2004: 52).

Dulles (1987) relying in part on passing remarks in the first encyclical of Pope John Paul II, suggests the idea of the Church as a “community of disciples”. This concept can be seen as a variant of the communion model. It calls attention to the ongoing relationship of the Church to Christ, its Lord, who continues to direct it through His Spirit (1987: 206). The concept of discipleship builds bridges to the other four models. It illuminates the institutional and sacramental aspects of the church and grounds the functions of evangelization and service that are central to the herald and servant models. The notion of “community of disciples” is thus a broadly inclusive one. Without being adequate to the full reality of the church, it has potential as a basis of comprehensive, ecclesiological leadership (Dulles, 1987: 207). It seeks to empower every member in the Church.

7.2.4 The disciples in the public ministry of Jesus

As discussed in the section above, the roots of discipleship is traced to the New Testament and to the earthly ministry of Jesus. The idea of forming a community of disciples, as an “alternative society” with its own rules and way of life, was basic to Jesus’ ministry. His original plan was apparently to convert the whole of Israel, to do penance and to welcome the coming of the Kingdom of God, as argued by Gitari (2005: 31-35). According to Dulles (1987: 207-208), the plan did not succeed as many of the leaders – scribes, Pharisees and members of the priestly class – rejected His message. In some places, Jesus found an enthusiastic following among the common people, but they generally misunderstood him. Many saw him as a kind or political Messiah and tried to use Him in order to achieve the political liberation of Israel from Roman domination.

- **Selection of the twelve**

Jesus in His ministry of discipleship and leadership chose a small band of followers and trained them under his personal supervision so that they could be trusted to understand His real message and style of leadership and after His death disciple others. The inner corps of disciples was not identical with the entire number of believers in Jesus’ message. He had

many friends and admirers who were not selected to accompany Him on His journeys (Coleman, 1963: 21-22).

In the community of disciples there were degrees of intimacy. An outer circle comprised a relatively large number of men and women, among whom we can identify Cleopas and his unnamed companion (Luke 24:18), Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38), and Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias (Acts 1:23). The reader of Luke 10:1-16 is evidently intended to understand that the seventy-two sent on the mission were disciples. The Gospels tell of a number of women, such as Mary Magdalene, Johanna, Susanna and Salome, who followed Jesus and supported Him with their possessions (Luke 8:1-3). Finally, we read in the first chapter of Acts of a band of some 120 persons gathered with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Peter and the Eleven in the upper room in Jerusalem. In view of these indications, it would be a mistake to underestimate the total number of disciples (Coleman, 1963: 23-25; Dulles, 1987: 208-209).

The Twelve, however, constituted an inner core of individuals personally chosen and commissioned by Jesus for a very important task. Even among the twelve there was a nucleus consisting of the two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John. In three incidents – the raising of Jairos’ daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden – we read of Peter, James and John being selected to accompany the Master (Dulles, 1987: 208). Peter, always named first, had a certain primacy among the twelve, even during the public ministry of Jesus. In the gospels, therefore, the term “disciple” is an analogous term, admitting of various kinds and degrees. The multiple dimensions of discipleship must be borne in mind when the claim is made, for instance, that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was the chief disciple, argues Dulles (1987: 209). The aim of Jesus’ strategy was not for the disciples to hold on to power but for them to train others to build his Father’s Kingdom.

- **Christian formation in the community**

The interpretation of office in terms of discipleship, as proposed by Dulles, (1987) contributes a pastoral dimension to the institutional model and helps to bridge the gap between the institutional community models. In this case the pastors must be close to Christ in order to lead, but they must also be seen as disciples under the authority of the Chief Shepherd. To prevent an unhealthy alienation, the official leaders should foster the bonds of love, trust and familiarity with fellow disciples under their care. They need to resemble the Good Shepherd, who calls his sheep by name and whose voice is recognized as that of a

trusted leader (Dulles, 1987: 217). It would be unrealistic, of course, to demand that moderators, bishops or pastors of large congregations, have close personal ties with all their members. Rather, pastors serve as coordinators, equippers, disciples, overseers and shepherds. This is good leadership, but it is leadership for, with and in the body. It is leadership on an organic community model, not on an organizational hierarchy model (Snyder, 1983: 247).

In this case the church needs an abundance of leaders having various degrees and types of responsibility for the affairs of the faith community. Sacramental ordination is appropriate for heads of community and others who publicly represent Christ in the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral government. But the ordained leaders must collaborate closely with a large body of lay ministers, some of whom will be formally installed and commissioned by ecclesiastical rites (Dulles, 1987: 217-218).

- **Discipleship for the Kingdom**

A discipleship ministry through the Holy Spirit turns believers into ministers potent for the priorities of the Kingdom. This is its strength and beauty, following the Ephesians 4 model. It liberates the church for the Kingdom business and not just church business. A few religious professionals and “faithful laymen” can make the church go and grow, but it takes the full range of gifts and the priesthood of all believers to make the biblical ecology of the church function well and to equip the church to participate receptively in the economy of God (Snyder, 1983: 255).

Today the pastoral priority, as always, is equipping men and women for the Kingdom. It means developing discipleship and shared leadership the church to be equipped to function as a balanced ecology of worship, community and witness for the sake of God’s Kingdom in the world. It supports the methodology of doing theology in this study.

7.2.5 Conclusion

The Discipleship movement sums up the plan Christ for the world to be involved in His ministry. The strategy allows full participation of every member of the faith community to be equipped to assist others for transformation of the whole community. The strategy of starting with the training of a small group is to make sure each member has the opportunity to participate. It aims at the fulfilment of the great commission motif of going out to teach all

men and women to be equipped for the kingdom of God. It applies to the RCZ as well. The RCZ should seriously consider studying and employing the discipleship principles.

7.3 LAWRENCE O RICHARDS' STRATEGY

This study supports the methodology that theology is about transformative action. Lawrence O Richards, in his strategy for empowering lay leadership states that there is a need to have a new face for the church. He argues that there are only two options open to the church today. One is to struggle to patch up the contemporary church, retaining traditional forms and patterns of life, resisting forces that demanded change. The other option is to accept the challenge of change, and to channel it – to seek to build together a church which will be a true expression of the church, yet uniquely suited to the 21st century world (Richards, 1970: cover information). Changes in church structures need to support individual growth.

7.3.1 Church structures that promote individual growth

Richards (1970), states that for the church to meet conditions for individual growth, a close personal relationship with another individual is necessary. He outlined the following points to support his argument:

- The church must permit individual members to minister to other individuals outside the formal agencies of the church.
- The church must be structured to provide opportunities for small-group Bible study – sharing experiences, into which an individual, be it a man or a woman, can be integrated on an intimate, personal level.
- The church must guide individuals into fruitful and meaningful Christian service, church leadership, both formal and informal. Both areas may well require training and support from church leadership.
- Members need to know that at personal level, we have been called to be followers or disciples of Jesus Christ (Richards, 1970: 20-21).

He argues that at the level of secular society, the church must adopt forms that are:

- Outward-oriented to reach those in society, rather than inward-oriented toward believers.
- The church must provide forms in which individual believers will find a point to contact with the 21st century.

- The church leadership must train and equip Christians for roles in such forms, expecting that as their lives are bent to Christ's purposes they will become more and more like Him.
- The church must be flexible in order to maintain meaningful contact with the world to which it is called to witness (Richards, 1970: 24-25).

The church also has an important role to play in society. It faces the public and should influence it in a positive way. There is need for the church to demonstrate that it is constantly reforming.

7.3.2 The church reformed: a concrete strategy

The church today needs to be transformed for the future. It needs to be transformed from the traditional forms which are clergy or pastor centred in most activities. Richards (1970: 32-35) suggests the following transformative actions:

- The pastor should be freed from some pastoral ministry. Many pastors today are worn out by organizational meetings which cut contact with people in need and tear them from the study of the Word of God. When freed from some other ministries he/she would invest his/her time on many people.
- People are forced to assume responsibility. They cannot shift it to the clergy or a teacher or some church agency. This means, of course, that members of growth cells will be required to commit themselves to attend, to be involved in all church leadership structures. No one can consider himself/herself a disciple of Christ or church leader by merely dropping into a pew on Sunday.
- Young people will be integrated into the life of the church. Older teens will be full and functional members of the church and bear the same responsibilities as an adult. They will no longer be segregated into "youth groups" to be preached at and prayed for in isolation, but involved in the reality of Christian life and experience at all levels of the church.
- Every believer will minister to others. In the free sharing relationship of growth groups, talents can be developed, recognized by the church, and each individual moved into leadership on the basis of spiritual maturity and gifts.

For the church to be reformed, Richards (1970) proposes a strategy for the growth of group structures. A growth group can be organized in one of three ways:

(i) By a functional group – several families of similar professional or social strata may form a group in order to better reach outsiders of the same strata. New members are inducted into the life of the group. After the group has up to eight or nine families, it divides. (ii) By

neighbourhood – families living in the same areas band together. (iii) By age of children – families with children with the same age have significantly similar clusters of problems. Sharing these, can promote stronger Christian homes and congregations too (Richards, 1970: 33).

For growth groups to function effectively, several necessary prerequisites are spelled out:

- The group members must be trained to function in the group. The pastor or Christian education director will have to work extensively with each newly established group.
- Each family and individual must take responsibility for the group life. Each must be committed to do the tasks given by the group.
- The group must be believers. This is a growth situation not for believers, not an evangelistic meeting. Within this group, believers meet within the framework of the group and its responsibilities. The church disciplines believers as enjoined in Scripture (Richards, 1970: 34; Snyder, 1975: 139-140).

7.3.3 Advantages of the reformed church

Difficulties are encountered in the workings of the new kind of organization. For example: How long should a growth group stay together? Will the seminaries be in the position to train men and women able to assume the roles envisioned?

