

**THE BINGA OUTREACH: THE CONTEXTUALISATION OF  
MISSION IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

The research starts with a descriptive study of the traditional missionary model used by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa in planting what is now known as the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ). The purpose of this descriptive part is to understand why certain mistakes are constantly repeated in cross-cultural outreach work and to prevent it from happening again. The RCZ is challenged to develop intercultural missionary theory and practice.

The outreach towards the Tonga communities living in the Binga district in Zimbabwe's North-Western province is used as an extended case study in developing a new missional framework for the RCZ. The research question is thus: **How is the RCZ appropriately, meaningfully and relevantly to express the missional praxis of God within the context of the Tonga people?**

The research argues that meaningful missional reflection has to start with knowing and understanding the Tonga people. The RCZ would then not fall in the same trap of the European missionaries who had an ethnocentric superiority attitude. This calls for a paradigm shift in the RCZ's thinking and doing mission. The RCZ needs to participate in the Mission of God with love and humility.

The research argues that there is a need for the RCZ to revisit and carry out a critical analysis concerning her thinking and strategies of mission today. The RCZ is to develop a relevant framework that will allow the Tonga people to be conscious instruments of their own transformation in their own socio-cultural context. The goal of the study is to have a shift in the RCZ towards a missiological approach that is appropriate, meaningful and relevant in order to facilitate the transformation of the community she serves and ministers to. This framework for doing Christian mission should be Biblical, communal and contextual in the RCZ and at the same time encourage reflective involvement of the faith community in the *missio Dei*. The research proposes an intercultural mission as appropriate in our context, not a cross-cultural one.

The research concludes that the DRC's traditional mission model profoundly influenced the identity and present mission practice of the RCZ. A better understanding of the identity of both the DRC and the RCZ will enlighten the members of the RCZ to accept the *missio Dei* as their vocation and challenge. Now and in future, it will help the RCZ members who are participating in intercultural mission to make more informed plans and decisions.

## OPSOMMING

Die navorsing begin met 'n beskrywende studie van die tradisionele sendingmodel wat deur die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) gebruik is in die totstandkoming van wat nou bekend is as die *Reformed Church in Zimbabwe* (RCZ). Die doel van die beskrywende deel is om te verstaan hoekom bepaalde foute gemaak is in die kruis-kulturele uitreike van die verlede en om nie daardie foute te bly herhaal nie. Die RCZ moet 'n interkulturele missionale teorie en praktyk leer ontwikkel.

Die uitreik na die Tonga gemeenskap in die Binga distrik in Zimbabwe se Noord-Westelike provinsie word gebruik as 'n uitgebreide gevallestudie in die ontwikkeling van 'n nuwe missionale benadering vir die RCZ. Die navorsingsvraag is: **Hoe moet die RCZ, binne die konteks van die Tonga volk, die *missio Dei* toepaslik, betekenisvol en relevant uitdruk?**

Die navorsing aanvaar dat as die RCZ 'n gepaste en betekenisvolle sendingbenadering wil ontwikkel, hulle die Tonga volk moet ken en verstaan. Die RCZ moet nie die foute van die Europese sendelinge met hul etnosentriese meerderwaardige houding herhaal nie. Dít benodig 'n paradigmaskuif in die RCZ se denke en sendingwerk want hulle was op pad om dieselfde foute te maak. Die RCZ moet met liefde en nederigheid deelneem aan die *missio Dei*. Haar optrede moet nie meerderwaardigheid teenoor die Tonga mense weerspieël nie.

Dié navorsing stel dus voor dat die RCZ se herbesin en 'n kritiese analise doen van haar huidige denke en strategieë. Die RCZ moet 'n relevante raamwerk ontwikkel wat die Tonga volk sal toelaat om bewustelike instrumente van hul eie transformasie in hul eie sosio-kulturele konteks te wees. Die doel van hierdie studie is 'n skuif in die RCZ na 'n missionale benadering wat gepas, betekenisvol en relevant is ten einde die transformasie van die gemeenskap wat gedien en bedien word, te vergemaklik. Hierdie studie is 'n poging om 'n raamwerk te ontwikkel vir die doen van sendingwerk wat Bybels, gemeenskaplik en kontekstueel binne die RCZ is en wat denkende betrokkenheid van die geloofsgemeenskap in die *missio Dei* sal aanmoedig. 'n Interkulturele benadering tot sending is in die konteks gepas, en nie 'n kruis-kulturele sending benadering soos voorheen deur die NGK gevolg nie.

Dié navorsing konkludeer dat die NGK se tradisionele sendingmodel die RCZ se identiteit en benadering tot sendingwerk integraal beïnvloed het. Daarom is die geskiedenis van die RCZ en die werk en invloed van die NGK op die RCZ eers ontleed. Die navorser wil die RCZ oortuig om haar eie identiteit missionaal te herontdek om sodoende in haar uitreik na ander kulture interkultureel te kan werk. In die proses wil die RCZ nie proseliete van die Tonga mense maak nie maar hulle bemagtig om self in die lig van die evangelie hulle kultuur te transformeer.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my mother who passed on to glory, the late Mrs V Munikwa Mudemba, and my father Mr P Munikwa Mudemba, who nurtured our family in a Christian extended family.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Shona people say, *Rume rimwe harikombi churu*, meaning that one man, no matter how huge he might be cannot surround an anthill alone. The Tonga people say, *Simwenda alike kakamulya kalonga*, meaning, the one who walks alone by the river gets eaten. It is a communal saying reflecting that a person needs others to fulfil a task. The Bible says, "Two are better than one, because they make a good return of their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up" [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10]. I believe that this academic journey would not have been possible without others. I extend my appreciation to all who accompanied me one way or the other on this difficult journey.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	African Initiated Churches
ANC	African National Congress
ARC	African Reformed Church
ARCA	Alliance of the Reformed Churches in Africa
CBAP (RCZ)	Community Based AIDS Programme (RCZ)
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
CFW	Commission for Witness
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DRC (Cape)	Dutch Reformed Church (Cape)
DRCM	Dutch Reformed Church Mission
DRC (OFS)	Dutch Reformed Church (Orange Free State)
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GAB	General Administrative Board
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GZB	<i>Gereformeerde Zendingsbond</i>
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LMS	London Missionary Society
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MC	Mission Council
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MThC	Murray Theological College
NetACT	Network for African Congregational Theology
PENYA	<i>Paridza Evangeri muNyika yeAfrica</i>
ODA	Official development assistance
PF	Patriotic Front
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RCZ	Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
REC	Reformed Ecumenical Council
SAB	Synodical Administrative Board
SADC	Southern African Development Commission
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions
TEE	Theological Education by Extension
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nation Programme on HIV/AIDS
UANC	United African National Congress

UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WARC	World Alliance of the Reformed Churches
WB	World Bank
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCRC	World Communion of the Reformed Churches
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSCF	World's Student Christian Federation
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Army
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches

# TABLE OF MAPS



Figure 1

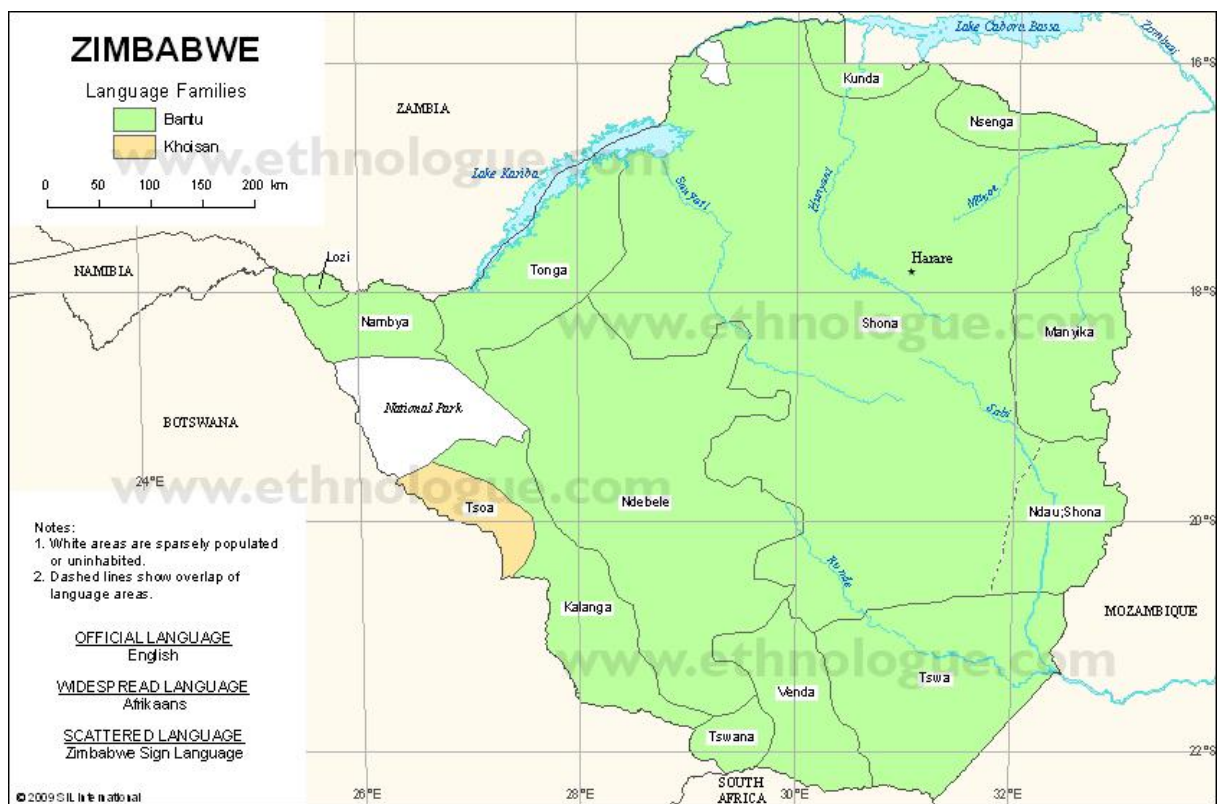


Figure 2

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

This research is, on the one hand, a historical-descriptive study of the traditional missionary model<sup>1</sup> used by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)<sup>2</sup> in South Africa in planting what is now known as the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ). On the other hand, it is engaging this missionary model of the DRC critically in an attempt to develop a contextual and communal<sup>3</sup> missional<sup>4</sup> approach in the RCZ so that she can reach out to other cultural groups in Zimbabwe with relevance (Guder 1998:4, De Gruchy 1994:133-134).

In beginning this discussion it might be helpful to give an overview of the first chapter. It is an introductory chapter which will lay out the plot of the research. It will outline the problem and state the hypothesis and goal. The chapter will describe the methodology of the research and define key terms. It shall describe the background and motivation of the research, demarcate the study and give the outline of the chapters.

The research presupposes that if the Gospel is to be proclaimed in light of the *missio Dei*,<sup>5</sup> then the RCZ is faced with the challenge of thinking and doing mission in an effective, appropriate and relevant way. The research is intended to help the RCZ to inductively develop a mission framework that guides her outreach to be both

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<sup>1</sup> The term model refers to a particular design. It suggests a procedure and principles that guide (Schreiter 1985:6) (see discussion on section 1.6.6)

<sup>2</sup> Dutch Reformed Church is a translation of Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK).

<sup>3</sup> The emphasis of this research is on communal theology, meaning a theology as holistically reflected and lived in the community of faith. Ukpong (1999:112) points out that community is one of the fundamental characteristics in African worldviews. In the Zimbabwean context a person's identity is communal. It is expressed in relation to others. The communal perspective of life must be treasured and affirmed as the only basis on which constructive human relationships can be built in Christian faith (Kritzinger 2002:149, 152, 156).

<sup>4</sup> Missional refers to being sent by God (Guder 1998:4). It denotes the purpose of God's action in human history aiming at transforming reality (Bosch 1991:390, Kritzinger & others 1994:4). Missional should not be equated with the traditional missionary model of sending missionaries to foreign countries. The concept is theocentric (Hendriks 2001:78). Craig Van Gelder (2007:17) explains that the focus of missional conversation is not to define the church around what it does (purpose), and how it does (strategies in context) but about what the church is, that is its nature. (See discussion in section 1.6).

<sup>5</sup> *Missio Dei* means the Mission of God which is the all embracing Reign of God. It is an activity of God, not of human beings (Guder 1998:5, Bosch 1991:390, Kritzinger & others 1994:41). The *missio Dei* is God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God (Bosch 1991:10, 391). *Missio Dei* describes the relationship of God and his creation (Bowen 1996:11) God has a mission in the world (Van Gelder 2007:18).

contextual and communal. From such a framework, appropriate contextual strategies and actions may develop (Guder 1998:4, Ukpong 1999:101, Hendriks 2004:20). Although this research is mainly deductive, the methodology is partially inductive. This methodology is discussed in section 1.5. If the calling of the RCZ is missional then her thinking and doing will be defined and shaped by God's mission in particular contextual and cultural realities (Ndhlovu 2008:49).

The study challenges the RCZ to work towards the contextualisation of her mission work. Context is defined in terms of a place, an event and a situation. Ukpong (1999:9) says that context refers to the situation of human beings. It is in this reality of people in which theological reflection on the Word of God is to be found. Mouton (1996:54) points out that research are not done in a vacuum but within a specific context. Context is a daily dynamic reality (Ukpong 1999:110).

Robert Schreiter (1985:2) observed that context frames one's reflection and as such influences one's deeds or practice. That which is contextual means that which is connected to and identifies with a particular situation. The working group of the Church of England on mission chaired by Bishop Graham Cray (2004:13) states that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed afresh within different social structures, and using appropriate approaches relevant to different social settings. Moyo (1996:47) argues that for the Gospel<sup>6</sup> to become the good news, it must be heard in and through the cultural context of the local people. Jesus expressed the love of God in order to transform humanity and create newness and wholeness through the Jewish cultural context. This shall be explained further in section 1.6 and chapter five.

In Africa people are realising that the Christian faith was communicated to them in patterns and forms of European socio-cultural perspectives (Ukpong 1999:101). The question we are to ask in Africa is how the Gospel message should be interpreted from the perspective of our daily contextual realities.

In any endeavour of attempting to address the needs and challenges people encounter in life, be it in social, political, economical or religious spheres, context plays a significant part (Guder 1998:19). The study argues that context of the local people is more important than the context of the person involved in mission. The RCZ members<sup>7</sup>, as disciples of Jesus Christ<sup>8</sup> involved in Christian mission, are to acknowledge and recognise the influence of their own context on their perception

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<sup>6</sup> The Gospel is the good news of God's transformative love to the world. Moyo (1996:1) defines the Gospel as that message which calls people to faith in Jesus Christ. The aim of the Gospel is to transform people and their culture through the Holy Spirit.