The advantages of this structure are striking. Firstly there are advantages for the pastor. Scripture portrays the pastor as a man who invests his life in people, studies the Word and teaches it with care. He applies the Word to individuals, reproving and rebuking as well as encouraging and exhorting. He has time to be in the Word, and to be with the people (Richards, 1970: 35).

The pastor will not be overwhelmed with meetings and be able to train men and women to teach others. He is not frustrated by a myriad of tasks he was never called by God to perform. In the reformed church, he is re-established in his biblical role as minister by training those in growth groups and by guiding the congregation through the Word on Sundays (Richards 1970: 37; Snyder, 1975: 81-82).

Taking the reformed organization for example, in congregations today, votes for officers might be democratic but there is no direct line of responsibility from the governing board to the individual member. Many groups in our congregations, particularly women, evangelists

and youth, are unrepresented on the boards. Communication is difficult and few feel part of the church life (Richards, 1970: 38). It seems as if Richards were familiar with the situation in the RCZ.

Richards' point is that each growth group should elect one member to the decision-making boards. The board members should bring up needs felt by the groups and communicate back to the groups.

In this simple way the clergy is guided and kept sensitive to current needs of his people. There are clear lines of communication up from each member to the clergy and supervisors with a minimum of intermediate steps. In this case, the whole congregation is intimately involved in shaping the total ministry of the church. (Richards, 1970: 38).

7.3.4 Leadership in the reformed church

Many clergy have questions in their minds today. In a fellowship of believers in which all are ministers, what role is left for leaders? If laymen in our churches today take this teaching seriously, what will happen to the pastor in the local church?

Richards (1970) answered the above questions basing his arguments on (a) the biblical concept of leadership and (b) the role of leaders in the church. In this case, he looked at the importance of principles. Are all believers, who are equally ministers, equal in other ways? Does the mutual ministry principle negate all need for spiritual leaders?

A glance through the New Testament shows that these two concepts cannot be contradictory. The calls of all believers to minister, and the appointment of some believers to leadership, are both features of life of the New Testament church (Richards, 1970: 109). They need to be balanced by the church today.

Granting ability to minister to each believer will not obviate the need for leadership. Nor will the presence of leaders alter the need for all to minister. Paul had more to give than the greatest among us today, and guarded against the impression that he was just a dispenser of the grace of God to others (Richards, 1970: 110). To Paul, the principles of mutual ministry and spiritual leadership stood side by side. In this section the issue to focus on is: What is the biblical concept of leadership and how does leadership in the church function?

(a) The biblical concept of leadership

Richards (1970) argues that God's way of looking at things is different from that of man. This is clearly illustrated in the New Testament concept of leadership which the church needs to emulate (1970: 111).

He argued that two major passages in the gospels introduce us to the kind of leadership appropriate to Christ's church. In one passage, Christian leadership is contrasted with spiritual leadership of the scribes and Pharisees in Israel. In the other, Christian leadership is contrasted with that of civil rulers. In each, a sharp contrast is drawn between the implication of superiority in the normal way of thinking about leadership, and the implication of servanthood inherent in Christ's.

The first passage illustrates (Matthew 23:1-12) how leadership in the Israel of Christ's day was to exercise its authority. The theme of power and servanthood is foremost in the private instruction to the disciples (Matthew 20:25-28) (Richards, 1970: 112).

When we think of leadership in Christ's terms, the normal connotations must be put behind us. A leader in the church is not related to authority: Christ only is our "leader". Christ only is the Head of His church. Leadership in the church is not related to self-aggrandizement. The leader is to be like Christ, the servant of all (Richards, 1970: 112). In this context Paul's instruction concerning the selection of church leaders can be easily understood. For a person to wear the mantle of leadership humbly, and to lose himself in service to others, his character will be far more important than his accomplishments.

Richards (1970) argues that the church, then, is to select as leaders those who have made distinct progress in the Christian life, whose characters show definite evidence of a transformation wrought by God's Spirit (1970: 113). But far more is implied in the concept of servant-leader. One of the disturbing features of the contemporary church is the insidious sense of distance which exists in most churches between the clergy and the people. This is tragic, because scriptural leadership requires that the leader be completely focussed in his relationships with others, and that he becomes deeply involved in their lives (Richards, 1970: 114).

The Apostle Paul stands as a model of Christian leadership in the New Testament. His life and ministry were marked by both openness and involvement (II Corinthians 6:11). To him,

there was no room for the distant professional. There was no room in the leadership of the church of Christ for the man who must pretend he has arrived. The servant-leader must share and give himself in his ministry to the church.

(b) The role of leaders in the church

In this section, the authority of church leadership is assessed. It needs to be discussed because it definitely is a biblical concept. Paul mentions – and at times used – his authority as an Apostle in dealing with church problems and with self-assertive individuals (Richards, 1970: 116). The writer to the Hebrews orders believers “obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are watching over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17).

Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus to “take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son (Acts 20:28). Surely God who has given the leadership of His church such a responsibility has also equipped them with authority necessary to carry it out.

Reading of the New Testament impresses us with the fact that authority is not, in itself, bad. God expects men to function within the framework of life-as-it-is and this demands adjustment to authority in many of our human relationships (Richards, 1970: 116).

In writing to Timothy, Paul gave instructions that help us see the two primary roles of the Christian leader; the two primary ways in which the leader exercises the authority he received from God. “Keep a critical eye both on your own life and on the teaching you give”, Timothy was warned. It is these two issues that are crucial in the exercise of leadership in the church (1 Tim. 4:6; Titus 2:7-8). Peter in writing to fellow leaders also focused on their roles as examples (1 Peter 5:1-4). This is leadership that lead, not push and which demonstrate, not demand. No wonder Hebrews can say of such men: “Remember how they lived and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

In the life of the church, the person who leads by example and gentle instruction is the person who will successfully fulfil his responsibilities.

7.3.5 The structure of the church

One important issue in the study of church leadership is decision-making

In most human organizations, decision-making is a function of leadership of “top management”. Others in an organization may make certain decisions that relate to their jobs, sections, departments, or divisions. But these decisions are normally limited to the implementation of the broader policy.

This way of doing business has tended to be carried over into church government, with added attraction in congregational churches of confirmation of such decisions by majority vote. So our church boards and our ministers have become, at times, decision-makers for the church, rather than men charged with carrying out the decisions of the church (Richards, 1970: 121).

To understand the structure of the church, we have to understand how the decision-making process operates in the Body of Christ.

(a) Decision-making in the church

The church needs to understand that its headship is reserved for Christ. “God has placed everything under the power of Christ and has set Him as head of everything for the Church”, says Ephesians. “For the church is His body, and in that body lives the one who fills the whole wide universe” (1:22, 23). If Christ is the head, the direction of the church is for Him. He is our “top management”. In this case, Christ should make the decisions through his word for the church, and we, his body, should carry them out (Richards, 1970: 122).

The question of decision-making revolves itself into another. It is not a problem of who makes the decisions in the church? It is a problem of communication. How does Christ communicate His decision to the church? What is the method, and what are the marks of true communication?

At this point, the theological and actual unity of the church seems to be especially significant. Richards (1970) argues that the church is one. Let’s remember here that within the church there is much more room for individual freedom, for individual responsibility to Christ. In many matters, believers are to make individual decisions (1970: 122).

The research supports the view of Richards, namely that individual freedom is not the question here. In fact it is not the function of the church to limit freedom. The function of the church is to develop strong individuals, believers who will be mature in Christ, strong men and women in their own right – not to force individuals into conformity with all, or create a dependency which hinders them from relating to God apart from the others (Richards, 1970: 122-123).

While there are many decisions each of us should make for ourselves, there are other decisions which do affect the Body, and decisions which affect the church are to be made by the church. Richards (1970), states that in decision-making, as in ministry, the whole body must be involved. For making decisions is not the prerogative of church leadership; it is the prerogative of Christ. As the body is in fact one, the church is to function as one and come to know in full consensus the will of God for the body (1970: 129).

(b) Derived structure

At this point it is possible to discern the structural skeleton of the church; the major beams which support development of its common life. Blending biblical “body” concepts of mutual ministry, servant-leadership, and consensus decision-making seems to indicate that the church meets and acts in these general patterns (Richards, 1970: 129; Getz, 1974: 112-113).

In conclusion Richards proposes three points of structuring the church for good decision-making which would involve all members:

- (1) The smallest churches (or unit of the church, if you prefer neighbourhood gatherings) can no longer comfortably fit in a home. In these meetings all functions of the church take place, and this is the prime location for mutual ministry. As Christian character and grace are developed by the Holy Spirit, ministering to each through the others the gifts of the Spirit emerge and are recognized by the community. As gifts emerge and are recognized, church leaders are selected from men and women, young and old.
- (2) The church at times assembles as a larger group, for a variety of purposes. One of these is general meetings, community worship, or joint communion. The church may gather to consider some problems facing it as a whole. In open discussion of the problems, and in the full participation of each member, a

consensus reflecting the mind of God will be reached. This process may well involve extended prayer and study, with the issues investigated in each home-church, and several meetings of the church at large.

- (3) The leaders of the church meet together and with their own home-church groups. These leaders, one or more, men or women, who may be supported by the believers to free them for full-time ministry, are equally recognized by the congregation. There is no one pre-eminent man or women in the local fellowship: a single minister to who all look (Richards, 1970: 130).

The proposal of Richards (1970) is the one which gives each church member to participate at all levels of the church structures. The purpose of this study that seeks the inclusion of the laity and women will be fulfilled if the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe accepts such a strategy.

7.4 THOMAS GROOME'S MODEL

7.4.1 Introduction

In this section the researcher looks at the model of Thomas H Groome (1980) in his book *Christian Religious Education*, for empowering lay leadership of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The model encourages the sharing of our story and vision for church leadership. Groome (1980) focused his model of Christian Religious Education on six important questions namely: (the what) nature; (the why) purpose; (the where) context; (the how) an approach: shared praxis; and (the when) readiness of Christian Religious Education (Groome, 1980: XIV). This can be applied to any discipline of study but in this case it will be applied to church leadership.

The model of Groome (1980) agrees with the methodology of doing theology in this study that seeks to discern God's kingdom by holding the four tension points active in the discernment process of doing theology described in 1.7.4.1. Groome (1980) is using the methodology of a life story considering the past, present and the future in a correlational way. In the definition of doing theology, the researcher considered the world and the Word (left and right points of the cross: keep them in dialogue); looking at who are in principle (foot of the cross, identity) and what we should become (top of the cross, identity realized or fulfilled). Where these two lines cross in the middle one finds a faith community in prayer,

listening and discerning (Hendriks, 2004: 23-24).

It is not in the scope of this study to go into the detail of Groome's model but to reflect on some of the key areas which can be of great benefit to the leadership of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. In this case the three dimensions or points of the word education "leading out" and the "how" aspect of Christian leadership. The five key aspect of Groome's model is: (1) present action, (2) critical reflection, (3) dialogue, (4) the story, and (5) the vision that arises from the Story (Groome, 1980: 184).

7.4.2 The three dimensions used by Groome for education

Groome (1980) defines education as an activity of "leading out". The emphasis being on: the already, the present experienced process and the movement towards a new future (1980: 6). It correlates with our traditional words for talking about time – past, present and future. His warning is that while we may use traditional words to talk about time, it is imperative for our leadership activity that we do not understand past, present and future as separated from each other in a linear sense (1980: 7). If time is misunderstood as three separate times, the leadership activity tends to emphasize one and neglect the other two to the detriment of the whole enterprise.

(a) The assumption and concern for the "past"

One of the basic assumptions from which leadership arises is that the people who were here before us learned from experience. This assumption gives rise to a concern that we preserve what is "already" known in the heritage of the human family. Thus, we are motivated to lead so that out of the past heritage of our people we may build a present and future for ourselves and for our church members (Groome, 1980: 7).

(b) The assumption and concern for the "present"

Groome (1980: 8) states that the present is the only time that actually exists for us, and within the present resides the heritage of the past and possibility of the future. To understand anything, even what was previously known or done, requires that we "reinvent" it in the sense of coming to see for ourselves in the present. From the present experience we come to know what may not have been known or done before, or not done in the same way. If the present do not inherit some of the past, then creativity is stifled and the result is

domesticating rather than educating good leadership.

True leadership can never settle for sameness. It is to be a leading out rather than standing still in the past. But the present model of any leadership should not be a prisoner of itself, captured in a historical cage of “now”, deprived of its past and disowning its future (Groome, 1980: 8).

(c) The assumption and concern for the “future”

In all models of leadership there should be the awareness of a “not yet” dimension, a leading out towards a knowing not yet realized. There is need to ensure that all of us can have a future leadership from our church members. When this concern is properly expressed in leadership activity, then the future is seen as arising from the heritage of the past and the activity of the present, but with newness beyond either past or present.

The warning given by Groome (1980) in the understanding of these three dimensions is that through experience, the leader’s task is to hold the past, present and future in a fruitful tension with each other. We need to understand that we are pilgrims living between two eternities “in time” between birth and death. In this time we journey together (Groome, 1980: 12). In this pilgrimage our leadership pattern should not be that of “power over” but “power with”. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe’s leadership history as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 need to understand this concept of Groome.

7.4.3 The formative power of social-cultural context

In Groome’s model of Christian Education social context is important. The community context is desirable for any Christian formation and influence of leadership or educational activity.

Leadership, taken from this model, needs to teach us the approach used by Groome (1980). He defines socialization as the process by which people came to be who they are by interaction with other people in their social environment. Leaders need to mix freely with the people they lead. He calls that “becoming Christians together” (1980: 109).

It bridges self and identity with each other. Groom (1980) uses the word “self” to include three related aspects of a person, namely one’s self-image, one’s world view, and one’s value system. Identity, on the other hand, is the experience of continuity and sameness we have of

ourselves. The two concepts are so closely related that he prefers to speak of them together as self-identity, meaning the continuous and stable awareness we have of our self-image, world view and value system (1980: 109-110).

He states that other terms that are important in the socialization approach are culture and society. He understands culture as the patterned way of life produced by people through whom its members have guidelines for valuing, believing and acting. Culture is embodied and expressed in a system of symbols, of which the basic and pervasive form is language. By appropriating those symbols, people come to know each other, the world and engage in it with the patterned behaviour of their particular culture. However, one need to be aware that culture it is not static.

Society, on the other hand, is the institutional order and organizational arrangements people give to their way of being together. It expresses, as it also promotes, the patterned life of culture. Although the two realities can be distinguished, cultural patterns and social structures cannot exist apart from each other. He thus often uses the term social/cultural environment to mean the whole ethos of a stable group of people.

Socialization then, is the process of being inducted into that ethos, which in turn produces our self-identity. Hence, leadership activity should take place in this socialization, which is a life-long process because the human estate is always lived out in solidarity with other humans - be it male or female, old or young.

7.4.4 The “how” aspect of Christian leadership

Groome (1980) on the question of how Christian Religious Education could be done used the “shared praxis approach”. He avoided calling the shared praxis a theory or a method because, in a definite sense, he intends it to be both. Attempting to avoid the traditional dichotomy between theory and practice and to capture twin moments of praxis (reflection and action), he calls it an approach – in other words, an informed reflective (theory) manner of doing (method) Christian Religious Education (Groome, 1980: 137).

The researcher favours this praxis approach of Groome (1980) to be used in the church leadership approach. Groome (1980) points out that any praxis approach must, by its very nature, be a constantly self-renewing process where every theory is clarified in praxis to empower further praxis (1980: 137-138). The researcher sees the proposed shared praxis in

section four of Groome's book (1980) as a possible approach to church leadership in the Christian tradition. It can benefit the leadership of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in doing theology through transformative action.

7.4.5 The praxis model of knowing

In the praxis way of knowing, Groome (1980) engages a number of philosophers and their understanding of the praxis of knowing. For Aristotle, in any context praxis means a purposeful and reflective action by which knowing arises through engagement in a social situation of a given community. Therefore, praxis always includes "twin moments" – action (i.e. engagement) and reflection, but not separated from each other; it is action done reflectively, and reflection on what is being done (Groome, 1980: 154).

According to Hegel, with his praxis of geist, the relationship between theory and praxis is central. For Habermas, all knowing has a "knowledge constitutive interest", that is, a basic orientation of knowing a subject that shapes the outcome of what is known. The "interest" we bring to the knowing process is that which unites theory and practice, where knowing a subject and world come together. We know what we want to know in order that we may act (Groome, 1980: 170).

7.4.6 Shared Christian praxis model

This is the heart of Groome's (1980) model which can also be fruitful to church leadership activity if implemented. Groome (1980) describes the shared Christian praxis as a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on their present action in light of the Christian story and its vision toward the end of lived Christian faith (1980: 185). In this study the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has the task to learn to reflect the challenges together with women and laity.

He points out that shared praxis takes place in a situation of group dialogue. Shared dialogue is an articulation of critical reflection upon one's present active engagement in the world as a Christian. That present engagement is in fact the embodiment of one's own story and vision, and critical reflection upon it takes place in light of the Christian communities' story and the response which that story invites (1980: 184).

He outlined his approach in five main components which can be used in any discipline of

study. These are 1) present activities, 2) critical reflection, 3) dialogue, 4) the story, and 5) the vision that arises from the story.

(1) Present action

Present action means our whole human world, our every doing that has any intentionality or deliberateness to it. Present action is whatever we give expression to ourselves. It includes what we are doing physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually as we live on personal, interpersonal, and social levels (Groome, 1980: 18). He wants the person to understand present action in the sense of the present of things present, the present of things past and the present of things to come. One has to balance the present activity in view of the past action and future in mind. In this study, the past and present reality of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has been discussed in the four previous chapters. The leadership history of the Reformed church in Zimbabwe Chapter 3, position of laity and women in Chapter 4, an empirical study on the attitudes towards women in Chapter 5 and the Zimbabwean scenario Chapter 6.

(2) Critical reflection

Critical reflection is an activity in which one calls upon i) critical reason to evaluate the present, ii) critical memory to uncover the past in the present, and iii) creative imagination to envision the future in the present.

(i) Critical reason to evaluate the present

At its first level of reflection, critical reason attempts to perceive what is “obvious” about the present. Very often the obvious is so much part of our given world that it is taken for granted and either is no longer noticed or it is seen as inevitable. Critical reflection, then, is at first an attempt to notice the obvious, to critically apprehend rather than passively accept it as “just the way things are” (Groome, 1980: 85).

(ii) Critical memory to uncover the past in the present

With the activity of memory, critical reflection becomes a reflection upon one’s reflection, a process of remembering the source of one’s thinking. If critical reason is to discover the interest of present action, critique the ideology that maintains it, and recognize the assumptions upon which it is based, then the persons and social genesis of our action needs to

be brought to consciousness. This is done by remembering (Groome, 1980: 186).

By critical memory, then, together with reason, we can discover the personal and social genesis of our present action. In reflecting the source of our activity, we come to know our own story and to name our own constitutive knowing, that is the knowing which arises from our engagement in the community, society and world at large. But critical reflection is incomplete if it rests only on reason and memory. The purpose of naming our present and knowing our story is that we may have some freedom to imagine and choose our future (Groome, 1980: 186).

(iii) Creative imagination to envision the future in the present

Groome (1980) points out that critical reflection is incomplete without imagination. Imagination is needed as we look at both the present and the past, but its predominant focus is the future. The reason we attend to the present and the past is that we may intend the future. But intending the future, requires imagination; otherwise the future will be little more than repetition of the past (1980: 186).