<sup>7</sup> Members shall refer to the believers who have membership with the RCZ.

<sup>8</sup> A disciple is a person following Jesus Christ, that is, to become like him. To be a disciple is to receive, accept and live the pattern of Jesus' transforming life. It is identification with Jesus Christ which means imitating his character and participating in his mission (Bennet 1998:22).

and practice. They are to take cognisance that the socio-cultural situation of the Tonga people they are ministering to is very significant.

There is cultural diversity in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, because of the reality of eleven ethnic groups in the country. One of the contexts where the RCZ is participating in the Mission of God is in the Binga area where the Tonga people live. This study will focus on the outreach of the RCZ among the Tonga people. The research is descriptive in nature, and describes how the outreach started and developed. It will investigate whether the outreach was cross-cultural<sup>9</sup> in its style or whether it was an intercultural<sup>10</sup> mission. The purpose is to help the RCZ to reach out in a sensitive intercultural way.

The need for research arises mainly from a problem faced by the RCZ. If there was no problem to solve or question to answer one would not have a reason to conduct a research (Smith 2008:125). The following section of the study will formulate the problem that the research will grapple with.

## **1.2 The research problem**

The attempt to solve or answer a problem is the goal of research (Smith 2008:125). The problem addressed by this research is that **the RCZ is struggling to develop appropriate approaches in her mission work that are meaningful and relevant in order to be a catalyst of transformation within the contextual realities of the Tonga people.** The research argued that the major aspect of the problem is that the RCZ is still uncritically and conservatively adopting and clinging to the traditional missionary model of the European missionaries.

The RCZ was planted by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRC). The mission work by the European missionaries had a significant impact on the peoples and cultures of Zimbabwe (Moyo 1996: vii). The research is aware as pointed out in history and mission studies in Africa that the missionary practices used by the DRC missionaries in planting of the RCZ a century ago, had merits and shortcomings. Bosch (1991:237) reminds us that there can be no doubt that the old paradigm of doing mission certainly had its dark side, yet it had its positive contributions as well.

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<sup>9</sup> Cross-cultural mission is a one-sided approach of the Gospel presentation from one culture to the other. Zwana (2007:75) refers to cross-cultural process as an invasion of one cultural context by another that comes with a superiority attitude. Saayman (1990:308) explains that cross-cultural implies too strongly that there are only two cultures involved in mission and it also carries the implication that one of these cultures is Christian and superior.

<sup>10</sup> An intercultural mission advocates the members to remain faithful and committed to participate without assuming any sense of superiority over other people (Asamoah-Gyadu 2002:16). It is not understood as cross-cultural ministry. Intercultural mission is deeply rooted in the community and contextual realities of people. Kritzinger (2002:146) explains that this will empower one to become a sensitive intercultural Christian. In this research the intercultural encounter is understood as the mutual participatory process which shapes both the RCZ and the Tonga people through active dialogue.



The mission enterprise of the European missionaries in Zimbabwe will be discussed in chapter three.

However, the mission of the RCZ grew and developed out of the socio-cultural context of the Dutch missionaries. The practices of a person or a group are influenced positively or negatively by culture. In looking at the RCZ critically, one can realise that she reflects the mission model inherited from the DRC missionaries. Sherwood Lingenfelter (1998:12, 172) explains that most churches in Africa reflect the culture of the missionaries who planted them. They seldom take the context of the culture of the local faith communities into consideration. The culture of the European missionaries will be discussed in a more detailed way in chapter two.

The other challenge the RCZ faces is that she is still rooted in a model which was and is monopolised by the ordained people (Dingemans 1996:84, Hendriks 2001:74). Bosch (1991:467) states that virtually in all church traditions ministry has been understood almost exclusively in terms of the service of the ordained ministers. The church was clericalised. The RCZ still adheres to the traditional missionary model of a deductive theology (Hendriks 2004:19). The assertion of this study is that doing theology should be both deductive and inductive, as discussed in section 1.5.

The problem the RCZ encounters is that she will fail to play a major and effective role in addressing numerous challenges faced by the people of Zimbabwe, and in particular the Tonga people, if she does not move to develop an appropriate and relevant intercultural missional framework and strategy. The problem stated in this research is one that is not unique to Zimbabwe but has been experienced all over Africa.

The main question, which this research will focus on, is: **How is the RCZ appropriately, meaningfully and relevantly to express the missional praxis of God within context of the Tonga people?** In attempting to deal with this question, the research identifies key questions such as: **What contextual systems influenced the traditional missionary model of the DRC? How did the DRC and the RCZ express Christian mission in Zimbabwe? Who are the Tonga people? How did the RCZ participate in the Mission of God in Binga outreach? How is the Gospel to be presented to people of a different culture? What is the way forward for the RCZ in relation to the Mission of God?** These questions are linked together in this research and will be discussed in each of the following chapters.

There is a need for the RCZ to revisit and carry out an analysis concerning her thinking and strategies of mission today. The RCZ is to develop a relevant framework that will allow the Tonga people to participate in their own transformation.

### **1.3 The research goal**

The goal is in a sense, the other side of the problem. Research is done to seek solutions to unsolved problems (Smith 2008:135). Hendriks (2004:222) states that the research goal or purpose is that which describes the end towards which an effort is directed. It tries to discern the dream or vision God has, of where he would like the church to move towards. It reflects the future, the eschatological hope, the Kingdom of God that is already present.

The vision or dream of the study is to bring about a shift in the RCZ towards a missiological<sup>11</sup> approach that is appropriate, meaningful and relevant in order to facilitate the transformation of the community she serves. Hendriks (2004:20) says that we have to find a way of doing theology in which we can disengage from the old orders and paradigms, and engage from afresh in a contextual theological way. It is an attempt to develop a framework for doing Christian mission that is contextual and communal, which will encourage reflective involvement of the faith community in the *missio Dei*. It aims to help the Tonga people to be Christian in creative new ways, in their context (Kritzinger 2002:145).

The RCZ needs an approach to theologising that will empower the Tonga believers to actively participate in processes of addressing the needs and challenges of their own context. People are to be conscious instruments of their own transformation in their own cultural context (Maluleke 2004:2). The RCZ mission framework must be able to recognise, acknowledge and empower the local people.

Since the dissertation will be presented to the RCZ, a historical rendering of the events make more sense than discussing the mission ministry thematically (that is, themes like education, health, agriculture, etc.) The aim is to help the RCZ to move away from the traditional missionary model in order to become missional and work from an intercultural perspective. The research shall argue that the whole people of God should be allowed to participate in the mission of God. The involvement should be contextual and communal.

The RCZ as a faith community should grasp both the wider contextual situation and the local reality of the people she is ministering to. Schreiter has developed this approach. Many scholars follow his guidance. He (1998:4) says that theology is to be done between the global and the local contexts.

The need for a movement or change in the thinking and doing of mission in the RCZ is inevitable. We are to shift from a missionary model inherited from European missionaries to a framework relevant in our present Zimbabwean social and cultural

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<sup>11</sup> In this research missiological refers to a process of critical reflection accompanying mission (Costa 1977:90-91). It is theologising that connects us with people in their cultural context in an organic way (Kritzinger 2002:147). He continues to state that we need a praxis that is inherently missiological.

circumstances. This is the purpose of this study. A communal-contextual missional framework is concerned with bringing the whole Gospel to the whole person in the present human context. The research argues that the framework is to be holistic or integrative in nature. Kritzinger (2002:150) proposes an inductive approach in mission as the basis of the holistic or integrative and contextual approach, which in the case of the RCZ and the Tonga people will imply that it is a communal approach. This shall be discussed further in section 1.5.

#### **1.4 The research hypothesis**

In this section the research will state its hypothesis. The hypothesis relates to the research question and directs the thinking towards the solution of the problem (Smith 2008:139).

This study investigates the following hypothesis, formulated as a statement: **A contextual and communal approach in intercultural mission will transform all parties involved towards becoming a missional church.**

The Gospel message should be an existential reality in the lives of the communities the RCZ is serving and not an abstract or theoretical concept. The Gospel will transform a people and their culture. This can only happen if the Gospel is not bestowed upon them in a top-down way with a sense of RCZ superiority. It can only happen when the Gospel is shared in love with an attitude of service and sacrifice.

The hypothesis statement is based on several assumptions. Firstly, the RCZ is to know that the framework, concepts and strategies of mission practised in a previous century will not work in another century and cultural context. Mouton (1996:15) explains that if a framework encounters challenges it cannot address, another framework should replace the one that is failing to address the contextual realities of people. If the RCZ is to make sense of the Gospel in local circumstances, there is need for the RCZ to pay more attention to how people's own circumstances shape their response to the Gospel. Poythress (1988:160) said that as surrounding culture changes, we might be called upon to undertake a reorganisation of our theological system or our interpretive practices in order, without compromising the message, to communicate it more effectively to the people within the culture.

The second assumption is that the missionaries failed to do mission in such a way that the Gospel adequately penetrated the lives of the Karanga people who constitute the majority of the RCZ members. Their culture was only superficially<sup>12</sup> transformed.

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<sup>12</sup> The research understands superficial as an outward appearance of accepting something. Many scholars such as Desmond M. Tutu, John S. Pobee, David J. Bosch, and Felix K. Ekechi pointed out that many Christians in Africa live dual lives. The failure by the European missionaries to contextualise the Gospel message produced this dualism in the African Christians. Berends (1993:276) states that one dimension in Christian mission where dualism can be seen is in the

Many RCZ Christians attend the church regularly, but when faced with difficulties and challenges resort to the indigenous healers at night. Moyo (1996:18, 19) argues that the traditional missionary model evidently held the Gospel to be superior to Zimbabwean culture. Many Zimbabwean Christians are participating in indigenous religious ceremonies privately. They live a European Christianity life during the day and live the real African life during the night. The Gospel of Jesus did not become flesh. Ekechi (1993:299) points out that the Christians then and now continue to seek solutions to their social and spiritual problems through indigenous African religious practices one way or the other. Walls (2002:18) argues that they are unable to trust wholly, for nothing in the Western modelled church as they know it offers defence against the worst features of the world as they know it. Van der Merwe (1981:121) observed that there was backsliding in the RCZ.

Some members of the RCZ joined the growing African Initiated and Pentecostal churches that were founded originating in Zimbabwe in the 1970s. This was to a great extent due to the fact that European missionaries had failed to comprehend the reality of evil forces, witchcraft and other indigenous beliefs. The African worldview sees the world as populated with evil spirits (Ukpong 1999:110). Ukpong (1999:111) argues that the church should equip the Christian for spiritual warfare against the evil forces. The research shall argue that many members of the RCZ live a superficial Christianity and the fear is that she may reproduce a superficial Christianity in the lives of the Tonga people.

The DRC mission model did not take cognisance of most of the African cultural values, which created a superficial spirituality in the RCZ believers then and now. Mashoko (2005:53) argues that since the Gospel message presented was clothed with European culture, Christianity has been superficial in the lives of many Africans. The missionaries had a tendency of believing that Christianity was to be done right and usually what was 'right' meant the way it was done in their home church (Lingenfelter 1998:53). This made it difficult to address adequately problems such as the reality of spirits and demons, illness or any other problem associated with the evil powers and magical forces (Bowen 1996:140).

Mwaura (2004:105) explains that this misconception created a vacuum in African people, which the African Initiated Churches (AIC) and Pentecostal Churches filled with their emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit that manifested in healing, exorcism, deliverance and prosperity. The AICs represent a serious attempt by Africans to bring the Gospel into African culture by expressing it in images familiar to the indigenous people of Zimbabwe and in responding concretely to their needs and aspirations (Moyo 1996:31). In her ministry to the Tonga people the RCZ has demonstrated an inability to deal with similar issues.

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contemporary African medical system. Many people are making use of both European and African indigenous medicine. This is discussed further in section 3.4.3.

A third assumption has to do with ethnicity. The DRC's mission work was concentrated on one ethnic group, creating an ethnic or tribal church. This was a problem then and is now, because members of the RCZ in all provinces are basically of the Karanga people. The research argues that the background is historical because the DRC missionaries in Zimbabwe were influenced by the situation in their church in South Africa. The DRC in South Africa was an ethnocentric church as shall be discussed in chapter three. If the RCZ is to continue viewing and expressing herself as an ethnic church, she will not be able to be faithfully involved in the Mission of God. The research believes that a missional church should be able to embrace all races and ethnic groupings. The RCZ is sadly known today as the church of the Karanga people (*Kereke yemaKaranga*). The church does not have many members from other ethnicities such as, Ndebele, Korekore, Manyika or others in Zimbabwe. She has therefore not been able to sufficiently develop sensitivity for cultural differences in doing cross-cultural mission.

The fourth assumption deals with worship. How one is doing Christian mission can be diagnosed in worship. The foundation of the faith community's active reflective engagement with God's praxis is seen in the patterns of the church's worship and practise (Hendriks 2001:81). In Africa music and dance is an indispensable aspect of the Christian faith which expresses the joy of Christians (Kritzinger 2002:169).

In the RCZ, however, the emphasis is on uniformity which leads to rigidity. It is sad to note that flexibility is condemned, because it is argued that it distorts church traditions, thus only uniformity is encouraged. The church of Jesus Christ is to seek for an approach to be Christian in creative new ways (Kritzinger 2002:145). Theological rigidity tends to limit the effectiveness of the church in responding to the present daily challenges and realities. Chitando (2007:1), in reflecting on the HIV epidemic in Africa, call upon the African churches to be effective and flexible in their approach. This is applicable to all ministries in the faith community.

The church is to discard inflexibility because it is dangerous. It kills and destroys the initiatives raised through the work of the Holy Spirit in the faith community. She is to embrace flexibility that is to be dynamic in her life. The Holy Spirit does not enforce uniformity, but multiplicity in the ministry of the Gospel. The faith community is one body, but of many members, and these are called by the Spirit to special forms of ministry and endowed for them by grace (Jay 1978:152). The faith community has a dynamic essence not a static one. Therefore the RCZ should not be satisfied to copy unconditionally the Christian practices as they have come to her.

The rigidness in the RCZ is hindering creativity in debates and worship services. The church should not be rigid and exclusive, but flexible and inclusive. Failure to be flexible and sensitive to the current contextual realities in Zimbabwe may lead to voidable conflicts in the RCZ. Schisms in the Reformed Church in Zambia, as shown

by the research of Lukas Soko (2010), indicate the dangers of rigidness and insensitivity in the church.