In the empirical discussions of Chapter 5 of the research discovered how difficult some men and clergy can be on the issue of involving women in the broader church leadership structures in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. But the new methodology of doing theology proposed in this study has to be used in a friendly way. The researcher believes that by using the methodology described in chapter 1, enriching it with that of Groome – with which it has much in common, one should try to get the RCZ to critically engage its past, present and future.

(3) Dialogue

In a shared praxis approach to Christian leadership, the participants' critical reflections on their present action as Christians are in dialogue within the pedagogical setting. Dialogue is necessary for building a Christian community within the group.

Groome (1980) states that to be dialogical does not mean that the participants are to talk back and forth “at” each other constantly; such a situation might not be dialogical at all. Paradoxical as it may seem, that dialogue begins with one's self. At bedrock it is a conversation with our own biographies, with our own stories and visions. In actual fact, to be

truly known by us, our self-dialogue must be externalized and shared with others, and they, too, must be heard if we are to know more clearly our own stories and visions (1980: 189).

Two essential activities are constitutive of dialogue, namely telling and listening. So often when people say they are ready to dialogue, they mean that they are ready to talk. But dialogue involves listening as much as telling. It must, however, be a listening that attempts to hear with the heart what the other person is attempting to communicate. Much more than the mere words or gestures of the other must be at “heart”. This brings mutual trust between the dialoguers (1980: 190).

In this study, men and women in the church need to dialogue to come to a mutual understanding to share leadership at all levels of church structures in the RCZ.

(4) The story

Groome (1980) says by “story” he does not mean simple human narrative. Though narratives are indeed part of our story, our story is much more than our narratives. To distinguish it from our individual stories, he capitalizes the word. By Christian story he means “the whole faith traditions of our people. However, it may be expressed or embodied”. It is the essential part of the Jewish and Christian process of knowing God. That is the story of God active in the life history of people. This means people’s stories need to respond and participate in the activities of God’s story. If we are to know God and find salvation in our present, then we must remember the story of God and the faith communities (1980: 193).

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe’s leadership history needs to be tested by the history of God’s activities in the Scriptures. Doing leadership theology in this regard challenges the present method of exercising church leadership which is based on the tradition of the church alone.

(5) The vision

Groome (1980) intends the metaphor vision to be a comprehensive representation of the lived response which the Christian story and of the promise God makes in the story. By vision, then, he means the Kingdom of God, God’s vision for creation. From us it invites a lived response that is faithful to the reign of God. As we respond, we help to make the Kingdom present today (1980: 193).

It is important for Christians to understand that story and vision are not separate realities, but two aspects of the same reality. The story is the story of God's Kingdom; the vision is the vision of the Kingdom of God.

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe would do well to reflect on its present leadership situation by using this model of Groome (1980). The model shares the principles of the methodology of doing theology supported in this study.

7.4.7 Conclusion

Thomas Groome's model (1980) emphasizes that events should be reflected upon in time, as present, past and future simultaneously. The past way of life has to consider the present and the future to work in dialogue. In view of the situation in Zimbabwe, church leadership should use his model to challenge itself and critically reflects on its present leadership style with the past and the future in mind. This is to be done based on the broader Story of God's redemptive history.

7.5 OTHER STRATEGIES – LUMKO METHODOLOGY

7.5.1 Introduction

The researcher suggests that number 10 of the Lumko Series by Lobinger [s a] to be used by the RCZ to discern a contextually relevant leadership style. This part of the series focuses on non-dominating leadership. It demonstrates the vision of a community-orientated ministry, principles of training emergent leaders, and methods of training leaders, equipping pastoral workers and putting the emphases on the sharing of responsibility in the faith community. Even though the Lumko Series was developed for the Roman Catholic Church where the hierarchical nature of church structures is even worse than in the RCZ, the researcher found the biblical based and practical material extremely helpful.

7.5.2 The vision of a community-orientated ministry

Lobinger [s a] demonstrated his community-orientated ministry vision with the congregation of St Simon which was totally dependent on the service of one leader. He used ten phases to demonstrate to the congregation that anybody who is trained can assume leadership. The method was resented by a few strong male church members but the latter saw the importance of the idea when some of the leaders got sick and did not come to the Sunday service. The

service did not stop because they were not there to perform the duty.

7.5.3 Community versus domination

Of the ten phases used by Lobinger [s a] this is the last one. At several stages, the problem was that leaders desired to do things alone, establishing a monopoly and obtain some kind of privileges. Again and again the community encountered problems of domination by the leaders. Many people realized the weakness of one centred leadership. Hence the leader could not turn up due to sickness. Some proposed that everybody should be involved in church activities. But others said that they found it good if leaders had special rights and were very different from the others (Lobinger [s a]: 9).

In one of the meetings of St Simon congregation, one member stated: “Do you not see that leadership domination is the main problem of our whole society, not only of the Church? We have officials in the town-offices who want to become our bosses instead of serving us. We have people on top who want to enrich themselves instead of uplifting our nation. And we have leaders who compete among themselves for power and status instead of working for the common good of the people and the country” (Lobinger [s a]: 9). He concluded by saying: “If we believe that society needs non-dominating leadership, we must prove in the church that this is possible. This is the service to the world” (Lobinger [s a]: 9).

Lobinger [s a] methodology emphasizes that leadership needs to be developed at the level of the whole congregation, but “non-domination” leadership do not mean “non-existing” leaders. A larger number of people cannot act without leaders. But people know very well that leaders could easily destroy communal responsibility instead of building up. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe need to aware of this fact.

Lobinger [s a] argued that Jesus gave us important guidelines for the life and leadership of his community, and it is these which must form our aim. Jesus said: “You know that among the pagans the rulers lord it over them and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be the first among you must be your slave, just as the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

Lobinger [s a] closed the section by saying: “In the title of this booklet we have not used a biblical term, but have used a term which was born from human history, the term “non-

dominating leadership”. It is identical with the words quoted from Jesus. At the same time it is an ordinary term for summing up the aim of our efforts because it affirms that there should be leadership and authority, but we aim at new ways of exercising it. It is also the desire of the researcher to see the target-vision of a community-orientated, non-dominating leadership practised in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

The model of the Lumko Series number 10 [s a] shows that for the above vision to be achieved, good principles are needed to train leaders emerging from each community. The local pastor needs to be aware of the principles of training many local leaders to empower every church member to play a role.

7.5.4 Principles of training emergent leaders

In the main principles presented by Lobinger [s a] he shows that training emergent leaders is different from residential training. The training of emergent leaders must follow the principles of adult education. Emergent Christian leaders must be trained locally. The formation of leaders must go hand in hand with community-building among all members. Team-work in leadership training is important. The importance and incentive for leadership formation should be growth, not promotion. The researcher noted that though terminology and context may be different, the principles of the Lumko Series are present in the discussion of leadership and participatory action research in *Studying Congregations in Africa* (Hendriks, 2004: 197 – 221).

7.5.5 Training emergent leaders is different from residential training

(a) What is an “emergent leader?”

The term “emergent leader” refers to leaders who emerge within a Christian community and usually remain with this community. This can take place where leaders are not dominating the members. These emergent leaders are self-supporting, have an occupation, have a family and are not young (Lobinger [s a]: 22).

Lobinger [s a] prefers the term “emergent leaders” to other terms, such as “part-time”, “voluntary”, “auxiliary” or “self-supporting”, since the term “emergent leaders” emphasizes their relationship with the community. The community plays a decisive role in detecting their charisma, in choosing them, and keeping them in office. This acceptability to the community

is vital ([s a]: 22).

(b) The difference between emergent leaders and full-time leaders

It is a well-known fact that other kinds of leaders can, in fact, emerge, e.g. a candidate for the priesthood, or for a full-time lay leader. But for them, this aspect of emerging from among a group soon becomes unimportant when they are transferred from one community to another by the church authorities. Acceptability of full time leaders rests more on the authority which sends them, who did not play a major role during their training, which normally takes place outside the community at a residential training centre at a distant. They do not reflect the faith and community-spirit of the people whom they will work with, while emergent leaders normally are the “product” of the faith of the local community. Training of emergent leaders is very much determined by the needs and standards of the community which they serve (Lobinger [s a]:22). It is for these reasons that the Lumko Series prefers the term “emergent leaders”, although no term can adequately express all aspects of office and leadership.

7.5.6 Training of emergent leaders follow the principles of Adult Education

Training of emergent leaders appreciates that adults are not empty bottles to be filled by experts.

- Adults want to decide themselves what to learn.
- Adults learn easiest about things that concern their life and their task.
- Adults learn easiest what is connected with their past experience.
- Adults learn slower but in a more reliable way.

Hence training of these leaders begins with training for the concrete tasks for which they are chosen by the community to do. Theory is necessary, for adults, but it should not be the contents of the first training sessions, but should be linked to concrete tasks. It can be good to ask them what they want to learn. Give them self-confidence from the beginning (Lobinger [s a]: 24-25). This creates a non-dominating leadership spirit and encourages more participation.

The training should concentrate on: 1) spiritual life, 2) attitudes, values, awareness of social responsibility, community relations and teamwork, 3) skills: to animate a group and a large community, conduct meetings and to solve conflicts, and 4) information, knowledge, insights,

theological knowledge and insights and general knowledge about society, economy and about media.

Lobinger [s a] suggests that the training of emergent leaders can be a combination of local and central training, but emphasizes that it needs to be localized training. He argues that formation of leaders should go hand in hand with community building among all members. This is mostly found at local training centres. It is here they can easily identify with their calling theoretically and practically. It promotes the spirit of equality of the leader and the members of the Christian community.

7.5.7 Methodology of training in this model

In training methods, Lobinger [s a] shows that a congregation needs many kinds of training. Training should be distributed to all lay leadership groups in the congregation. They should be trained to do Sunday services in the absence of the clergy, visit the sick, social awareness, rural development work, self-help projects, conduct meetings, and small-group catechesis. The trainings should be initiated by the congregation clergy (Lobinger [s a]: 47).