The research argues that worship should be contextual; we are to seek for ways to worship God in an African way. Ukpong (1999:106) points out that African Christians are critically questioning the mode of worship in the mainline churches. This is also true of the situation in the RCZ. Why should the RCZ members worship God using foreign styles of worship and symbols? The research is in agreement with Mashoko (2005:9) when stating that mission has to be expressed within the context of the people in symbols they will understand in order for it to make sense to any ethnic group. The AIC designed worship patterns compatible with an African sense of worship using local drums, rattles, dancing and clapping hands (Ukpong 1999:106). The research argues that we are to worship and sing like Africans.

The reality of our present context is that we are living in a world of diversity and variety. The challenge is how to promote and facilitate growth as a faith community and inspire one another to participate reflectively in our proclamation of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. In this modern world the church is to understand that no single form is able to express the Christian faith wholly on its own. The research is in agreement with Cray and his working group (2004:18) who argue that the diversity of fresh expressions of worship style is inevitable. The research argues that worship should be contextualised and inculturalised.

The RCZ should rethink her mission strategy and embody it. This will enable her to play a major and effective catalytic role in her outreach to the Tonga people. This requires a renewed and holistically contextualised reading of the Bible. According to West (1991:227), to be critical readers of the Bible means that we question and study the Bible, rather than just accept and repeat what others have told us about the Bible.

What methodology is this research going to use in an attempt to contribute towards the process of answering the question: **How is the RCZ appropriately, meaningfully and relevantly to express the Christian mission within the context of the Tonga people?** After formulating the problem, stating the goal and making an educated guess as to what the solution of the problem will be (Smith 2008:139), the research will discuss the methodology it will employ.

### ***1.5 The theological methodology***

The methodology section will examine how the research is going to attempt to address the problem. It describes how the research plans to answer the research question (Smith 2008:157). It is important to choose appropriate methodology to solve the research problem and implement it consistently (Smith 2008:157).

This study has basically a historical and descriptive-critical, as well as literary research framework (Smith 2008:152). The purpose is to attempt to discern how we are to develop a communal-contextual intercultural framework in the RCZ mission.

The research will critically look at the Binga outreach in order to help the RCZ to reach out effectively to people of other cultures. The work was called the **Binga outreach**, because its purpose was to evangelise the Tonga people, of which the majority live in the Binga district.

The **historical-descriptive** aspect of the study is looking at what kind of mission is happening and how it is happening. It shall discuss the historical background of the RCZ. Upkong (1999:118) explains that a historical analysis investigates the origin and development of issues and their effects on the lives of people. The **critical** aspect will question and evaluate the RCZ and her outreach within the Tonga community. Smith (2008:205) quoted Cowan who stresses that to be critical requires that we explicitly evaluate the inherited understandings that guide our interpretations and actions. They are to be prophetic. Hendriks (2004:211) says,

*The term critical means that a prophetic stance and an analytic ability are required to understand the present reality in the light of the church's missional calling.*

Rather than blindly following the theories and strategies transferred to us by others, we should analyse and constructively critique them and develop an approach that is relevant to our times, situations and to our present interests. If we are to develop an appropriate and meaningful missional praxis<sup>13</sup>, we are to learn from the history of the Christian mission. We are to know how our history and traditions have both shaped the RCZ story and this will help us in the process of coming up with a relevant mission framework. We also need to think critically through the strategies we employ in mission. We must question them because theology is faith-seeking understanding (Anselm). We must not be copies of others but allow Jesus to make us originals. The disciples of Jesus Christ need to ask questions in order to discern and comprehend what is happening in their context.

The question to be dealt with in this section is: How are we to understand and do theology? Kritzinger (2002:147) points out that we need a relevant and meaningful theological methodology that leads to action and emerges out of action. The research believes that we are to be Christian and do theology in context. Context is dynamic and not static, but always changing. The RCZ is active in this evolving context in Binga and should develop a framework that is leading people to action. A

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<sup>13</sup> The research refers to praxis as active reflection on human experience. Kritzinger (2002:149) explains that praxis is not simply another term for practice or action, but refers to action that is collective, transformative and integrates thinking and acting, praying and working. Praxis means practical action arising out of experience (Bowen 1996:174). Praxis focuses on a reflective engagement as Christian people in their context (Hendriks 2001:76).

missional church is dynamic not static, and is always moving (Hendriks: 2001:76). The church requires a theological methodology that can help it to discern the way forward (Hendriks 2001:79). For her Binga outreach the RCZ needs to have a methodology for doing mission.

There are different methodologies that one can use in research. The researcher is to select a methodology that is appropriate for the study. Tobias Faix proposes the Empirical-theological praxis (ETP) cycle<sup>14</sup> as a methodological basis for missiology. Faix (2007:117 - 126) explains that the ETP cycle is based on Kuhn's theory of science and Bosch's paradigmatic approach. The ETP cycle has six phases,<sup>15</sup> namely research plan, field practice, conceptualisation, data collection and data analysis and research report. These six phases constitute a small cycle and each small cycle is governed by three different processes which are deduction, induction and abduction.<sup>16</sup> Faix explains that the central part of the ETP cycle represents missiological deduction, induction and abduction, which continually permeate the individual phases. In the ETP cycle there is a continuous alternation between inductive, deductive and abductive assumptions. The ETP cycle has a dynamic flexibility that may lead to a process of change. However, it requires a lot of time and effort (Faix 2007:124,125,126).

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<sup>14</sup> Faix (2007:113 - 114) points out that research in missiology was conducted as applied research. There is discussion in missiology on the issue of regarding it as an applied discipline. Missiology needs to have a missiological methodology. The proposed ETP cycle research process has a circular dynamic and not a fixed linear structure.

<sup>15</sup> Faix (2007:117 -119) explains the six phase's cycle interpretation as follows: 1. Research plan which reflects the constitution of the researcher and methodology and procedure 2. Field of practice which focuses on missiological formulation of the question and explorative preliminary investigation. 3. Conceptualisation which reflects missiological development of the problem and the aim, and the specification and clarification of the terms. 4. Data collection includes specification of the empirical data design and empirical data collection. 5. Data analysis that focuses on empirical-theological data analysis. 6. Research report that focuses on missiological interpretation and missiological-methodological reflection.

<sup>16</sup> Faix (2007:120) explains that deduction has been the classical method used in literature and missiological principles which are to be applied to individual situations and people. It comes from theory to individual situations or people. In the theological-empirical praxis cycle the deductive approach is used to embody the objective perspective and generally acknowledged truths.

Faix (2007:120 - 121) explains that induction is understood as assumptions from individual cases to general principles and possibilities for solving the diagnosed problem. It starts with a particular situation. The inductive approach is the classical empirical approach which starts with the experience of the people, which is known as theology from below.

Faix (2007:120 - 121) explains that abduction starts with a real case and attempts to solve the problem in reverse. It is like inductive approach which starts with a real case but in contrast with inductive approach neither a particular rule nor a result exists beforehand. The lines of argumentation are neither inductive nor deductive. Abduction works to eliminate surprise in facts. It is especially appropriate for interpreting religious practices because it can be used to refute particular facts and experiences. The abductive approach represents an important supplement to the inductive and deductive approaches and closes the gap in research (Faix 2007:122). The research understands that abduction is simply interpretation.



The methodology Faix proposes is valid and helpful, but it is a European (German) perspective. The research notes that it breaks things up and defines them in smaller and smaller units. Faix (2007:114-115) treats sub-disciplines as fields that differ; the emphasis is on its difference. However, if we are to help our people in Africa to do theology and discern the will of God, one needs to develop a methodology that reach the same truthful results, but does not necessarily follow the same analytically specialised methodology created in a European context. The research believes that we are to do theology holistically and regard the different sub-disciplines of theology as supporting one another in our quest to discern the will of God and participate in his mission. Thus the research does not like to speak of empirical theology, but prefer to speak of empirical research in theology.

In Africa and as an African Christian, the researcher believes genuine theology is done from a faith community perspective. This is bound to be holistic because one is constantly in a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue of discernment seeking to understand and follow the intention and guidance of God through the Holy Spirit in a particular place and time. In this case it focuses on guiding the RCZ to learn from her Binga outreach to the Tonga people. What did we do right, where can we improve in bringing and being the good news – the Gospel – to all the people of all nations?

The methodology proposed by JNJ (Klippias) Kritzinger is what he terms a five-point praxis cycle. It is related to the one developed by Roman Catholic priests in Latin America and popularised by Holland and Henriot, and known as the pastoral circle<sup>17</sup>. Kritzinger (2002:150) says:

*“The cycle praxis is an approach designed for a group of committed people who wish to think together, work together and pray together, in order to make a difference to society.”*

In our theologising we need adequate missiological praxis in order to be relevant within the Tonga community. Kritzinger (2002:150) explains that adequate missiological praxis is that which is collective, transformative and holistic or integrative in nature. The praxis cycle has five points: involvement, context analysis, theological reflection, spirituality and planning, which are all interwoven. Ignoring or neglecting any of these dimensions negates the missional praxis. Kritzinger

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<sup>17</sup> Upkong’s methodology of inculturation is informed by the works of Holland and Henriot (Ukpong 1999:116). Ukpong (1999:101) calls the methodology he uses the Sociological-Anthropological approach in his development of inculturation. What other scholars describe as a hermeneutical circle or spiral is referred to by Ukpong as the interpretation process of contextual theologies. They involve a context, a text and an interpretive framework which are interwoven. The interpretation process is guided by five steps which flow into one another and may be reflected in one another. The steps are clarification of the problem, identification of the specific context of the theological reflection, the analysis of the specific context, analysis of the text and the theological reflection (Ukpong 1999:109).

Madge Karecki (2002:139) refers to the contextual approach as the cycle of mission praxis.

(2002:151) contends that if we are to develop meaningful and relevant mission praxis, we need a full-blown and well-rounded praxis that creates a dynamic interplay between personal involvement, contextual analysis, theological reflection, spirituality and strategic planning. The term cycle gives a picture of a continuous process in this methodology (Mashoko 2005:8). The research also believes that cycle reflects a methodology that is not linear but circular. This fits in well with an African understanding of doing research.

The theological parameters employed in the study are Biblical, communal, and contextual missiological in perspective. The methodology to be used to connect aspects from these perspectives shall be a critical hermeneutical approach. The research embraces an approach of thinking and doing theology that is Bible-based and views the Bible as the authoritative Word of God (Smith 2008:153, 154). The premise of this study is that all theology must be Biblical, communal and contextual. It is a methodology that will assist the faith communities to listen to the Gospel message and to understand it by means of, and from their own cultural contextual realities in order to experience transformation.

The frameworks developed within the faith communities must have practical application (Smith 2008:154). Doing theology ought to be personal and communal, a methodology that leads to transformation (Hendriks 2001:83). The study favours the communal and not an individualistic rational framework of discerning of the will of God. This research, although mainly deductive, is not an exclusive literary and deductive approach. It involved the Tonga people through informal group discussion. This is what the researcher personally observed as part of the outreach team. The study also analysed and evaluated the contents of the RCZ documents and Binga outreach reports. As such, the research is a critical reflection on what we did in Binga as a church.

The research is aware that there are many methodologies to use, but this research shall use the one developed in Lusaka by African theologians, including some from Zimbabwe. Jurgens Hendriks and a team of sub-Saharan African theologians wrote *Studying congregations in Africa* (2004) where they outlined the shape of doing theology. The RCZ is not to give a blueprint to the Tonga people to which she reaches out. She is to strive to provide a methodology that enables all to participate in the mission of God (Hendriks 2001:76). We are to follow a research methodology of participatory action (Hendriks 2004:219-221). This was the case, spontaneously, with the Binga outreach.

The general question and aim of the study is to indicate how the RCZ can shift her praxis, moving from a traditional missionary model to a missional framework. This research will apply their methodology, which uses the illustration of the cross metaphorically (2004:24). The *Studying Congregations* methodology says that theology is about:

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 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).*

Hendriks (2004:23) uses the metaphor of the cross to explain this approach of doing theology. He speaks of steps, but in this research they are viewed as dimensions. The eight dimensions are interwoven which means they cannot be separated. As explained by Faix and Kritzinger the methodology used in this research is dynamic and flexible. There is a continuous interplay between the eight dimensions. The research expands the eight dimensions of doing theology with reference to the RCZ and the Binga outreach.

1. **The foot of the cross:** represents the first and second dimensions and deal with **identity**. This is about who we are. We are disciples of Jesus Christ living a transforming life. Our identity is not determined by what we do. We were formed to resemble God. The church is the body of Christ.

The identity of the DRC will be described and critically analysed in chapters two and three to determine the role she played in the formation of the RCZ. The research wants to analyse the extent of influence the DRC had on the way in which the RCZ is doing mission. In chapter three the research is going to look at the identity of the RCZ as a faith community. We need to know her position in order to discern where God wants her to be. The disciples of Jesus Christ are formed by God to resemble Him. This compels disciples to ask about God and God images if they want to know something about themselves and about the church (His body).

God is the Creator. The research believes that God is love and loves His creation. He wants us to be in a relationship with him as our Creator and wants to use us to live in a relationship with other human beings and the ecosystem. We can see all this in a complete way in the life of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. When we are

speaking about God then we are theologising. It is faith-seeking understanding. It is to understand who God is in order to understand who we are and what we are to do. Theology is faith-based focus on God (Hendriks 2004:21). Hendriks (2004:24) continues to say that a way to do theology is to “participate obediently” in the missional praxis of God. Theology is to know God, to discern his will and guidance for the way one should live and witness in pursuing the *missio Dei*. Thus the research understands theology to be inherently missional.

This God is missional in his very nature. If God is missional, it implies that the faith community, his body, is to be missional (Guder 1998:11). The research agrees with Bosch (1991:392) when he said that the identity of the church is missional by its very nature. The church has to know her identity in God. The church is missional by her very nature and therefore, as argued by Bevans and Schroeder (2004:13), mission is prior to the church and constitutive of her very existence. As the faith community engages with particular contexts under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, her mission nature emerges. Her identity is established through the transforming work of God in Jesus Christ. The church has to be transformed fully to be able to transform wholly the community she is serving and ministering to. She needs radical changes in the way she witnesses, as she faces new needs and challenges in the local context. Transforming the nature of the Christian faith community, means it is continuously trying to change a complex and diverse world to conform to the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. It is a life-changing process.

The RCZ must be touched once more by Jesus Christ so as to see clearly and witness effectively. Jesus touched the blind man and he saw people walking around looking like trees. The master touched him once more and his eyes were opened, his sight restored and he saw everything clearly (Mark 8:22-25). The contemporary world challenges the faith communities to practice “**critical transformational hermeneutics**”, a theological response which transforms us first before we involve ourselves in the mission to the world (Bosch 1991:23, 189).

Smith (2008:204, 205) contends that transformative theologies are to change the world into what it should be, to bring it into harmony with the Word of God. He (2008:204) points out that Cowan distinguishes between contemplative and transformative approaches to doing theology. The former is content to reflect on the world as it really is and the latter is determined to change the world into what God intends it to be. Theologising is to be done in a transformative way that is aiming to change the cultural contextual realities into what God intends them to be. The critical hermeneutical aspect of doing theology requires the ability to interpret sensitively and accurately both the world and the Scriptures (Smith 2008:205).

The missional God has called us, the faith communities, to glorify him. We were created to glorify God and that is our identity. The essence of the faith community is being in Christ, it is not determined by what we do. If the RCZ is to be a missional

church and do mission God's way, her work will be authenticated. The research believes that mission is an activity of God, the one who reveals himself as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. When we understand that theology is inherently missional, we mean in essence that it is to be faithfully obedient to the missional God and to discerning our mission in life.

**2. The left side of the cross:** refers to the world which God sent Jesus Christ (John 3:6). In this world there are the sent faith community, that is, the third and fourth dimensions dealing with **the wider contextual situation** and **local analysis**.

The faith community, in discerning the will of God, should look at the world. As we look at the world (context), we should also look at the Word and keep them in dialogue in the discernment process. The faith community should analyse both the wider and local contextual situation. Kritzinger (2002:162) contends that context is an indispensable dimension of the praxis. It is an inherent necessity for doing theology. The faith community is being sent by the missional God into the world. The missional praxis of the church is to participate in a context. Therefore the RCZ should equip and empower all her members as faith communities that endeavour to be faithful and effective witnesses in their cultural context. The research believes that theology is contextual by its very nature and that it must address the problems, needs and challenges of society in a holistic way. The faith communities are to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed.

A faith community cannot really understand God in a personal way without participating in his missional praxis (Guder 1998:4, De Gruchy 1994:133-134). The RCZ is to equip the people as a faith community, to theologise in their own cultural context. According to Hall (1991:61) Christian theology is contextual. Schreiter (1998:4) speaks of doing theology between the global and the local contexts. Contextuality of the process of doing theology demands encouraging and creating space for a continuous look at and careful study of the situation within which theologising faith communities are wrapped up (Kalilombe 1999:169). The faith communities must be equipped to struggle to discern the will of God in and from their own cultural contextual circumstances. They are to be actively involved in attempts to address and solve their own cultural problems, needs and challenges. The faith communities are to act as transforming agents of God through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in their local contexts where they develop strategies of engagement such as the Binga outreach. Kritzinger (2002:162) explains that the Holy Spirit is the searching, questioning and discerning Spirit, moving believers to ask questions in order to discern and understand what is going on in their context.

The theology of the RCZ is to enable all believers in the confines of their world to ask and answer questions. Questions such as: Who are we? Why are we here? What is happening? Why is it happening? What is wrong and what is right? How should we address that which is confronting us? (Kritzinger 2002:148). Therefore it is important

to develop a **correlational, critical, dialogical, liberating and transformative hermeneutics** to be in touch with local problems and realities and be connected to the people.

The people in Binga must struggle to answer questions they have asked in their own specific circumstances. The people on the ground need to be involved. The research proposes that the RCZ should follow a participatory action research (PAR) approach within the Tonga community (or any other ethnic group). Kalilombe (1999:169) states that the real life experiences on which reflections and praxis are to be based must involve the whole community. They should be given ownership of their past, present and future. The problem with the European clericalism paradigm was that it provided answers to questions never asked by the people in Zimbabwe. They came with their questions and answers. The RCZ must avoid such a scenario when she witnesses among the Tonga people. The Tonga people must be empowered so that they can articulate their own concerns.

What is the role of the people from outside our context? The research believes in an interdependent approach to doing theology. It is not healthy to live in isolation, we need one another but we are to be equal in this process, no big brother. Hendriks (2004:214) calls them the outsiders. Consequently, they can discern what we refuse to perceive, or does not have the courage to discuss. They can facilitate the process. In this research they are partners, that is, co-workers. We are a people together. There is a proverb in our culture which says, *Chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda*, meaning that one finger cannot kill a louse.

**3. The right side of the cross:** refers to the Word, which is the fifth dimension that summarises our heritage or past. **Scripture** and **faith traditions** play a central role here. But the study embraces that faith traditions are subordinate to the Word of God, and are not equal (Smith 2008:154). He (2008:209) continues to say that a person's interpretation of Scripture should be informed by the faith traditions. There is a relationship between the right and left side of the cross that is horizontal.

In struggling to discern the will of God, the faith community should focus on the Word that is our heritage and past, the Scripture and tradition. Theological reflection is important, for Jesus stands at the heart of the Christian faith. Kritzing (2002:164) contends that it is not possible to have creative and inspiring mission if we do not return to search the Scriptures continuously, to allow the Holy Spirit to take us also into the deepest places of the Bible. The research agrees with Hendriks when he says that we can, and must, use scientific methods in our study of the Bible and our world. The sociological methodology of analysing faith communities in their environment is an important step in a process of doing theology (Hendriks 2004:17). However, we must never forget that we are disciples of Christ and thus must use these methods in such a way that pragmatic or other concerns do not manipulate the process of discerning God's will (Hendriks 2004:21).

How is the dual integrity to context and text to be maintained, so that the message remains universal and yet, can be owned by local participants? (Bevans 2002:8). The interaction between the cultural contexts of our communities and the Christian should be dynamic. West (1991:220) says that we bring our contexts with us to our reading of the Bible. This has always been the case in the history of Christianity but it has not always been acknowledged.

Theology is contextual and also not static but a process. Mouton (1996:4) states:

*More often than not, actions and signs do not have inherent meanings; they only derive meaning within a context of a form of life.*

This means that what might be acceptable in one cultural context might be disapproved in another social context. In our communal and contextual theologising, the Holy Spirit must teach and guide us. The Holy Scriptures say,

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13a).

The Holy Spirit empowers the Faith community to bring the Gospel to the world. The understanding of mission is pneumatologically expounded, not christologically, and stresses that God’s Kingdom is being advanced by the Holy Spirit in this world (Bosch 1991:391-392). This calls the church to go back to the Holy Scriptures and review her mission. The Gospel is relevant to all ages, cultures and peoples, but its communication must be contextualised in order for it to be experienced as the living message of God (Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989). The research agrees with Mashoko (2005:11) who boldly states that without contextualisation there is no mission.

A crucial task for the church is to test continuously whether her understanding of God’s mission is in agreement with the Holy Scriptures. Herbert Kane (1974:85) rightly points out that the Christian mission is rooted in the Holy Scriptures. We derive our message, our motivation, and our methodology from the Holy Scriptures. Apart from the Word of God, the missional movement has neither meaning nor sanction. Holy Scriptures and Scriptures alone are able to make man wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3: 15-16).

**4. The centre of the cross:** is the sixth dimension where the faith communities struggle to **discern the will of God** for the present situation, where correlational hermeneutics are encountered (Philippians 1:9). Here we find a faith community in prayer, listening and discerning.

In order to discern the will of God one should hold the four tension sides of the cross active in a critical hermeneutical and correlational dialogue. The faith community is the interpretive community (Kritzinger 2002:159). In 1 Corinthians 2:11, 12, 15 the

Holy Scriptures speaks of knowing (v11), understanding (v12), and discerning (v15). The theologising of the RCZ should develop within a **personal communal framework** not on an individualistic rational framework. Kritzinger (2002:159) emphasises the need for a communal hermeneutic if we are going to develop a transformative praxis. The social inclusiveness of the Christian faith and the African cultural system should not be exchanged for the exclusiveness of the Enlightenment philosophy. In Christian mission we must not impose European identity on the people but allow people to understand their personal identity. In the Zimbabwean context a person's identity is communal, meaning it is expressed in relation to others. The communal perspective of life must be treasured and affirmed as the only basis on which constructive human relationships can be built in Christian faith (Kritzinger 2002:156).

The research proposes a continuous constructive and dialogical approach to theology in the RCZ mission within the Tonga people. Jay (1978:156) quotes Paul Tillich (1886-1965) who states that theology must elucidate the crucial questions which man asks in his situation in existence, and then show how the revelation of God in Jesus Christ answers those questions. He calls this 'the method of correlation'. It explains the contents of the Christian faith by means of existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence. A correlational method evaluates the relationship between the world as it is and the world as it should be (Smith 2008:205).

Tillich advocated Christian existentialism. Miller (1997:254) notes that Tillich believed that theologians needed to adopt a theological methodology of correlation in which the existential situation posed questions and theologians used their knowledge of Christian symbols to respond. The church is to listen and learn, that is, to engage in continuous conversation. This calls for the involvement of the whole community of believers. The faith community should undertake a form of Biblical interpretation that focuses on ways of reading whereby the marginalised, local people can be empowered to become agents of self-actualisation in their worlds or contexts (Dube 2001:12).

**5. The top of the cross:** is the seventh dimension and shows where we are moving or heading, and deals with eschatology. The faith community is to be a sign of the Kingdom of God. It is about becoming what we received because of our identity in Jesus Christ. This will lead to **a vision** and **a mission**. This dimension reflects a vertical relationship between the foot and top of the cross.

Metaphorically speaking, the top side of the cross defines our purpose or goal. As a missional faith community we are to work towards realising something of the Kingdom of God in a very broken situation and society. This is a vision, that is, a dream about the future that shapes our reality (Hendriks 2001:82). The RCZ has a mission to proclaim the Kingdom of God, in word and deed, in her context. The



communal-contextual missional approach should express it in all its ministries (example: in preaching, teaching, healing, striving for social, political, ecological, economical justice, in unity of all believers, etc). This will bring about the Kingdom of God that will bring transformation to the people.

The RCZ is to develop a mission framework that will encourage participatory involvement of the community of believers in her goal of realising the Kingdom of God. The approach of the church should equip and empower people to set agendas for the church, because the experiences and observations of the people, especially the Tonga, will enrich the church's knowledge of mission. The RCZ community of believers should conduct a substantive research into the practices that affect their lives in their own context (Mouton 2001:59).

**6. The movement from the bottom to the top of the cross:** focuses on what we do and is the eighth dimension. The movement from the Alpha to the Omega describes the doing of transformative theology. It involves obedience and developing a **strategy** which should be **implemented** and **evaluated**. The research believes that what we do, does not determine what we are but reflects who we are (identity). During the process of implementing, of being involved in missional praxis, the discernment continues, the correlation between the dimensions of the cross continues. They inform the process, one adjusts and develops. It is a praxis (reflective engagement) methodology.

This process is about becoming what we already are in Jesus Christ. The faith community identity should not be determined by what we do. The research believes that what we do should manifest who we are. Our identifying with Jesus means imitating the character and mission of Jesus Christ, a life of discipleship. This identity, found in grace, in the creation of God and redemption in Christ, has to be realised in our lives and witness. It is the process of sanctification where the Holy Spirit guides and empowers the faith community.

Once we have discerned something, we should start doing what we have discerned. Thus implies that we participate in transformative action. The life of a disciple of Jesus Christ is a transforming one. The RCZ should be obedient and develop a plan and strategies of fulfilling the *missio Dei*. In this process of involvement, the discernment continues, the correlation between the points of the cross continues. They inform the process, one adjusts and develops. It is an active reflective engagement and is referred to by the term, theological praxis. The communal and contextualising missional framework is not static, but dynamic. One is to hermeneutically discern present and past contextual realities in order to participate in the mission of God (Hendriks 2001:82).

The communal-contextual missional framework has multi-faceted dimensions or ministries. The missional praxis is fulfilled by the body of Christ in a communal way

(1 Corinthians 12:12-31). There are many members of the body with different functions in unity (communal) and in a specific situation, time and place (context) for one ultimate purpose (mission). The body of Christ is the faith community. The body functions well when all the organs (members) are present and participating. The body is only a genuine body because of every member. Every member is important and should be given space to function.

There is no ministry that is more important than the other and every ministry should be given room to function. The functions represent the different ministries in the faith community. Christ manifested all the ministries when he was here on earth and his body the faith community is to be embodying Him. In the process of the faith community participating in the mission of God, structures develop that are contextual. The RCZ is to allow the outreach to Tonga people to grow in line with their cultural context. Hendriks (2001:79) explains that as the faith community responds to God's missional praxis, the communal church structures constantly develop in a contextual way.

The methodology to be used in this research is to be in the first place the study of literature. Relevant materials, reports, minutes and published literature from the libraries of the University of Stellenbosch, Murray Theological College, and the RCZ Synod archives shall be studied in order to substantiate the findings of the research. The research is in a position to identify all relevant primary sources, which include numerous church documents, such as the church magazine (*Munyai Washe*), minutes of the Synod and Synodical committees.

An analysis and an interpretation are going to be carried out of the results of the research. This will be done in dialogue with the research problem, the goal and the hypotheses. Conclusions will then be made (Babbie & Mouton 2001:163-2004). The last aspect will be the application of the results. The research will apply the findings in the ongoing process of participatory involvement in the discerning and doing of the *missio Dei* (De Vos 1998:408; Hendriks 2004:219).

After stating the theological methodology of this research, the next section will focus on the meaning and use of concepts. The research will not be able to define all the terms used. But one hopes that the concepts defined will make it easier to follow the argument of the research.

## **1.6 The research conceptualisation**

The argument of the research will be followed better if the readers understand the research's definition of terms as it will use them (Smith 2008:143). It is vital at this point to describe and define the key concepts that will be used in the study (Hendriks 2004:227, Smith 2008:118).

### **1.6.1 Holistic**

The research will often refer to a holistic mission approach. A holistic perspective is concerned with presenting the whole Gospel to the whole person as a member of a community of all believers in unity. It is concerned with the body as well as the mind and the spirit. Holistic means mission is integrative, allowing the diverse dimensions of mission to interact constantly and dynamically. It embraces wholeness and creativeness. Bowen (1996:63) explains:

*A holistic ministry is as wide as the ministry of Jesus was and is concerned with every aspect of human life.*

The study presupposes that the Christian missional praxis is multi-faceted (Bosch 1991:512). The dimensions or ministries can be distinguished, but never separated, because of its holistic approach (Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman 1994:36). This mission in all its different ministries such as preaching, teaching, healing, exorcism, and its striving for social, political, ecological and economic justice must be expressed in unity by the faith communities. The thinking and strategies of the RCZ must encompass all the dimensions of Christian mission. The research agrees with Bosch (1991:512) who states that mission has to be multidimensional in order to be trustworthy and faithful to its origins and character.

The holistic aspect cannot be separated from the contextual situation in mission. Kalilombe (1999:212) points out that one of the characteristics of African culture is its holistic and integrating nature. Ukpong (1999:101) contends that the contextual interpretation process must be holistic, using an African conceptual frame of reference. Our theologising should not be fragmented but be integrated to be relevant to the people within which we live and minister to as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is important to understand that the African worldview sees all in this world from a holistic perspective (Moyo 1996:20). Christianity in coming from the European world to Africa emphasised the separation of religion from the secular sphere of life, whilst the Africans view religion as inseparable from the material well-being of human beings (Ukpong 1999:105, Moyo 1996:1).