The methods for training should involve training of skills, working and reflecting together, awareness programmes for the whole Christian community, attitude formation for groups of emergent leaders and spiritual formation of emergent leaders.

The training will assist members to discover what their gifts are in the faith community and will develop and empower future leaders for the church. It will assist the leaders and other members to understand the importance of non-dominating participation in groups.

7.5.8 Introducing pastor to training methods

In this section, Lobinger [s a] states that change is easier when the whole presbytery cooperates. The new role for pastors or any pastoral worker is the desire to train others. The church of the future will rely on a large number of self-supporting leaders. They will not be trained residentially but locally ([s a]: 27-30).

In this method, the congregation will not disappear, but will assume a new role. It will no longer be considered as the place where the church becomes a community, but it will be the link between the many small church communities.

Seminars and workshops on the idea of Community Ministries will be conducted at congregational level. The seminars will be based on group-work. Different topics on church leadership and methods on training others in their wards will be done. It is done to give each member a sense of responsibility in the church.

7.5.9 Sharing of responsibility in the church

Lobinger [s a] argues that the main goal of the Lumko Series is not to create specific grades, but to create communal responsibility which supports a non-dominating ministry. The acceptance of such ministerial leadership is an integral part of the approach, but the exact extent to which it must lead needs not to be decided by us but by the leadership of each church. What is definitely the responsibility or obligation for each church leadership is to move towards a church which is community and which serves the world ([s a]: 89).

He suggests that if a community is mature, its members should assume responsibility. Our present church structures show something very different. It states that all key responsibilities are exercised by a clergy who is sent to a geographical area and is transferred or called upon. Responsibilities and key functions are not exercised through togetherness of men and women of the local community and its own leaders.

If it is us who celebrate, our own leaders and church members must preside. This should be the vision of incarnation. God's Work took flesh in Mary. In her, the whole human race accepted this one-ness with God. Over and above this global acceptance of all human beings, Mary also gave her own personal and unique features to the Saviour. Her neighbours would say that the child looked like her as any child resembles the parents. Mary gave her unique body into this union of the incarnation, and she also expressed it with her own unique voice when singing the magnificent song in Luke 1:46b-56 (Lobinger [s a]: 93).

7.5.10 Conclusion

The Lumko Series methodology of church leadership as presented by Lobinger [s a] in number 10 of the series is one of the strategies the researcher proposes to Reformed Church in Zimbabwe for the development and empowering of laity and women. The aims and methods of the series are focused on non-dominating leadership and the training of leaders for ministries. The strategy challenges the ministers to train church members for church responsibilities even in their absence.

7.6 THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION (TEE)

7.6.1 Introduction

Theological Education by Extension is one of the strategies the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe can use to empower lay leadership for transformative action in congregations. As discussed in the methodology of doing theology (point 8, discussed in chapter 1), it was said that theology is also about transformative action. Transformation should not only focus on Scripture and tradition with the intention of making systematic comprehensive interpretations. A missional praxis theology should be focusing on local and particular issues with the purpose of doing something about the reality and problems that confront the faith community, as well as society (Hendriks, 2004: 33). TEE can be used to accomplish that purpose for the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, together with other strategies discussed above.

The following section aims to briefly give a description of TEE, beginning with a short historical background, describing its approach to community faith from grassroots and pointing to some of its strong and weak points to be considered when empowering the laity.

7.6.2 What is TEE?

Theological Education by Extension simply means decentralized theological education. It is a field-based approach that does not interrupt the learner's productive relationships to community and society at large (Mulholland, 1976: 66). It is the model of theological education that provides systematic, interdependent study together with regular supervised seminars in the context of people's varied life and work and ministry (Kinsler, 1983: xiv).

In order to understand TEE, one need to understand the concept "extension", that is contrasted with the word "extraction". The extraction model is the model of traditional theological training-leaving one's context and learning in a different context namely the institution. The person is extracted out of his or her life context. By contrast, the extension model educates a person where he or she is without requiring any change of environment (Thornton, 1999: 28-29).

7.6.3 A short historical background on TEE

Theological Education by Extension developed in Latin America in 1963 and since 1970 in Africa (Thornton, 1999: 10). To understand the genius of the TEE movement, it is imperative to grasp the experiment of the Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala where it became a model for change because it responded to the needs of a church faithfully engaged in mission. It did not result from the implementation of a carefully predestined theoretical model with a fully developed theology of ministry or philosophy of education. Theological education by extension took shape in the Presbyterian seminary as a series of responses to problems encountered in the task of ministerial training among the sectors of society represented in the Presbyterian Church (Mulholland, 1976: 65-66).

One of the problems noted in Guatemala was the numerical growth of church membership resulting in a lack of enough leadership. Most of the graduates trained by seminary either never entered the specific ministry for which they trained, or else left it in order to enter non-church-related occupations. Genuine leaders in the rural communities could not attend a residence program because of job and family responsibilities. Again, many gifted leaders with great intelligence particularly in rural areas had such meagre academic training, that they could not even do post-primary level work required for the most basic training (Mulholland, 1976: 66).

TEE is a new way of training pastors, it is financially viable, eliminate the problems of extraction, and it is contextually appropriate. It was decided that theological education would be taken to the people by extension (Rutt, 1991: 3).

7.6.4 Approach of TEE

Three important components are used in TEE training of members. The three components are information, response and confirmation.

(1) Information

Self-study material is supplied to enable the student to learn at home. Each individual has a textbook, containing one set of reading per day.

(2) Response

Each participant or student answers questions applicable to the reading. Practical work is done in the participant's own congregation.

(3) Confirmation

A group gets together and discusses the lessons. It is regular encounters or seminars that promote fellowship and inspiration to both students and teacher (Kinsler, 1983: 34-35).

Although it has been adapted to a variety of situations around the world, these three components make up the genius of Theological Education by Extension. It is seen by its promoters as a panacea for the leadership needs of growing churches, but on the other hand, it is seen by its detractors as a serious threat to the future of Christian Education and church leadership.

7.6.5 Strengths and presuppositions of Theological Education by Extension

Theological Education by Extension endeavours to address many of the failures of the residential seminaries. In the first place, it seeks to teach ministry in a specific context. Students are not removed from their home for the period of study. They have the opportunity to relate and apply what they are learning to their daily life situation and the lives of those around them (Mulholland, 1976: 65). The importance of this aspect cannot be overestimated. Patterns for leadership development are copied from the presuppositions of the seminary. When theological education takes place in context, leadership characteristics and patterns from that culture can be taken into consideration, and natural leaders can participate (Mulholland, 1976: 66).

Theological Education by Extension, on the other hand, is an attempt to utilize the natural leaders of the community for ministry among their own. This in turn, provides the opportunity for more spiritually mature leaders to utilize their experiences in everyday troubles and joys of life and how to relate the Gospel to those experiences (Newton, 1991: 52; Roland, 1962: 106).

Another presupposition of Theological Education by Extension is that the ministry belongs to all the people. Theological Education by Extension is a way to break down the structures of elitism in the missionary model period (Kinsler, 1983: 43). All members of the body of Christ

have the responsibility of the work and life of the church. It is not geared towards helping the elite to maintain their position of influence and authority, but opens the door for theological knowledge to all. Due to the non-formal nature of Extension Education, there is flexibility to accommodate the educational levels and educational needs of the participants (Robert, 1991: 6).

Lester Hirst (1986) describes a typical programme of theological education by extension and how it meets the needs of the church. He lists the objectives such as:

- 1) Training is programmed for every level of local church leadership;
- 2) Training takes into consideration the aspects considered to be important for leadership development. They are knowledge, skills and character;
- 3) Courses are taught not only by outsiders, but local leaders are incorporated as teachers;
- 4) Flexibility is allowed, and indeed, encouraged;
- 5) the training programmes is linked integrally to the local church (Hirst 1986: 420-424).

Robert (1991), states that numerous books have been written in the past years proclaiming the abovementioned advantages of Theological Education by Extension. There are some who are unwilling to accept it as a credible model, but the fact is that it is here to stay. Churches, missions and mission boards see the pressing need for an alternative to the traditional model, and Extension Education come to the forefront as a reasonable option.

7.6.6 Areas of concern for Theological Education by Extension

Some caveats are in order however, for whenever sweeping change takes place, it should not be done hastily or carelessly, but rather in a thoughtful and informed manner. This is especially true when so much is at stake. Christ has given the church the responsibility for maintaining and handing down the Gospel in all its truth (Deuteronomy 6:6-8; Matthew 28:20, II Timothy 1:13-14; Titus 1:9). Theological Education has its purpose; the perpetuation and dissemination of the gospel so that it might be preserved for coming generations and extended to those who have not heard the good news. In this respect, TEE has much to offer, for excellence and dedication to Theological Education has always been of great importance in our synod since 1984. But for the sake of this study, certain concerns or weaknesses need to be reflected:

- The first concern is the first approach stated in this section. It is assumed that participants will have certain readings to study, along with some kind of workbook that helps him/her pick out the important points in the reading so he/she can interact with the material. Caution needs to be taken, as this can degenerate into what has been called “list memorization”. While the validity of possessing a body of facts is not called into question, Theological Education cannot be accomplished merely by passing on that body of information (Robert, 1991: 11). If the goal of the Theological Education by Extension programmes is simply to pass on certain facts so that the participants can pass a written test or repeat memorized phrases and clichés, real theology will never be taught.

Theological education by extension should stick to the call of the educator, Paulo Freire (1973), who writes from a deep concern that in any educational endeavor, the rights and integrity of the student should be respected. This is especially crucial in the area of adult education (Freire, 1973: 9-13). He rejects the banking model of education. The goal of education should never be only the passing on of certain facts. It has to do with helping someone to discover the meaning of truth and how it can be helpful to him/her in his/her situation.