### **1.6.2 Contextualisation**

Context is defined in terms of a place, an event and a situation. The contextual aspect points to the need for and responsibility of Christians to make their response to the Gospel as concrete and lively as possible (Schreiter 1985:1). Contextualisation is an attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of particular contextual-cultural realities. Ukpong (1999:9) says that context refers to the situation of human beings. It is in this reality of people in which theological reflection on the Word of God is to be found.

Context is a daily reality of people that is dynamic (Ukpong 1999:110). A Gospel presentation that is contextualised enriches and is enriched by the specific human

cultural context (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:12). Mashoko (2005:8) also points out that the expression of the Gospel is more effective when it takes into consideration the context of the recipients. This research believes an appropriate strategy of mission emerges as the Gospel of Jesus Christ meets with specific contexts. The fact that Jesus was born in a specific culture and incarnating into it, reflects that mission of God should be contextualised. The Gospel is concretised in a particular historical cultural situation. Shaw and Van Engen (2003:13) state:

*God wants to interact intimately with human beings who always live in social context of their own making.*

Contextualisation is bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the context of people. It is the process whereby the Christian faith is made relevant and meaningful in a given cultural context. Guder (1998:19) says that to be faithful to her calling the church must be contextual, that is, she must be culturally relevant within a specific situational setting. This research focuses on the Tonga cultural context. How is the Gospel message enabled to speak to African peoples from within their contexts in order to transform them from within? Ukpong (1999:109) points out that the context of people is to be brought into creative interaction with the Gospel message.

It is vital for the disciples of Jesus Christ to study carefully and understand the context of the people in among which they are living and ministering to. Contextualise means consciously and carefully thinking about life in relation to the circumstances in which it is happening or existing. Those involved in intercultural mission need to be aware of their own identity and have respect for the identity of the person of a different culture (Bediako 2004:24). Bevans and Schroeder (2004:31) argue that mission is and must always be radically contextualising. They continue to explain that to be in Christian mission is to be responsive to the demands of the Gospel in particular contexts, continually “reinventing herself as she struggles with and approaches new situations, new peoples, new cultures, and new questions”.

It is important to provide the context since religious phenomena do not occur in a social vacuum (Chitando 2000:6, Mouton 1996:54). The faith community is to bring the contextual analysis into a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue with the Holy Scriptures (Hendriks 2004:3). The Gospel is to interact with context for the RCZ to be missional and relevant. Contextualised mission is an affirmation that God has turned towards the world through the birth of Jesus Christ. God identified with the world through Jesus becoming flesh. The research believes that contextualisation occurs when there is identification with the cultural system of the local people. The Gospel must be contextual, that is, it is to relate to the real life circumstances of the people who hear it (Bowen 1996:64).

Bosch's (1991:421) basic argument in his book '*Transforming mission*' is that, from the very beginning, the missionary message of the Christian church became flesh in

the life and world of those who embraced it. It is, however, only fairly recently that the essentially contextual nature of a faith has been recognised. Context influences and even determines our doing of theology. A contextual framework starts reflecting on the social and cultural context (Schreiter 1985:12). The intrinsic role of cultural, political, and economical factors in a faith must be recognised if we are to be faithful in our mission. In terms of the cross metaphor of our research methodology, the left side of the cross deals with the world. It analyses the wider and local context. In order to appreciate the current situation, needs and challenges of the Tonga people, the Zimbabwean and global contexts need to be analysed. The Binga situation and the Zimbabwean context are influenced by the wider contexts of the country and the global world.

### **1.6.3 Globalisation**

The research bears in mind that the circumstances and challenges facing the church in Zimbabwe have changed and will continue to change because they are influenced by the global situation. Global refers to that which covers the whole world. Cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other in a profound way. Hendriks (2004:15) says that even the most remote village in Africa is no longer an island unto itself. Globalisation is the extension of the effects of modernity to the entire world when, at the same time, the compression of time and space is taking place (Schreiter 1998:4, 8). Globalisation and modernity are deeply intertwined, because it expresses the modernisation process (Goudzwaard & Vander Vennen & Van Heemst 2007:145).

John Tomlinson (1992:2) calls globalisation a complex connectivity, that is, the rapidly developing and ever-condensing networking of interconnections and interdependencies that characterise modern social life (Perrons 2004:1). Globalisation is defined by Anthony Giddens (1990:64) as,

*The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away, and vice versa.*

Goudzwaard, Vander Vennen and Van Heemst (2007:142) have generated three basic conclusions from their observations of globalisation. The first conclusion is that globalisation is a phenomenon that is dynamic and interlocking. Second, at the centre of globalisation are modern technological and economic developments. Lastly globalisation has important social and cultural impacts from the outset.

This phenomenon is particularly realised in physical agility by means of a quick and efficient transport system and the advancement in communication technology such as the internet, satellites, cell phones and the mass media (Ndegwah 2004:83, Perrons 2004:2). Mouton (1996:52) explains this phenomenon and says that in various ways the local events are influenced by the broader context and conversely the global trends are increasingly affected by local events (Giddens 1990:64). It will

be disastrous for one to fail to accept the reality of living within a globalised world. Globalisation is profoundly restructuring the way people live (Giddens 2000:22). No situation is static, and this also affects the Tonga community.

#### **1.6.4 Communal**

The way of life of the people of Zimbabwe is essentially communal (Moyo 1996:9). The emphasis of this research is on 'communal theology', meaning a theology as holistically reflected and lived in the community of faith. The study share the view that understands theology as faith-seeking understanding, and is a discernment of God's will in the hermeneutically sensitive process of interpreting Scripture in the context of a local faith community living in this corrupt world (Hendriks 2004:11). The research understands communal theology is collective and interdependent, not individualistic. Sadra Gourdet (2003:37) noted that in Africa there is a strong awareness of interdependence as opposed to the individualism of European culture. In the Zimbabwean context a person's identity is communal, meaning it is expressed in relation to others. Moyo (1996:17) states that life can only be meaningful if it is life in communion with and among others.

Ukpong (1999:112) points out that one of the basic characteristics of the African worldviews is community. The African way of life is described as *ubuntu* and in Shona the term is *hunhu*. The essence of *ubuntu/hunhu* is humanness or being human, communality and the values it implies such as relationships, compassion and hospitality. Edwin Zulu (2001:6, 7) states that life is recognised by most African societies as life in the community, thus to "be" or to "belong" is to participate in one's community.

A person finds meaning and being in community (Taringa 2007:4, Goudert 2003:37). Ukpong (1999:112) explains that each person's life and even inanimate objects in the cosmos find meaning and explanation in terms of cultural systems of relationships within the human community, and between the human community and nature. This means every person has a responsibility to work for the harmony of the community and the God-given nature (Hendriks 2004:147). The communal perspective of life must be treasured and affirmed as the only basis on which constructive human relationships can be built in Christian faith (Kritzinger 2002:149, 152, 156).

#### **1.6.5 Model**

'Model' suggests not only a procedure for engaging in theological reflection, but also some specific interests or principles that help to guide the use of the procedure (Schreier 1985:6). Hendriks (2004:45) clearly states that models explain and explore. Dulles (1985:21) says,

*When an image is employed reflectively and critically to deepen one's theoretical understanding of reality it becomes what is today called a model.*

Models explain and help us to understand. Karecki (2002:132) states that models are too confining and simply do not do justice to the scope of missiology. The research prefers to use the word 'model' when referring to the missionary practices of the DRC missionaries. It prefers the word 'framework' when it tries to outline a way forward for the RCZ in reaching out to other cultures and ethnic groups. The reason for doing so is to emphasise an open process and not a set of rigid 'models' that is driven by rules and regulations.

### **1.6.6 Missional**

Different perspectives on mission have led Christians to produce different definitions of mission (Bowen 1996:71). The term 'mission' is not found anywhere in the New Testament (Saayman 2010:6). Bowen (1996:72) continues to contend that what is vital in Christian mission is how we participate in God's mission when we relate to Him and fellow human beings, not how we define mission. Bowen (1996:72) says,

*We must not try to define mission accurately. The accurate defining of mission is not feasible and realistic.*

Mission means the manifestation of Jesus' entire embracing rule. Guder (1998:4) says that mission means "sending", describing the purpose of God's action in human history. It is the result of God's initiative rooted in his purpose to heal and restore creation. Bosch (1991: xv) expresses mission as the dimension of our faith that refuses to accept reality as it is and aims at transforming it. The mission that aims at transforming reality is concerned with presenting the whole Gospel to the whole person and the whole community of all believers in unity.

Karl Barth was one of the first theologians to articulate mission in the context of the Triune God; he used the words *missio Dei*, which means God's mission. The Triune God is the one who took the initiative in reaching out to this world and continues to reach out to his creation. Bosch (1991:10) says that it expresses the Gospel of Jesus Christ that God is a God-for-people. God is missional God in his very being and is the origin of Christian mission. Christian mission refers to the participation of the church in the *missio Dei* (Bosch 1991: 10). This means the church is missional in essence.

What is implied by the term 'missional'? Saayman (2010) in an article in *Missionalia* made a contrasting terminology study of missionary and missional. Saayman (2010:7) says that the terms 'mission' and 'missionary' are understood as the spreading of Christianity among unbelievers. In Africa it is negatively associated with European colonialism, and people began to detest missionaries. The term 'missionary' does have an unpleasant and offensive history (Saayman 2010:15). Bosch (1991:6) states that use of the term 'mission' was causing discomfort or malaise and examined the reasons. Saayman (2010:8) explains that the Christians

who believed that the sharing of the Gospel was necessary sought for an alternative term.

The use of the term 'missional' as alternative to the traditional missionary started in the mid-1990s and is meant to convey a distinctive meaning not to be a synonym for missionary. The terms 'missional' and 'missionary' find meaning in *missio Dei*, but it is the contextual rootedness that distinguishes the two terms (Saayman 2010:16).

One can also note that both terms were coined in the European world. Missional originated in North America as a result of the work of Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch as part of a contextual missiology of the European postmodern culture (Saayman 2010:9, 10, 13). The question was about its identity and its contextual relevance in North America and Europe. In this context missional meant sending the church in North America to North America (Saayman 2010:13). The research argues that this is a process of contextualisation, which was influenced by the theologising of the Third World and then imported by North America and Europe. The concept used in 'missional' has its origin in Africa and Asia.

The focus of missional conversation is not to define the church based on what it does (purpose), and how she does it (strategies in a local cultural context), but about what the church is, that is, its nature (Van Gelder 2007:17). The Biblical and theological understanding is that the church is missional in its very nature. The missional church's essence is derived from the words *missio Dei*. The missional church is a faith community led by the Holy Spirit to participate obediently and faithfully in the mission of God. Van Gelder (2007:18) explains:

*In understanding the missio Dei, we find that God as a creating God also creates the church through the Spirit, who calls, gather, and sends the church into the world to participate in God's mission.*

In this research, the term missional "emphasises the essential nature and vocation of the church as God's called and sent people" (Guder 1998:11). This research's premise is that the missional church is a faith community formed by the calling and sending of God, communally and contextually reflecting the redemptive reign of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

### **1.6.7 Evangelism**

Bosch (1991:409) acknowledges that it remains difficult to determine precisely what authors mean by evangelism or evangelisation. In the RCZ the word **evangelism** is used for reaching out to the lost souls and backsliders with the Gospel of Christ with the aim of bringing them to the Kingdom of Christ. The research argues that this understanding is too one-sided. The understanding of evangelism should be holistic or integrative by nature. Evangelism is being used in place of mission in the RCZ. Mission is perceived as the activity of people of the West. When European



missionaries were in the RCZ there used to be a mission committee, but now it is called the 'evangelism committee'. It is this committee that is leading the outreach ministry of the RCZ.

The word 'evangelism' or 'evangelisation' has been understood by some ecumenical Protestants to be identical with mission. 'Evangelism' is deemed more acceptable than 'mission' because of the colonialist overtones still associated with the latter term. In the case of the evangelicals, 'evangelism' or 'evangelisation' is often preferred to 'mission' because of their emphasis on saving souls. Roman Catholics and ecumenical Protestants increasingly tend to use the word 'mission' for an ever-widening range of ecclesial activities (Bosch 1991:410, 411).

The research agrees with Bosch (1991:411) that 'mission' and 'evangelism' are not synonyms but nevertheless, indissolubly linked together and inextricably interwoven in theology and praxis. Bosch's definition of evangelism is a lengthy one (1991:420). The research refers to evangelism as the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him and call them to conversion inviting them to become living and responsible members of the body of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Binga outreach has both evangelistic and mission goals.

### **1.6.8 Correlational dialogue**

There is a need for a **correlational dialogue** between the Gospel and the people and their culture. It should involve the local people. As noted before, Paul Tillich states that theology must elucidate the crucial questions which man asks in his situation and then show how the revelation of God in Jesus Christ answers those questions. He calls this 'the method of correlation.' It explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers that dialogue with one another. The RCZ is to help the people to listen to the Holy Scriptures and to understand them in their own contexts, and live them by faith and hope. She is to empower local faith communities to theologise within their own contextual situation (Hendriks 2002:6). She is to revisit her past and take stock of her future (Hendriks 2002:3). In intercultural outreach, the church must acknowledge and respect the mindsets of the people. Jesus did not send us to culturalise the nations, but to make disciples of them (Matthew 28:18-20). The Tonga people are to have the necessary space to question the traditions of the RCZ, for them to be meaningful and relevant in their context.

The theological methodology used in this research is correlative in its very essence. The discernment process correlates identity, context, tradition and eschatology in the process of trying to follow Christ obediently in this world and making it a better place for all.

### **1.6.9 Intercultural**

An intercultural mission advocates a body of Christ in which the members remain committed to their function whilst contributing to the whole without assuming any sense of superiority over other people (Asamoah-Gyadu 2002:16). It is witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in love with boldness and humility to people who are culturally different. It is not understood as cross-cultural ministry which the research perceives as a one-sided approach. Intercultural mission is deeply rooted in the community and contextual realities of people. There is active dialogue and reciprocity. The intercultural mission is a reciprocal process where the one presenting the Gospel message and the one receiving exchange their roles in a dynamic way (Kgatla 2002:53). Kritzinger (2002:146) explains that this will empower one to become a sensitive intercultural Christian.