- Centre-periphery: Another concern with regard to theological education by extension is the centre and periphery phenomena in education spoken of by Altbach (1981). He stated that in Theological Education by Extension, participants in a third world environment seem not to be allowed to contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of theology. In fact, many extension programmes are initiated, directed, funded and carried out by Western missionaries. What is taught in the programmes is often directed by the priorities and cultured assumptions of the Western church. To many, this is seen as another form of neo-colonialism. It is still to be seen if the extension movement will produce theologians who will contribute on an international level to Christian understanding (Altbach, 1981: 601-621).

In the same line, the issue of academic quality and accreditation needs to be addressed. It has often been said that Theological Education by Extension does not function at a level so as to make it academically credible. Often the participants do not meet the entrance standards common to Western theological seminaries (Robert, 1991: 15).

7.6.7 Conclusion

Some of these concerns may seem to be of secondary importance. After all, Christ does not expect from us to have a degree or certificate in order to serve Him. At a personal level, we have been called to be followers or disciples of Jesus Christ (Altbach, 1981: 618). A well-planned and executed programme of theological education does not necessarily produce a

true theologian. At the same time, it must be recognized that we live in a context that is becoming increasingly globalised. The term “global village” has been used to describe our world. If we are going to prepare Christians, pastors and theologians to lead congregations in the future, we must be sensitive to what is credible in the world.

Yet, the primary concern of theological education is the formation of leaders, pastors and teachers who are capable of, not just knowing theology, but being theologians, theologians who possess a character that manifests itself in his/her relationship to him/herself, to others, and to God. This would answer the point of our methodology of doing theology in Chapter 1 which states that theology is about transformative action. In the end, only the Holy Spirit can make a real theologian, whether male or female (Robert, 1991: 16).

While only the Holy Spirit can make a real theologian, theological education can be carried out in such a way so as to facilitate that process. Theological Education by Extension as a model incorporates many necessary ingredients, combining theory and practice with dynamic reflection. There are concerns, however, which must be taken into consideration, as with any educational model. Theological Education by Extension is not and cannot be the panacea that it is sometimes claimed to be, primarily because no person, except Jesus Himself is a perfect leader or teacher. It is, however, here to stay. How well it is used and how well it serves the church, depends largely on how much thought and work are put into its implementation.

7.7 APPLICABILITY ON LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE RCZ

7.7.1 Introduction

Transformation and development of lay leadership groups in the RCZ is applicable in the sense that at local level they are the people who are fully involved in church ministries. Evangelists and lay preachers, women leadership and youth leaders need to be fully accommodated in all church structures, not just by co-option. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe believes in the core biblical principles and traditions held by the early reformers of the sixteenth century that supports the development of each individual believer. There is need for the church to understand and implement some of the biblical principles for each believer to have an opportunity to participate at any level.

This section discusses three core biblical principles which approve the applicability of laity to participate at any level in the church. It then discusses the applicability of it to each of the lay

leadership group in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

7.7.2 Three core biblical principles

This section focuses firstly on three core principles or foundations to propose full accommodation of the lay leadership groups in all church structures. These are (1) the priesthood of all believers, (2) the gifts of the spirit and (3) the servanthood of Jesus Christ.

The problem of this study is the exclusion of lay people in broader leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The New Testament has strong principles which disapprove exclusion.

(1) Priesthood of believers

The key passage here is 1 Peter 2:4-9. Peter says that believers are “being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”. The church is “a chosen people (*laos* or “laity”), a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God”, called to declare the praise of him who called (it) out of darkness into his light”. In 1 Peter, the author refers to Exodus 19:5-6, where the whole nation of Israel was to be God’s priesthood.

Snyder (1983) is in favour of the priesthood of all believers as stated by the early reformers. It means that *all believers have direct access to God*. We may all “approach the throne of grace with confidence” (Hebrews 4:16). The way to God has been opened directly through Jesus Christ.

The other balancing truth is that we are priests to each other. We are not just individual priests; we are the priesthood, just as the church is a body, a people and a nation. We have this ministry together, to be priest to each other (Snyder, 1983: 170-171).

Priesthood is not just for the internal life of the church; it is for the world. As priests, Christians are God’s missionaries and servants for others. They are to represent God to the people and the people to God in good servanthood (Snyder 1983:170). This is transformative action in doing theology at the secular social level. The church witnesses to the public and should influence it in a positive way (Hendriks, 2004: 3).

Biblically, this is the first foundation stone for understanding the ministry of God's people. From the perspective of the priesthood of believers, every believer is a minister. This makes the development of laity in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership relevant for today.

(2) Gifts of the Spirit

The key passage here which supports the applicability on the development of laity leadership in the RCZ is Ephesians 4:1-16. The passage speaks of the unity of the church – “one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all in all”.

According to Paul, the Holy Spirit gives various specific useful gifts to the church – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers (Eph. 4:11). It is in this passage that the fourfold offices of the RCZ are derived.

Snyder (1983) argues that today, the Holy Spirit is often hindered in His ministry of distributing and igniting gifts among members by traditional church structures (1983:175). He further argues that in a way, church structure quenches the spirit. For example: The spirit-led church chooses its leaders according to each member's gifts. The institutionalized church chooses leaders according to how many positions it takes to run the organization (1983:175). He states that three important points must be noted by the church to see the relevance of transformation of evangelists in church leadership.

Firstly, ministry is by God's grace. Redemptive ministry for the Kingdom in the New Testament is not a matter of training, intelligence, experience or ordination, even though all these have their place.

Secondly, God gives a wide variety of ministries, all of which are important for the Kingdom. The early church understood spiritual gifts as meaning a variety of ministries as seen from 1 Peter 4:10-11 and Hebrews 2:4. Gifts, diversity and mutuality are all important. The point to understand is that spirit-given diversity and functioning mutuality in the body is needed - not uniformity. The body is not all hands or all feet. The church is to be like a human body, not a centipede or an octopus (Snyder, 1983: 176-177).

Thirdly, every believer can do some ministry. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift which can be put to work for Kingdom purposes. In the institutional view, people have value

because of what they can do. Talented people are worth more because they can do more; others are worth less because they perform less. But in the biblical view, everyone has value because each person is created in the image of God (Snyder, 1983: 177). Linking the priesthood of believers with the gifts of the Spirit, we find that they clarify and reinforce each other. Both points to the same truth: Ministry is for all believers.

(3) Servants of Christ

The third foundation stone for the ministry of all God's people is the call to be servants of Jesus Christ. To be a minister in the church in this case means to be a servant. This underscores the practical significance of the servant of God model (Snyder, 1983: 178; Richards, 1981: 78).

A key passage here, though many others might be cited, is Matthew 20:25. Jesus says: If you are going to be my disciples, you must function differently from the world's way. The model is not hierarchical but focuses on servanthood. Ministry is about service, and greatness is Christ-likeness (Richards, 1981: 81)

This foundation stone also suggests three things for the ministry of God's people. Firstly, Jesus is the model for ministry. We do not have to look elsewhere, and anything we learn elsewhere must be corrected by Jesus' example. Secondly, success is measured by service which involves others. Thirdly, servanthood suggests that we are to do the works of Christ for his Kingdom together (Snyder, 1983: 178-179).

These three foundations stones form an interlocking basis for the applicability of Christian ministry today. They all say the same thing: Ministry is for all believers. Every believer is ordained for ministry. To be a member of the body of Christ is to be a minister with others.

7.7.3 Evangelists / lay preachers

Protestants have always held, at least theoretically, to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. For the most part, however, this doctrine has been understood soteriologically rather than ecclesiologically. It has been understood to mean that all Christians have direct access to God without the mediation of a human priest (Snyder, 1983: 169). But the implications of this doctrine for Christian ministry, in particular church leadership, have seldom been drawn out. Perhaps the reason is that these implications radically call into

question the clergy-laity split by asserting that all believers are priests and therefore ministers.

Yet, if we trace centuries of church history, we find that renewal has often accompanied a widened understanding and practice of Christian ministry. As the church institutionalizes, it narrows its view of ministry to the point where only certain people at certain times with certain training can perform God's work. But in the renewal movements, both pre- and post-Reformation, ministry that was restricted to a certain place, time and people, often broke through barriers and was given new meaning to the body of Christ (Snyder, 1983: 169).

This clergy-laity split from the past church tradition still influence Reformed Church in Zimbabwe Constitutionally, evangelists are co-opted in some church structures and trained as theologians to assist ministers in the congregations and presbyteries (Rules and Regulations RCZ, 1999: 3). This applies to lay preachers and youth counsellors who are also trained for two years to assist ministers in preaching and children's ministries. They are only co-opted and not accommodated for full participation which is a wrong way of understanding of the Reformation doctrine of priesthood of all believers. The purpose of this study is to set ministry activities in a biblical framework. What would a biblical understanding of Christian ministry and leadership really look like? It certainly starts with the fact that all Christians are the people (laity or *laos*) of God (Snyder 1983: 170; Richards and Martin, 1981: 11). This cannot be avoided if one looks at the problem addressed by this study, namely the clericalism and professionalism encrusted the RCZ's understanding of ministry and church leadership for more than one hundred years. Evangelists were the founders of missionary work in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe from 1891. They should be given recognition in church leadership structures at all levels.

7.7.4 Applicability on women leadership development

The Christian women of Africa love the Lord with a great zeal and commitment that surpasses that of men. Particularly in Zimbabwe, it has been noted that in every Sunday service of worship, women constitute more than 60% of the congregations. If women were to be removed from the church, the pews of many churches would be empty. Financially, spiritually and socially, in Zimbabwe and Africa at large, women are the backbone of the church (Usman, 2001: 83; Ramodibe, 1988: 16-18; Runyowa and Rutoro, 2001: 56-60). However, this fact is not reflected in the official structures of the church, especially in the

field of decision-making and ordinations.

7.7.4.1 Factors influencing women leadership development today

(a) Change in social structures world-wide influence women leadership in Zimbabwe. Society is taking faster strides than the church in that women are called to work alongside their male counterparts and that is hardly questioned by anybody today. Global and local contexts of leadership, even in Africa, have changed. The general movement across Africa to push women into influential political positions also affects leadership development of the church. Liberian president, Ellen Johnson-Sir became the first woman to break into the men's world of leadership in Africa. Three women are holding vice-presidential posts (in South Africa, Burundi and Zimbabwe) and a number of them are ministers (Amosu, 2006: 18-20).

In Zimbabwe, recently, the largest business chamber, the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC) elected a female president. The Central Bank has a female deputy governor and Zimbabwe Open University has a female vice-Chancellor (Chiwara, 2006: 16). Several other corporate bodies have also followed suit.

(b) Change in the role and work of church offices have also occurred. Due to contextual changes in society and communities, the congregational activities which used to be centred on the institutional role of the ordained minister in church offices and worship service are phasing out. The "controlled-and-govern" type ministry developed in the "clerical" paradigm is also phasing out (Hendriks, 2004: 26).

Today, it has become clear that one cannot depend solely on trained theologians or ordained clergy to lead the way towards the church and its ministry (Hanson, 1986: 526). It has also become increasingly clear that as women are given opportunities in society, their gifts are being manifested in various leadership positions in the field of medicine, finance, industry, politics, education, law, engineering and even the church.

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has the potential of leadership development.

It ordained its first ever female minister, Ndakarwirwa Mubwandarikwa on 25 February 2006 in the Harare congregation. Research done in 2000 by the researcher and a research team, discovered that the women guild in the RCZ are capable for church leadership (Runyowa & Rutoro, 2001: 59-60). The women's guild has a strong women's desk and contributes most of the financial support of the church work. They have proved also to be a prestigious educated group in the nation of Zimbabwe, which also helps the church and the society at large in the field of education health care (Runyowa & Rutoro, 2001: 60-64). They teach Christian Education in the Church and also at government schools as they are involved in their day to day work. The nation and church benefit from these women as they are teachers, nurses, land officers and social workers in their communities.

The research team was of the opinion that the present situation in the RCZ is not theologically acceptable and it is an injustice towards women. It is also depriving the church and society of important and valuable leadership resources (Runyowa & Rutoro, 2001: 64).

7.7.5 Youth Leadership

The role of youth-serving organizations in society is undergoing a significant shift. From many corners of public and private life, there are calls for more involvement in community processes and in those agencies providing youth services. A certain mindset is required for youth-serving organizations if they want to thrive in this changing environment (Holling and Gunderson, 2002: 4). This shift and mindset is in a way influencing the church youth movements. This shift proves the relevance of the goal of this study, namely the inclusion of lay leadership at all levels of the church decision-making boards of which the youth are one part.

In brief, this section discusses the influence of youth organizations in society, reasons for the shift to more youth-inclusiveness at all levels of society and proves the applicability of youth leadership development in the RCZ.

7.7.5.1 The shift within the youth development sector

Across Zimbabwe, there is a move towards activity focusing on including youth in community processes. The church cannot ignore this. Terms like youth engagement, youth inclusion, youth participation and community youth development have gained new prominence in traditional human services and government literature (Action, 2004: 11-12). The trend is visible in a number of initiatives taking place in communities and throughout the world. In health organizations, Human Resources Development, Youth Employment and some church organizations, youth development is on the agenda.

In 1999, the Zimbabwean Council on Social Development found that an increasing number of cities and towns in Zimbabwe were involving young people in civic life initiatives such as roundtable and civic committees (Armistead and Wexler, 2001: 6-7). National and provincial conferences on topics ranging from rural revitalization to HIV are deliberately incorporating a youth component. These concerted efforts on behalf of youth are having a profound effect on the youth movement of the church in the RCZ. Pittman (1991) argues that, “the interesting thing in including young people in community processes is that young people offer fresh perspectives and new insight into life analysis” (1991: 16-18)

7.7.5.2 Reasons for the shift to more youth-inclusive participation

Any major change in a sector or church is caused by a multiple forces. The call for more youth inclusion is no exception. The inadequacy of old patterns of community life styles phase out as new patterns is emerging.

In order to avoid the spread of these forces, we need to take our leadership development work to the communities where young people live and associate. In essence, we need to find ways to include youth leadership in community processes (Pittman, 1991: 18).

A short historical look at the youth-development sector provides clues to the origins of the current trend of youth-inclusion in decision-making. The programs that were done in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to improve the structures of the communities world-wide, included youth in decision-making positions. One sees that some resources for youth development were not properly used. It became clear that focusing resources and energy on communities where the problems surface and young people reside were necessary (Marc, 1998: 2-3).

Public recognition of young people as key players in social processes has been strengthened by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Children (1989). It stated that, "All children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account in all matters that affect them". Significant cutbacks and redirections of social programs by governments in the last half of the 90's have also contributed to the shift of youth services world-wide. Government's current focus on partnership and community-based decision-making has caused private agencies to rethink their delivery services (Marc, 1998: 3). This also impacted on Zimbabwe to seek change in their organization and in the church (Thomas, 1978: 74).

7.7.5.3 The voices of the youth

For their part, young people world-wide are also strongly influencing the call for more youth inclusion in decision-making structures. Most of them will tell you there is still a very long way to go in this regard.

In a British Columbia study into youth well-being, youth expressed a strong desire to have input into the operations and decision-making processes of different levels of government, especially where policies regarding youth are concerned (Zammit and Glodberg, 1995 as cited in Lui, 2002: 31-32).

From the church perspective, Kabelo Matthews Ruda (2004: 13), a youth member from the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana, argues:

"There is an increasingly negative view of young people in Southern Africa, both in the church and society. Hence, the youth ministry generally operates in a hostile environment. However, young people are a valuable resource and can play a positive role in the life of the church and society if only they are allowed to. The church leadership needs to break the chains of injustice that cruelly traps young people and deny them life in fullness"

He further argues two important points valued by this study. Firstly, he strongly believes that the church is well positioned to minister to young people both in the church and in society. The voice of the church in Southern Africa is still respected by many people, even those who do not belong to the church. This places the church leadership in a strategic position to influence society positively to change its attitude towards inclusion of young people in decision-making positions.

Secondly, if the church is to succeed in increasing the profile of young people in society, it must start by destroying the walls of injustice within the church that sucks the life and hope from young people. The church will have to take the first step to transform the hostile environment in the church in which young people operate in optimum conditions that will enable to maximize their potential to be the best they can and freely play a meaningful role in the life of the church, both today and tomorrow. Again the church needs to create optimum conditions for all its stakeholders (children, youth, women and men) to play a meaningful role without segregation (Ruda, 2004: 14-19).

7.7.5.4 The RCZ youth desk

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has a strong movement called *Chiedza Chenyika* (Light of the Word), which longs for reconnection by church leadership decision-making bodies. They have a constitution which is recognized by the church and is co-opted in the constitution of the church (RCZ Rules and Regulations, 1999: 72-79).

Their motto is, “How can a young man/woman keep his/her way pure? By guarding it according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). Also: “Come now, let us reason and build together” (RCZ Rules and Regulations, 199: 78).

Their objectives: are to create a National Youth Movement within the church for the purpose of seeking to deepen personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and stimulate other Christians to relate their faith to daily living within the church and society:

- To make the Christian teaching relevant and applicable to all members of the church, thus in this way also getting to understand the mature youth with their problems.
- Encourage the presentation of evangelical truth as outlined in the doctrinal basis of the movement in accordance with the RCZ doctrinal teachings (RCZ Rules and Regulations, 1999: 73).

Their leadership and supervision, i.e. their central executive is composed of:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson

- Minutes Secretary
- Correspondence Secretary
- Treasurer
- One additional member
- Youth Organizer / Director (a minister)

There is no gender discrimination in their offices.

The RCZ Youth Movement is subject to the control and supervision of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe synod, also by way of local congregations where it is operating through the minister and the Church Council. It is in the powers of the church councils to choose the elder who work with the youth and represent them in Church Council meetings and other boards. The Youth Director is appointed by the church leadership without their consent.

The researcher agrees with some of the youth members who stated that the church has the tendency of appointing church elders and ministers who are too old to work with them and sometimes who are not gifted and interested in the youth. They desire to have youth church elders from their groups to represent them in all levels of the decision-making structures. This means there is still a need for reconnecting the youth and church leadership structures. There is a feeling that one is only co-opted in the church, not accommodated in the body of Christ.

7.7.5.5 Conclusion

The strategies discussed in this chapter addressed the problem of the study which is the exclusion of women and laity from broader leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The four strategies discussed above support the goal of this study, namely the inclusion of women and laity in broader church structures. The challenge for the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is to take these strategies and apply them in all its faith communities. The methodology how to do this has been explained by Hendriks (2004: 23) and discussed in 1.7.4.1. This methodology will assist the faith community to discern God's will together as the "body of Christ." Hence, if these strategies are implemented, the problem of the clerical paradigm leadership style will gradually disappear.

The researcher staunchly believes that transformative action in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe will be attained and the goal of this study will become a reality at all levels from the congregation to synod. The chapter also proved that all the laity leadership groups in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe are applicable for leadership development as they are already involved in major roles in the church and in the communities of Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

8.1 THE OVERALL SUMMARY

In Chapter 1 of this study, the researcher stated his interest to explore and analyse the leadership structures in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, which almost exclude the laity and women in the broader decision-making positions. The study was concerned about the hierarchical structures in the RCZ, where leadership and decision-making are dominated by the male ordained clergy. The researcher aimed at finding out how a balance could be attained between clergy and lay leadership responsibilities. The purpose of the study was to describe the situation and events that led to the present structures and practice of ministry in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

To answer the key question of the study: Why is lay leadership not represented in the leadership structures of the RCZ, the study employed the Practical Theology methodological framework of doing theology based on the eight points of doing theology used by HJ Hendriks in his book “Studying Congregations in Africa”, a NetACT publication (2004, 23 - 24).