Saayman (1990:316) defines interculturalisation as a process of partnership and mutuality by which both cultures of the evangelist and the evangelised are essentially affected by the communication of the Gospel. In this research the intercultural encounter is understood as the mutual participatory process which shapes both the RCZ and the Tonga people through active dialogue. They are to shape one another; to transform one another. The one presenting and receiving both communicate and receive in a dialogical process (Kgatla 2002:53). Bosch (1991:511) explains that a transforming mission transforms the context.

The following part will discuss the scope of the research. Smith (2008:140-141) explains that delimitations are self-imposed limitations that help to focus on what is relevant to the problem of the research.

### **1.7 Demarcation**

It would have been better to do this study with regard to the mission activities of the RCZ in the whole country of Zimbabwe in order to obtain a more complete picture of the whole matter conceptualised in this study. But for the purpose of this study, the research will be limited to the evangelism outreach of the RCZ among the Tonga people in Binga. The title indicates some of its main demarcations (Smith 2008:143). This theological research is limited to the RCZ Christian mission.

In each part of Zimbabwe there are particular socio-cultural contexts, which may be different. The research demarcations are therefore geographical and cultural (Smith 2008:141, 142). When one looks at Chinhoyi RCZ congregation, for an example, the social contexts of the communities are urban, mining, farming and rural. The cultural context differs among the Karanga, the Chewa speaking immigrants from Zambia and Malawi, and the Korekore people in these areas. It would be difficult to do justice in this research to all the contexts in which the RCZ is working.

Therefore for the purpose of this study, the research will be limited to the outreach to the Tonga people. The work is unique in the RCZ, because it is an effort to proclaim the Gospel to a non-Shona ethnic group. It is a cross-cultural mission. It is also a recent development in the RCZ and it focuses on a particular ethnic group in Zimbabwe still living in relative isolation. The next section will briefly look at what motivated the study.

### **1.8 Motivation**

The researcher's personal involvement in the RCZ evangelism outreach in Binga among the Tonga people motivated this study. The interest originated from the observation that this mission by the RCZ needed to be well equipped to address the present day challenges and questions the people were facing in their contexts. The research is motivated by an attempt to provoke a debate that leads to the construction of a missiological approach that is appropriate and relevant to our context.

The interest in the question of a holistic and contextual missional praxis developed through studies at Justo Mwale Theological University College in Zambia. This continued through interaction with ministers and Christians of the RCZ, different denominations and also in association with the Church in Society Department of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. The researcher's Master of Theology studies (1999-2001) also continued to influence him greatly in developing a perspective that Christian mission can only be done holistically, communally and contextually.

The researcher comes from a Reformed faith background, being an ordained minister of the RCZ. The researcher chaired the Evangelism Committee of the RCZ from its inception in 1995 up to 2004. The church started a yearly national evangelism outreach to reach out to other non-Karanga ethnic groupings in Zimbabwe. The first evangelism outreach programme was conducted in Chinhoyi RCZ congregation. The researcher was the minister of this congregation when the evangelism meetings were held in 1995. The evangelism outreach was launched at Dete School in Hurungwe which is a preaching post of Chinhoyi congregation. This will be explained in more detail later.

As an African minister, the researcher was encouraged to make a meaningful contribution towards a framework for mission that is appropriate and relevant to our contextual realities. As a member of the faith community, the researcher was motivated to obediently participate in the missional praxis of God (De Gruchy 1994:133-134; Guder 1998:4) and to struggle with others in discerning the will of God in our present situation.

The last section gives an overview of the chapters of the research. This broad overview of the discussions will help in following the main argument of this study.

## **1.9 An outline of chapters**

The first chapter of this study is the introduction. The chapter outlined the problem and stated the goal of the research. The hypothesis, theological methodology and the key concepts to be used in the study were defined. The scope of the study was discussed as well as the background and the motivation of the researcher.

The second chapter shall describe the traditional missionary paradigm, particularly that of the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment period. The research attempts to reflect on the ways in which the earlier European Christians were thinking and doing mission. They formed the missionary model of the DRC. In terms of the theological methodology the research is employing, this chapter is looking at the foot of the cross which portrays identity, and at the left side of the cross. It shall look at the relationship between the historical context and identity in order to determine why the DRC has influenced the identity of the RCZ. The work in this chapter will be the basis and framework for chapters three.

The third chapter shall be a historical overview of the beginning and development of the RCZ. It deals with identity. It first endeavours to describe the identity of the DRC and her approach to mission. The chapter then focuses on describing and analysing the beginning and growth of the RCZ and her involvement in the mission of God in Zimbabwe. It shall also look at the need for a shift in the mission of the RCZ. What the church is relates to how she acts or behaves. The question is: How was the RCZ born and why does she have certain characteristics? What is the understanding of mission in the RCZ? How has she been doing mission? The study will scrutinize the approaches of the DRC and the RCZ in order to develop a communal-contextual missional framework for the RCZ.

The fourth chapter will discuss the historical background of the Tonga people, their cultural context and their social, economic, and political and religious system. The focus is on identity and a contextual analysis. The chapter shall also look at the local and broader situation of Zimbabwe, the world as the global village and in particular its influence on the Binga society. It will briefly look at the geographical area occupied by the Tonga people. The chapter will also attempt to assess the influence of other ethnic groups upon the Tonga people. Finally, it shall analyse the effects of the broader context and the realities of globalisation on the Tonga society.

The question to answer is: Who are the Tonga people? How has the changing context affected the Tonga community? This will help us in the development of a missiological framework that is communal and contextual in relation to the discussions of chapter five and six.

The fifth chapter is a discussion of the outreach of the RCZ within the Tonga people. How has the RCZ understanding and strategies of mission affected the Tonga community? What is the RCZ doing to transform the Tonga people?

The sixth chapter deals with intercultural mission which the research is proposing to develop for the RCZ's outreach to other ethnic groups such as the Tonga in Zimbabwe. It will look at its principles, skills, dynamics and strategies. The principles for intercultural mission shall be discussed and outlined in this chapter. The Biblical foundations for intercultural mission shall be discussed. It also looks at: What is the meaning of intercultural mission? Why intercultural mission? How do you witness to the culturally different?

The last chapter will relate chapters two to five in order to develop the framework for a communal-contextual missional approach in and from the RCZ. The chapter focuses on the doing of a theology that will lead the RCZ to be obedient in developing strategies and implementing and evaluating her mission. The question is: How can the RCZ understand and express faithfully the missional praxis of God in her life with contextual appropriateness, meaning and relevance? The chapter shall conclude with suggestions to the RCZ on which course to follow in her endeavour to be a missional church.

### **1.10 Conclusion**

In concluding this chapter it is vital to summarise the discussions. This is an introductory chapter aiming to provide a framework for the research (Smith 2008:171). The question stated in this research is: How is the RCZ to express appropriately, meaningfully and relevantly the Christian mission within the context of the Tonga people? The key questions the research identifies are: Which contextual systems influenced the missionary model of the DRC? How did the DRC express Christian mission in Zimbabwe? What is the RCZ's way of thinking and doing of mission? Who are the Tonga people? How is the Gospel to be conveyed to people of a different culture?

The research goal is to contribute in developing a mission framework that is holistic and contextual, which will encourage reflective involvement of the faith community in the Mission of God with appropriateness, meaning and relevance to the context within which the RCZ is serving and ministering. This study is based on the hypothesis that, **a contextual and communal approach in intercultural mission will transform all parties involved towards becoming a missional church.** Failure to come up with a new approach will lead to producing a superficial Christianity in the life of the Tonga people.

The methodology employed by the research is Biblical, communal, contextual and missiological in perspective. This research methodology is indebted to Hendriks and

the NetACT team. The research believes that it is a theological methodology that will assist the faith communities to listen to the Gospel message and understand it in and from their own contextual realities. The research follows the rules of a historical and literature study.

After examining the theological methodology, the chapter defined the terms or concepts used in the research. The research is limiting the scope of this study to the mission of the RCZ within the Tonga people in Binga. The work within the Tonga community is a cross-cultural mission. The motivation and interest is derived from the researcher's personal involvement in the RCZ cross-cultural mission in Binga. The research is motivated by an attempt to provoke a debate that leads to a construction of the missiological approach that appropriately addresses the present-day challenges and questions.

In the process of developing a communal-contextual missional framework in the RCZ, the research shall discuss the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment paradigm. The next following chapter will discuss these paradigms which the research argues formed the missionary model of the DRC.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In the following chapter, the research attempts to reflect on the ways in which earlier European Christians were thinking and doing mission. The key question is: **Which contextual systems influenced the missionary model of the DRC?** This question connects to the research problem or question discussed later in this section. It is important to have knowledge of the historical perspective of Christian mission, so as to assess the present perspective and then to develop a framework that is meaningful and relevant. Bosch (1991:181) observed that it is necessary to write about the meaning of Christian mission for our own time, keeping in mind that the present era is fundamentally different from the past era.

The DRC's traditional missionary model, although appreciated, was laden with the presuppositions of its time. The missionary model of the DRC was influenced and shaped by the European cultural matrix. The thinking and practice of the DRC missionaries in Zimbabwe reflected the values and patterns of the social system of the culture in which they lived for much of their lives in their home communities. They brought their social values, patterns and expectations with them and because they failed to comprehend the local people's social systems, they insisted upon transplanting their organisation and cultural values (Lingenfelter 1998:172). The research argues that this model does not fit well in the Zimbabwean context today. The fear is that mistakes made by the Dutch missionaries may creep into the RCZ's mission approaches in her outreach within the Tonga people.

In this historical descriptive literary study, the research argues that the discussion of the past will give the RCZ lessons that will help in her endeavour to be faithful to her essential missional identity. In relation to our contemporary socio-cultural context, the RCZ should come up with missiological reflections from the past. The reflections, whether positive or negative, will assist her to have a deeper insight into what Christian mission might mean. They will help in mapping the strategies of and for our time and place. This research's problem is that **the RCZ is struggling to develop appropriate approaches in her mission work that are meaningful and relevant so that they will be a catalyst of transformation within the contextual realities of the Tonga people.** The research will argue that the major aspect of the problem is that the RCZ is still uncritically and conservatively clinging to the missionary model of the European missionaries. She uncritically adopted their missionary thinking and method.

According to the methodology the research is following, this chapter shall focus on the foot and the left side of the cross. It will look at the relationship between the historical context and identity. The research is a critical hermeneutical approach to history and identity as reflected in the mission theology and practice of the DRC in Zimbabwe. It follows the paradigmatic approach of Bosch which integrates historical, theological and missiological dimensions. It is not critiquing the work of Bosch. The research is not following a thematic approach, but a chronological historical approach to the context and identity of the RCZ. It is discussing the whole of missionary thinking and doing of the RCZ. This chapter discusses the context that shaped the missionary model of the DRC. The DRC missionary model had a profound impact on the RCZ mission model in relation to the context of the Binga outreach. This model shall be discussed in chapter three.

This chapter is about describing to which extent their cultural context influenced all aspects of their work, to such an extent that one can call it particular. The point is that in outlining the correlation between context and identity and the resultant missionary model that developed from that, the research wants to sensitise the RCZ to scrutinise her mission strategy in reaching out to the Tonga people in the Binga region. The research wants to influence the RCZ not to copy and paste the DRC missionary model by means of which they received the Gospel. The wholesale copying of the DRC model will not work efficiently and effectively for the RCZ outreach ministry within the Tonga people. The identity of the DRC was influenced by the historical contexts of the paradigms under review. In turn, the identity of the RCZ was shaped by the practices of the DRC in Zimbabwe.

In discussing the manner in which the Christian church through the ages interpreted and carried out her mission, this study will look at the mission paradigms. While the detail of each paradigm is important not all of them are of concern to this chapter. For the purpose of this study, we shall focus on mission in the context of the Protestant Reformation and mission in the context of the Enlightenment.

## ***2.2 Mission in the context of Protestant Reformation***

The Protestant Reformation was preceded by the scientific discoveries of the fifteenth century. The geographical discoveries by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and Vasco da Gama seven years later would be followed by many expeditions to conquer the new worlds (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:172). The Protestant Reformation took place during the new period ushered in the sixteenth century. The forces of change that led to the emergence of the Reformation led to a crisis for the Roman Catholic Church and its way of doing theology in the late middle Ages.

The origins of Reformation are in the Renaissance. 'Renaissance' means 'rebirth' which refers to the rebirth of classical Europe. Jonathan Hill (2006:241) states that humanism and neo-Platonism (a philosophical and religious system) were the



intellectual movements of the Renaissance. The basic viewpoint of the Renaissance was that things were going to be very different from now on. It looked with renewed interest at the world beyond Europe (Hill 2006:274). Hill continues to state that the renewal of interest in exploration of the world would lead to an explosion of Christianity to other continents. The DRC in the Netherlands participated in the spread of Christianity in Africa.

The person who became the catalyst in introducing the new paradigm of Reformation was Martin Luther (1483 – 1546). Luther was influenced by humanism. Andrew Pettegree (1999:242) states that he eagerly embraced the techniques of humanist scholarship. During the years that Luther was at the University of Wittenberg he started to formulate a new theological framework that would later underpin his theology (Pettegree 1999:243; Hill 2006:252). In his reflections, Romans 1:17 provided a breakthrough for his theological framework. His central theological message was justification by faith.

Luther and his writings were condemned by the Roman Catholic Church but received widespread public interest and had an impact on most parts of Europe. He was called to account for his teachings but refused to recant and was excommunicated (Littell 2001:153, Hill 2006:252). Luther said:

*I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted. My conscience is held captive by the Word of God. I cannot and will not take back anything, because it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience* (Hill 2006:252).

Luther viewed the pope as an agent of the Antichrist (Pettegree 1999:245). In Germany the new movement following Luther made their 'Protestation' against Luther's condemnation in 1529, hence the name 'Protestant' (Pettegree 1999:243). In 1530 the new movement adopted a common declaration of faith known as the Confession of Augsburg. During the Protestant Reformation many religious wars erupted across Europe.

The new movement had a wide impact on parts of Europe, and its most immediate influence was felt in Switzerland. The influence of Luther's movement was spread by immigrants and merchants (Pettegree 1999:250). Many other adherents of Luther's teaching rose and became influential leaders. For the purpose of this research, however, the study shall briefly focus on a young French refugee, John Calvin, because the DRC, on which this chapter is focusing, is a Calvinist church.

Calvin was also influenced by Luther. He belongs to the second generation of the Reformers (Littell 2001:157). He was a humanist (Hill 2006:264). The persecution which erupted in 1534 drove Calvin from his homeland France (Pettegree 1999:258, Hill 2006:264). He was persuaded by William Farel, a follower of Zwingli, to stay in a small city, Geneva, where he helped to consolidate the ministry of the Protestant movement. He made use of the best of his experiences in Germany and of his small church in Strasbourg to build a Reformed Church community in Geneva. Geneva

became a city of international importance and home for religious refugees of many countries (Littell 2001:157).

The shaping of Geneva as a hub of the Reformed community owes everything to the clear vision and leadership of Calvin. From Geneva the influence of Calvin reached the world. Pettegree (1999:260) says that the fame of Calvin in the world is because of his remarkable gifts as a theologian, preacher, administrator and popular writer. Littell (2001:157) contends that Calvin presented the most clearly, comprehensive and consistent Christian thinking of his time in his book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin contextualised his theology for his writings and addressed the concerns and challenges people such as the refugees were encountering. The research argues that the RCZ's theologising should be relevant to the contextual realities of the Tonga people.

Calvin had a profound impact in France and the Netherlands. It was the inspiration of Calvinism that led to the revival and restructuring of the movement in the Netherlands. The strengthening of the Calvinists in the Netherlands came as an opportunity because of the political crisis between King Phillip II of Spain and the noble of the Netherlands. Mass open-air preaching which called for religious freedom was held (Pettegree 1999:263). Over time, the towns of Holland became the stronghold of the Calvinists.

The church of Calvin in Geneva became a model for all the Calvinist churches, including the Dutch Calvinists. The Calvinist church in the Netherlands was recognised as the sole public church. The church achieved a significant reordering of communities where she was strong. Pettegree (1999:265) recounts that Dutch Calvinist members were known for the way they dressed and for their resoluteness in deploring entertainment such as dancing and the theatre. The DRC was modelled on the church of Calvin, which was then exported by the missionaries to Zimbabwe.

The Protestant Reformation sought to cleanse the Church of corruption. It was to return to a pure Christian faith. The Protestant Reformation was multiform and had several origins. This Reformation started from different countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands and others. It questioned how the church was conveying the Christian message. The Protestant Reformation was a movement whose intention was renewal and reform, not the establishment of new denominations. Pettegree (1999:238) contends that the division of the European Christendom was an accidental and an unforeseen consequence. Some elements of Protestantism were a continuation and renewal of the Roman Catholic model. The insistence on a correct formulation of doctrine is one example. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:173) interestingly state that Protestantism represented a human spirit that strove for a more radical Gospel life. The research also is questioning how the RCZ is expressing the Gospel message. The expression of the Gospel message should be transformative to the

Tonga people. Thus the research proposes that the RCZ develop a communal-contextual missional framework.

Bosch (1991:241-243) highlighted five features in which the Protestant Reformation differed from the Roman Catholic paradigm. The research will look at them briefly, in order for us to appreciate the movement's unique contribution to the understanding of Christian mission. The first and central feature is justification by faith. The starting point of the Reformers was not what people could and ought to do for their salvation, but what God had already done in Christ. Secondly, human beings are to be seen from the perspective of their lost state. Human beings are unable to do anything to save themselves.

Thirdly, the Reformation stressed the subjective dimension of salvation. The question of salvation became a personal question to the individual. The fourth feature is the priesthood of all believers. The understanding is that each person stood in a direct relationship with God, a relationship that existed independently of the church. The last feature speaks of the centrality of the Scriptures in the life of the church. The Word thus prevailed over image, thereby making the sacraments subordinate to preaching.

This all too brief reflection on some aspects of the Reformation serves to answer the question: 'Which contextual systems influenced the missionary model of the DRC?' For a Zimbabwean the first discovery is that he/she suddenly understands why missionaries were so strict on dress-code and a certain style of music and why they did not allow dancing during worship. These features are now part and parcel of a rather inhibiting "code" in the RCZ.

On a more positive side the Reformation encourages us to be questioning the status quo. In our time and place, the Reformation should encourage us to be questioning faith communities. As faith community we should not accept uncritically what is coming or brought to us (Latourette 1954:700). In the RCZ the members should be accorded space to reflect on the world as it really is and be determined to change the world into what it is intended by God to be. The questioning, from the perspective of this research, should not be in a spirit of fear but of love, power and humility (1Timothy 1:7). The RCZ can learn from this paradigm the need for their leaders to be sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit and needs of the people. The leadership should have the willingness and commitment to change.

Reflecting on the emphasis on humanism and the endeavours of the human spirit, the researcher wants to point out that the work of the Holy Spirit should be incorporated in our understanding and reflection of transition processes. The study believes that Reformation was not only the human spirit at work but the Holy Spirit's work of renewal.

These five key features of Protestantism had important consequences for the understanding and development of mission, both positively and negatively during the said period. These features were used by the DRC in her missionary work in Zimbabwe. The features form the basis of the identity of the RCZ.

### **2.2.1 The Reformers' understanding of mission**

How did the Reformers perceive Christian mission during this period? It has often been argued that the Reformers showed a poor mission record and that they were indifferent towards mission (Bosch 1991:243). The Reformers' churches were not mission oriented. Basically they were not moving out to proclaim the Gospel message to all nations. The Reformers were not involved in Christian mission, because they engaged mostly in defining and defending their new theological thinking and identity. One can safely say that during the Reformation period the Reformers were concerned with and focused on defining and maintaining their newly found institutions. Jay (1978:9) states that the talents of theologians were, for the most part, directed towards the defence of the Christian faith against the most powerful and bitter attacks it had received since the second century. They also spent much of their energy on catechism in order to educate the people to help them understand the Bible so that they could defend themselves intellectually against the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

Bosch (1991:244) quotes Gustav Warneck who said that the mission action in the Protestant Church and even the idea of Christian mission was missed in the sense in which it is understood today. Recently some scholars disputed this accusation, saying it is misunderstanding the basic thrust of the Reformers' theology and ministry (Bosch 1991:244). They argue that the nineteenth century understanding of Christian mission has been imposed upon the Reformers. The Protestant Reformers set an example of Christian mission in their own context.

The research is in agreement with Bosch (1991:245) who contends that despite what these arguments have identified as the Reformed theological basis for Christian mission, very little happened by way of evangelisation outreach during the first two hundred years after the Reformation. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:195) gives a number of reasons for this phenomenon. Firstly, most of the energy and focus was on mere survival and reforming the church which involved defending themselves and developing their own identity and doctrine. Secondly, initially there was not much contact with non-Christian peoples in the countries in which the Protestant churches were situated. Thirdly, for the Protestant churches to develop missionary models to replace those of the RCC, with whom they were in an intense theological and political dispute, would take time.

The difference and confrontation between the Reformers and the Anabaptists also help to explain the issue under discussion. The Anabaptists were involved in a

remarkable missionary outreach. They were among the first to make the Great Commission mandatory for all believers. Bosch (1991:246) says that the “wandering” of the Anabaptist evangelists infuriated the Reformers. From the perspective of their view of mission, the Anabaptists insisted on the absolute separation between church and state and on non-participation in the activities of government. They disapproved of any symbiotic relationship between the church and the state. This naturally meant the church could under no circumstances whatsoever cooperate with the state in Christian mission. The Reformers on the other hand, could not conceive of a mission outreach into countries in which there was no Protestant government (Bosch 1991:246).

The Reformers’ concern was the reformation of existing churches, and not their replacement. Schaufele who is quoted by Bosch (1991:247) says,

*The Anabaptists’ project was not reformation of the existing church but the restoration of the early Christian community of true believers.*

The Anabaptists were ruthlessly persecuted during the Reformation. Much later they also began to concentrate on maintaining their institution rather than doing mission.

In Protestant circles ecclesiology received much attention. Each of the fragments of Protestants was obliged to define itself. This led to the formulation of different definitions of a true church in confessions. The Calvinist formulated the Belgic Confession (1561). The marks of a true church were defined by the Reformation Protestants as: Gospel taught purely, sacraments and discipline. This forced the RCC to respond with her own definition of the true church at the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

The Calvinists from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, England, Scotland and other countries convened at the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. They formulated their common statement of Faith, aiming at views expressed by Jakob Arminius and Hugo Grotius, as well as at the Lutherans and Roman Catholics (Littell 2001:172, Hill 2006:269). The DRC missionaries brought to Zimbabwe these doctrinal statements, which were part of their historical context and which influenced their identity. The Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort and the Apostle’s Creed form the doctrinal basis of the RCZ.

The church during this period was defined as a place where something is done, not a living organism doing something, therefore in terms of what happens inside her four walls, not in terms of her calling in the world (Bosch 1991:249). Each confession understood the church in terms of what it believed and others lacked. The RCC prided themselves in the unity and visibility of their church and the Protestants in their doctrinal impeccability (Bosch 1991:248). The Reformation had come to its conclusion with the establishment of the state churches, and of systems of pure doctrine and conventionalised Christian conduct. Niebuhr, who is quoted by Bosch, (1991:249) says that the church of pure doctrine was, however, a true church but

without mission and her theology more scholastic than apostolic. In this context the pietist movement, which shall be discussed in the next section, impacted the church.

### **2.2.2 The Pietist movement and mission**

As the Reformation era was progressing Pietism was emerging and developing. Its origin lies with the German Lutherans. Its name was derived from Phillip Spener's book *Pious wishes*. Pietists believed that Luther did not complete the Reformation, thus their vision was completing it (Hill 2006:326).

During this era the Church did not do very much in evangelising the whole world. The Pietist movement however influenced European Christians. They were enthusiastic to share with people of other cultures the joy of their own personal experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. Their aim was the conversion of individuals into small fellowships, not to establish churches (Bowen 1996:95).

The Moravians is the most famous group of the Pietist movement in Germany. Through the leadership of Nikolaus Zinzendorf a community was planted in 1722 on his estate, called Herrnhut, meaning the Lord's protection (Hill 2006:327). They believed honest work was to be done by a believer for the betterment of the community. The Moravians believe in mission as one of their most important ministries and send many missionaries across the world. Many Christians from Catholic and Protestant denominations went to Herrnhut and after training were sent back to influence their society.

The Pietist movements emphasised piousness in the life of a believer. The emphasis was on having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that changes the way a person live. It had moved away from an emphasis on doctrinal standards towards lifestyle and from a concern for the church towards a concern for the individual (Hill 2006:325). They believed a Christ-like life was to be manifested through the moral life of a believer. Littell (2001:231) contends that the response of the Pietist movement to the state of the church and cultural systems of their time was to emphasise the importance of each individual soul and, as such, on evangelism and missions.

Littell (2001:230) states that Pietism is to be understood as a recovery of the eschatological aspect of primitive Christianity. Pietists focused on living a life of preparing for Jesus Christ's second coming to earth. He continues to argue that it is to be understood as a movement reacting against the thought and culture of secularization. The major characteristics of Pietism were a disciplined life rather than a sound doctrine, subjective experience of the person rather than ecclesiastical authority, practice rather than theory.

In Pietism the formally correct, cold and cerebral faith of orthodoxy gave way to a warm and devout union with Christ (Bosch 1991:252, Hill 2006:326). Concepts such as repentance, conversion, the new birth and sanctification received new meaning. Individual conversion became the Pietist model (Littell 2001:231). Pietism had narrowness in its approach especially insofar as it tended to be very prescriptive about the way a person should become a true believer.

The movement has to be praised, however, for having broken with the practice of a merely formal church membership and with the superficiality of conversion. These had characterised much of contemporary RCC mission work. Pietism also introduced the principle of “voluntarism” in mission. It was not the church that was the bearer of Christian mission, but the small, revived community inside the church. They established pacifist and communal fellowship groups in expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus (Littell 2001:230).

The church was neither the goal nor mission. Mission work could in no circumstances be regarded as the obligation of the king or the state. The Gospel was to be proclaimed by the disciples of Jesus Christ under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Pietist movement believed in winning non-believers to faith in Christ irrespective of any colonial or political interests (Bosch 1991:254). The research believes that the Pietists’ emphasis on living a Christ-like life, as opposed to a life ruled by church doctrine, is commendable.

The movement in its early stages was interested in the wholeness of human beings and not only the souls of people. The Pietists had an understanding of the Reign of God that was dynamic and comprehensive. They did not separate one from the other, soul and body, conversion and development. Many believed the key to reforming the society was education. According to Hill (2006:326) many Pietists were of the opinion that education was not for the training of mind but of character. They were to use it in furthering their ideal model. This led to the founding of schools, colleges and universities in Germany. The researcher argues that the use of education in their missionary endeavours played a significant role, even in the DRC work in Zimbabwe. The DRC emphasis on education can not merely be attributed to pietism. Education was very much a characteristic of the Scottish Presbyterian missions all over the world and, as such, influenced the DRC missionary work.

However, the theological climate of Pietism slowly began to change by the third decade of the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment was then slowly emerging in Europe and had much to do with the new development. Whereas orthodoxy denied Pietism’s theological validity, the rationalism of the Enlightenment emptied faith of its mysteries (Bosch 1991:255).

Even so, Pietism played a major role in the development of the Protestant missionary idea. Firstly, mission could no longer simply be regarded as the duty of colonial

governments. Secondly, it was transformed from being a concern of rulers and church leadership to being an enterprise with which ordinary Christians could not only identify but in which they could actively participate. Thirdly, Pietism ushered in the age of ecumenism in mission in that it aimed at a Christian fellowship that transcended the boundaries of nations and confessions. Fourthly, for one entire century, the eighteenth, Pietism caused Germany to be Protestantism's leading missionary country. Lastly, Pietism demonstrated in a remarkable way what total dedication meant (Bosch 1991:255).

### **2.2.3 Puritanism and mission**

A largely English-speaking movement known as Puritanism emerged during the seventeenth century. The consciousness of reliving Biblical history was fundamental in Puritanism. The Puritans believed the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the coming of the Reign of God was imminent (Littell 2001:170). Puritanism was driven with the new spirit of morality. Hill (2006:268) explains that the moral demands of Calvinism became an important aspect to the Puritan movement and represented the Calvinist influence within the Church of England. The Puritans were Protestants who perceived their church as incompletely reformed in some aspects. It must be fully purified (Pettegree 2001:419). Hill (2001:420) continues and observes that they understood the true church as a disciplined community governed rigorously by the rules of Scriptures. The Puritans believed that the concern of the community is the building up of the faithful ones of God.

The Puritan movement was a response to the orthodoxy that had settled in Calvinism as it did in Lutheranism. The decisive factors for keeping a missionary zeal were theological as well as socio-political (Bosch 1991:256). The political factor was that Holland and England, both strongholds of Calvinism, belonged to the rising maritime powers with numerous overseas colonies.

The theological factor was the crucial role played by the "Second Reformation" in Holland and by Puritanism in England, Scotland and the American colonies. Calvin placed a special emphasis on pneumatology in both the work of the Spirit in the human soul, renewing the inner life, and in the Spirit's activity of renewing the "face of the earth". This gave rise to the idea of mission as "extending the reign of Christ" both by the inward spiritual renewal of individuals and of transforming the face of the earth through filling it with "the knowledge of the Lord" (Bosch 1991:256). The "vertical" and the "horizontal" relationship between these two dimensions, was to characterise much of Calvinism during all subsequent centuries and exercise a profound influence on the theory and practice of Christian mission. The influence lasted more or less until the beginning of the Great Awakening.