The following six chapters (2-7) of the study focused on what the researcher believes is the missional praxis of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier and about God’s body, an apostolic faith community (the church). This praxis takes place at a specific time and place within a global world, where community members are involved in a critical and constructive interpretation of their present reality (local analysis). That is doing theology in the local situation, drawing upon an interpretation of the normative sources of Scripture and the tradition of the church. The focus being on the coming together as the RCZ to discern God’s will for its present leadership situation, in order to be a sign of God’s kingdom here on earth while moving forward to the future - and in the end obediently participating in transformative action at different levels of the church as clergy, laity and women.

Chapter 2 discussed views on church leadership and church offices. The biblical views on church offices from the perspective of the Old Testament and New Testament were discussed first. The analysis of the Roman Catholic theologians, the twentieth century theologians, Reformed theologians, liberation theologians, and the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) document of World Council of Churches followed. The analysis was done to compare and contrast leadership principles and the ways practised by the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe.

The methodological points 1, 2 and 7 of doing theology in 1.7.4.1 were the basis of discussing the viewpoints of chapter 2. The result of this chapter was that all the viewpoints discussed claimed biblical support; they all have their proof texts in the Bible. It was proved that through different ages, different structures developed because of different contexts. Not one is absolutely wrong. But the biblical principles from the BEM document balanced most of the viewpoints. According to the researcher's conviction the BEM document is of considerable value for the RCZ in its quest to address the problem.

The chapter confirmed that the RCZ leadership should take into account the methodology of doing practical theology, which begins by saying that theology is about God. Our identity is based on the image and likeness of this God, who is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. God is not a dictator and does not enforce authority (Psalm 23).

Chapters 3 and 4 explored and analysed the events of the leadership history of RCZ, i.e. its past and its present identity. They analysed the position of the laity and women in the Shona culture as well as leadership structures of the RCZ from its founding in 1891 to the present (2006).

The exploration of the two chapters proved that the hierarchical structures of the Shona culture influenced the leadership structures and practice of the RCZ. The leadership practised by the missionaries in the different periods of the RCZ history was influenced by the Shona culture and their own Western culture which by then was dominated by male clergy. Authority was practiced from the perspective of the clerical paradigm and enhanced by the Shona culture which followed a top-down leadership structure.

The chapters were explored in relation to the methodological points of doing theology in this study. That is points 2, 3 and 4 (discussed in chapter 1) which stated that theology is about God's body, an apostolic faith community (the church), and that theology is done at a specific

time and place within a globalised world (a wider contextual situation). These points determined that the RCZ approach of doing church leadership should take the identity of the “body of Christ” image seriously and determine its application to our present context from a biblical perspective. The leadership styles practised by the church in the past were determined by the correlational hermeneutic of context and biblical principles.

Chapter 5 dealt with the present context of the RCZ leadership, the third and fourth points of the methodology of doing theology (as discussed in Chapter 1). The researcher investigated the empirical attitudes towards women in leadership structures in the RCZ. The empirical investigations in this chapter were based on some of the following: church tradition (the way people view women); people’s prejudice; biblical basis of people’s views on women in leadership; cultural bias towards women; secular experience; one’s personal faith and one’s personal call by God. A sample of 60 women and 60 men was used and an analysis followed.

Negative and positive responses were obtained from both men and women. Generally, due to the influence of contextual changes, people are willing to see women involved in church leadership with men. Some people are, however, still finding it hard due to cultural bias.

The results of the empirical analysis proved that the inclusion of women in the leadership of the presbyteries and synod meetings could make a major difference in the quality of decisions and ministry of the RCZ. Women are also ready to do theology with an eye on Mary who obediently offered the most precious thing in her for the Lord: “her virgin womb” (Steuernagel, 2003: 104). Mary, in a humble way, says: “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38).

Chapter 6 focused on the Zimbabwean situation and its influence on church structures and offices. According to the methodology of this study, the chapter dealt with points 3 and 4 (as discussed in chapter 1), and concentrated on understanding our present situation. The Zimbabwean scenario is also influenced by the global world events (a wider contextual situation). A local analysis was briefly done and an interpretation of the present reality, politically, economically, educationally and health delivery service was discussed.

The chapter first discussed the impact of modernism and postmodernism on the Zimbabwean context and its church community. The postmodernism era questions the traditional concepts of truth and revelation, as well as the authority of the Bible. It urges and drives for global democracy, and where we are all part of this drive. Democracy influences the way we regard

the role and place of women, laity and youth in congregations and communities.

The chapter ended with an analysis of the political climate in the country and the region and how political parties work and influence the leadership of the church. The crisis caused by economic policies of the government in the early 1980s, the education and health crisis as they were inherited from the colonial government and activated by the elite in the government. All these events in the Zimbabwean scenario have influenced the church leadership in one way or another.

Chapter 7 aimed to resolve the problem of the RCZ leadership of the exclusion of women and laity in the broader church structures, answering point 6 of the methodology of doing theology (as discussed in Chapter 1). We all struggle to discern God's will for our present situation (a critical correlational interpretation). As the church, we obediently participate in transformative action at different levels: personal, ecclesial, societal, contextual and scientific. It means doing liberating transformative theology of leadership that leads to a strategy, implementation and an evaluation of our progress together.

The chapter proposed to the RCZ leadership to consider the following strategies to meet the goal of the study, namely the inclusion of women and laity in the broader church structures. It suggested cognisance of the discipleship model of Lawrence O Richards, Thomas H Groome's model, and other models like the Lumko Series and Theological Education by Extension (TEE). These are some of the models the RCZ can use to empower lay leadership development. It will assist the RCZ in doing theology using the tension of the eight points of the methodology in chapter 1 in order to discern God's will together (Phil. 1:9-10).

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests the following recommendations to the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in order to include the laity and women in its leadership structures:

The seminary of Murray at Morgenster Mission must teach the student pastors the methodology of doing theology using the book of Hendriks "Studying Congregations in Africa" (2004). Ministers in congregations must be encouraged to read the book. Seminars must be presented on the book at the seminary. The book was in fact written as a team effort by those teaching (practical) theology in the NetACT institutions.

The researcher strongly encourages the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe to use the strategies discussed in Chapter 7 of this study: the discipleship model, Thomas Groome's model, Lawrence O Richards' strategy to attain a church with a new face for the future, and other such as the Lumko methodology and Theological Education by Extension.

Ministers must be encouraged to train their church members to be able to use the strategies suggested above.

Evangelists and women need to be encouraged to be part of the leadership of the church. They must form small groups and study groups in order to empower themselves and coordinate their strategies.

The empowerment of women must be developed by training them for ordained ministry. This should be continued at the seminary. Opportunities must be opened up for women to go to universities for further theological studies.

The present church leadership must put the information presented in this study into practice at all leadership levels in the church. They need to develop an understanding of the views of all the church groups discussed in the empirical work of this study (chapter 5).

The church leadership needs to listen and observe what is currently happening in their community and society at large to be able to interpret the Word of God contextually in order to discern how it applies to leadership styles and structures.

8.3 CONCLUSION

As stated in Chapter 1, the concern of this study has been about the hierarchical structures in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The fact is that women and laity are excluded in church structures hierarchy and authority is concentrated within the ranks of male clergy.

The main goal is inclusion of the laity and women in broader leadership structures for transformative action to take place 1.2. This goal has to be attained in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe by describing the situation and events that led to the exclusion of women and laity in the broader structures of the church. The key to attain this goal was to examine the normative biblical principles regarding leadership in the church and to suggest how to rectify the present situation in the RCZ where broader leadership structures currently are dominated by male clergy.

The hypothesis of the study has been proven. The church offices and structures are hierarchical and functioning in terms of the clerical paradigm, the hierarchical Shona culture structures and the example adopted from the missionaries.

The study has tried to confront in a humble way the leadership of the RCZ, the Theological College lecturers and other members by exposing the reality of outdated leadership structures and styles. To attain the process of leadership transformation and empowerment of the laity and women, a practical theological methodology has been used as the framework of the whole study. This study has not offered a panacea that will resolve all that the Reformed Church leadership is facing. Indeed, it did not intend to resolve all the leadership structures in a short time in the RCZ. Rather, it has focused on constructing a sound theological process that could deal with the problems in a critical, constructive and participatory way. Hence, the study is expected to be a way forward that will lead, in a praxis way, to more elaborate studies of leadership using the same approach to discern the will of God together (Phil. 1:9).

ADDENDUM:STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEWS

(See Chapter 5)

What are your opinions / views about the questions below?

1. In the RCZ what are your opinions / views about women aspiring leadership positions?
2. Do you see any biblical reasons why women can or should not play leadership roles in the church?
3. Are you personally threatened by competent women in church leadership?
4. Do you believe that women are not capable of leading, learning the same leadership skills as men?
5. Do you have a significant number of women in the RCZ church councils whom you think if given an opportunity, can be church leaders?
6. What is your view / opinion about the exclusion of lay leadership on the church structures on broader decision-making bodies in the RCZ today?
7. How do you compare the present leadership structures with that of the missionary period of 1891 to 1952?
8. What are the experiences, feelings and thoughts of women on all the decisions of the church which affect them?
9. How do men feel about the church's decision to ordain as women ministers?
10. What is the opinions of women about male ministers studying about women issues in the church?
11. What is your view on the hierarchical Shona structure and its influence on church leadership which promotes the exclusion of women in leadership positions?
12. In general, should women be allowed to hold leadership positions in the church or in society?
13. As a woman, what is your view on being a church leader?

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