Bosch (1991:258f) identified features of Puritan missiology. The first feature was a fundamental trait of Calvinism, the doctrine of predestination. Some understood this



doctrine in extremely rigid terms: if God predestines persons to salvation, then Christians should leave it to him to save whom he wishes to save, according to his own pleasure. There was a shift in Calvinist groups to an emphasis on predestination leading to active involvement in mission: they argued that the elect of God cannot remain inactive. They believed the mark of a true believer was a transformed heart revealed in an experience of conversion (Littell 2001:420). Littell (2001:420) explains that such an experience will give a person the right understanding of predestination status. The person will have assurance of salvation. Secondly, for the Puritans the glory of God was the ultimate goal of Christian mission. Like predestination it was a basic tenet of Calvinism.

The third feature was the sovereignty of God which could not be conceived in isolation from his grace and unfathomable mercy. The Puritans were “constrained by Jesus’ love”, to preach the Good News to the lost world. This constitutes the most important point of similarity between Pietism and Puritanism. Fourthly, Calvinist mission enterprises were all undertaken within the framework of colonialist expansion. The Christendom idea was still completely intact in this period. Another dimension that was added was that of theocracy. Its purpose was to establish a socio-political system in which God himself would be the real ruler. Christ’s rule was to be made visible in both society and church.

Fifthly, the theocratic idea was intimately linked to the way in which early Calvinists understood the connection between mission and eschatology. Their view of the relationship between mission and eschatology embraced four elements. According to De Jong, who is quoted by Bosch (1991:260), these elements developed in anticipation of the downfall of Rome; the evolution of an era of true faith and material blessing among all people; and the firm conviction that England was divinely mandated to guide history to its appointed end.

The sixth element was that cultural upliftment, as an aim of mission, was still relatively undeveloped in the Second Reformation and Puritan period. The Puritans believed that they were God’s new Israel (Littell 2002:420). Western Christians believed that their culture was superior to those of non-Western nations, but they did not isolate cultural upliftment as a goal of mission. This view in the subsequent period would sometimes be so dominant that it was hard to distinguish between mission and “Westernisation” (Bosch 1991:260). The last feature was that the “Great Commission” surprisingly virtually did not play any role in the discussions of the seventeenth century.

These aspects of the Reformation were later affected by the influence of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment would shatter the theocratic idea. Religion would be banished to the private sphere, leaving the public sphere to reason. The next section shall discuss the influence of the Enlightenment on Christian mission.

### **2.3 Mission in the context of the Enlightenment**

In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, the intellectual-cultural underpinning of the Europe decisively shifted. The shift saw the demise and collapse of the medieval synthesis of the church and state (Brueggemann 1993:2). The Enlightenment period started in the sixteenth century and was fully established by 1700. It was the natural outcome of the Renaissance and the Reformation (Bowen 1996:153). The spirit of the Enlightenment's premise was that the new Europe would be built on new ideals developing from the ideas of the Renaissance (Hill 2006:312). The country that took a leading role in making this new worldview strong was the Netherlands. Hill (2006:313) points out that many thinkers such as Descartes and Spinoza who were seen as dubious and controversial found a safe place in the Netherlands.

The Enlightenment paradigm is known as the Age of Reason. The Enlightenment enhanced the development of scientific theory and method, and the extension of knowledge. According to Anthony Giddens (2000:20) the Enlightenment thinkers thought that the more humans are able to rationally understand the world and themselves the more they can shape history for their own purpose.

The Enlightenment saw the "rise of science," which from the beginning has been an explicitly masculine enterprise of controlling and raping "mother earth." It also witnessed the European Reconnaissance, the exploration of the earth and the development of an intricate system of European colonialism that still vexes the world community up to today (Brueggemann 1993:4). It resulted in the establishment of a political-economic power that had domination of the world, with reason at its centre. This hegemony produced two types of reliable knowledge. On the one hand, knowledge consists in rational, logical coherence, discerned by a detached, disinterested, disembodied mind. On the other hand, knowledge comes from what is experiential, empirical, and factual (Brueggemann 1993:5).

This development was reinforced by the absolutism of Hobbes and the empiricism of John Locke. These two kinds of knowledge reinforced each other. It flowed from desperation to cope with anxiety. John Locke, one of the influential enlightenment philosophers, felt that reason must always have the final say in judging revelation (Hill 2006:318). In the period under review knowledge was regarded as written, universal, general, and timeless. In other words, truth operates anywhere and forms a large coherent whole. In this world, it was proclaimed with shameless confidence, there is no need for insecurity, self-doubt, or embarrassment (Brueggemann 1993:5, Toulmin 1990:30-35).

The important features of the thinking and culture of the time were the emphasis on Rationalism, Empiricism and Romanticism in reaction both to philosophical rationalism and to classicism in art and literature (Jay 1978:3). Rationalism and Empiricism received great impetus (Jay 1978:4). One should note the deification of

reason during this period. The power of human reason dazzled the world with its developing technology (Bowen 1996:152).

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) shaped the natural sciences by stressing the importance of the observation of facts as the basis for conclusions (Latourette 1954:692). We see the development of the Empiricism of Bacon. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) revolted against scholastic philosophy and was deeply interested in mathematics and physical sciences. John Locke (1632-1704) was the founder of English empiricism and influential in stimulating thought and discussion on the certainty and adequacy of human knowledge (Latourette 1954:692). Empiricists regarded knowledge as being ultimately derived from sensed experience

Some philosophers were deists such as John Locke, John Toland, David Hume and Francois Marie Arouet (Voltaire). They believed that anything that could not be rationally proved is not acceptable. According to Deism the truth of religion must be demonstrable through reason. It also had no place for miracles and they regarded themselves as purging Christianity of superstitious teachings. Some like Toland rejected revelation because it could not be proved by reason (Hill 2006:317). Deism was basically acceptable to the intellectuals and nobles of this era but did not represent the religious mainstream (Hill 2006:318).

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) is one of the founders of the Enlightenment ideology of Rationalism. Descartes is accredited with the appearance of rationalism (Hill 2006:314). As a mathematician he was seeking to develop a new philosophy which revolved around certainty and proof (Hill 2006:315). According to Hill (2006:315) Descartes was of the opinion that human reason will never mislead people. Methodically he doubted everything in the intellectual process. Doubt to him entailed thought and thought implied a thinker (Latourette 1954:692). It was Descartes who posited the precept "*Cogito, ergo sum*" meaning "I think, therefore I am" (Bosch 1991:263). Rationalists such as Descartes, Spinoza (1637-1677), Leibniz (1646-1716) pursued their studies on the assumption that pure reason is capable of attaining truth. They were sceptical about divine revelation, for the competence of man's reason rendered it irrelevant. It led some to Deism (Jay 1978:4). Descartes through his ideas of subjecting everything to proofs, sought to provide proofs of the existence of God, the soul and the physical world (Hill 2006:315). The Enlightenment approaches operated on the premise that human reason had a certain degree of autonomy.

Stephen Toulmin (1990:212) in his book *Cosmopolis: the hidden agenda of modernity* has proposed that the convergence of Enlightenment ideology took place around the project of Descartes. Toulmin (1990) relates that Henry IV of Navarre was the coming king of France. He promised to end the religious wars and bring peace in France and Europe. He was assassinated on the brink of his enthronement. This signified the dashing of enormous hope for a new European peace. Thus Descartes,

along with his whole generation, were plunged into disarray as the threat of chaos became a social reality. Descartes' philosophical reflection was an urgent effort to fend off the coming chaos so evident in the world around him.

Susan Bordo (1987:76, 97-118), a feminist, critiques Descartes in her book: *The flight to objectivity*. She agrees with Toulmin. She proposed that Descartes and his cultural world were beset with enormous and profound anxiety as the medieval world collapsed. The loss of that "home" created deep dislocation and displacement. In order to respond to that anxiety Descartes engaged in an intellectual process of individuation, which amounted to a separation from "mother" and "loss of mother." The proposal of Bordo is summarized by Brueggemann (1993:4) in stating that Descartes experienced a sense of the loss of the cosmic mother. It led him to fashion an impenetrable masculinity that linked "objectivity" and masculine power.

The works of Toulmin and Bordo help us to understand the new cultural world that was formed in the Enlightenment. This new cultural context had a deep influence on the church and the Christian mission. The perceptions of the DRC in the Netherlands, just like other European churches, were deeply influenced by the Enlightenment context. It can be deduced that the new intellectual hegemony of male certitude had an influence on her theological reflection. Brueggemann (1993:5, 6) observes two issues that reveal that theological interpretation followed the new hegemony. Firstly, in its rational, logical way, the theological method created a tight system of certitude that purports to be absolute. Secondly, with its practice of historical criticism, it has sought validation in facticity behind the text. So there is in the Enlightenment a resulting dismissal of rhetoric as "mere rhetoric" and the discontinuing of speech.

Religion permeated every aspect of life before the coming of the Enlightenment. Even though Christian faith continued to be practiced after the Enlightenment, it had lost its state of being obvious and needing no further proof. As culture and thought forms began to change with the dawn of the Enlightenment, humanity and human reason began to be the focus of religious life and theological thinking (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:52). Bosch (1991:268) argues that the Enlightenment on the whole did not deny religion a place under the sun, but it radically relativises the exclusivist claims of Christian faith. The word "religion" prior to the Enlightenment was never used to refer to non-Christian faiths but it came to mean "a system of beliefs and practises." In essence, Christian faith was considered to be the same as any other non-Christian religion.

### **2.3.1 Characteristics of the Enlightenment**

The Enlightenment had features that can be distinguished and had immense effect on religious life. How was the Christian faith influenced by the Enlightenment period?

The first characteristic of the Enlightenment was that rationalism, the ability to reason, gave human beings their identity and sense of worth (Bowen 1996:153).

Human reason became supremely important, also in Christian theology. Faith had priority over reason but now reason supplanted faith as point of departure. Previously, it was believed that humans derived their existence from God, but now it was proclaimed that God owed his existence to humans. Karl Marx saw religion as something evil, the “opiate of the people,” Freud declared it to be nothing but an illusion. Emile Durkheim suggested that every religious community was, really, only worshipping itself. In a thoroughly anthropocentric world there was no room left for God.

The Enlightenment culture asserts that the mind is more important than the heart. Under the influence of modernity, evangelism has become the passing on of ideas to individuals who are to believe without expecting to feel or see anything different. In the Bible people who believed experience the working of God with visible difference seen in their lives. If nothing was happening, there was no Good News (Bowen 1996:156). The researcher believes this is one of the reasons why the church in the Western world is shrinking whilst in Africa it is growing. In Africa the Gospel has a visible effect on the lives of people.

The Church responded first, by divorcing religion from reason, locating it in human feeling and experience. Human feeling manifested through Pietism and human experience through the Evangelical awakenings. The second response was the privatisation of religion. The third was to declare theology itself a science, in the Enlightenment sense of the term. The fourth was for religion to try and establish its hegemony by creating a “Christian society” in which Christianity would be the official religion. The last response was to embrace the secular society; it was a call to radically desacralize the church and her activities (Bosch 1991:269-270).

The second characteristic of the Enlightenment was that it operated with a subject-object scheme. It was the Age of Science that developed the scientific method. Through this method human beings were empowered to stand back from the natural world in order to observe, analyse, understand and control it (Bowen 1996:153). The effect of this understanding was that people no longer saw themselves as victims of nature or unseen forces. Superstition was banished. People no longer accepted what the Church or tradition told them about nature as they learnt new truths of science.

A new body of ‘public truth’ emerged which all reasonable people were expected to accept. This meant that it separated humans from their environment and enabled them to examine the animal and mineral world from the vantage point of scientific objectivity. As such the Enlightenment was not holistic because it dealt with issues in compartments. The different aspects of human life were scientifically studied separately from the others (Bowen 1996:154). The African culture views life in a

holistic way with all its aspects interconnected. Scientific objectivity is a myth (Ukpong 199:113).

In principle, then, humanity and the human mind had set no limits to people and could look and study the entire non-human world. Oceans and continents were “discovered” and the system of colonies was introduced. The second influence on Christian faith was that the Enlightenment’s strict separation between subject and object in the natural sciences was also applied to theology. The Biblical tradition would be treated as a mere object. The scholar examined the text but was not necessarily examined by it.

Thirdly, it was the elimination of purpose from science and the introduction of direct causality as the clue to the understanding of reality. Purpose was eliminated from scientific study (Bowen 1996:153). Reason claimed that the most important in life is to explain why things happen or exist, in the sense of what caused them, but not of what their purpose was. Bowen (1996:154) contends that knowledge of the cause of everything, but no knowledge of its purpose is a recipe for human hopelessness, which is exactly what has happened to people in the European world. Science operates on the assumption the cause determines the effect. The particular characteristic of the Enlightenment that made deep inroads into theological thinking was the elimination of purpose from science and the replacement of purpose by direct causality as the clue to the understanding of reality. Human planning took the place of trust in God.

The fourth element of the Enlightenment was belief in progress. People now expressed joy and excitement at the possibility of travelling across the earth and “discovering” new territories. With boldness European nations took possession of the earth and introduced the system of colonies. The idea of progress expressed itself, pre-eminently in the “development programs” the Western nations were undertaking in the countries of the so-called Third World. The model was based on the ideal of modernisation and expressed itself in materialism, consumerism, and economic advancement. The dimension of the optimism of the Enlightenment’s philosophy of progress also affected the Christian faith. The idea of an imminent worldly global triumph of Christianity is intimately related to the modern spirit (Bosch 1991:271).

The fifth characteristic was that it was contended that scientific knowledge was factual, value-free and neutral. Facts have a life of their own, independent of the observer. A belief is true when there is a corresponding fact and false when there is no such corresponding fact. Over against facts there are values, based not on knowledge, but on opinion, on belief. Facts cannot be disputed; values, on the other hand, are a matter of preference and choice. Religion was assigned to this realm of values since it rested on subjective notions and could not be proved correct. This element of the Enlightenment was equally far-reaching for theology. The Enlightenment paradigm was tolerant. It allowed individuals to select whatever values

they preferred from a wide range of options, all of which were on par. The outcome was naturally that Christianity was reduced to one province of the wide empire of religion. There was dichotomy between fact and value, science and religion were assigned to two different realms.

The sixth was that all problems were in principle solvable. Everything could be explained or at least made explicable. Science was regarded as cumulative and all-encompassing. The Biblical miracles and every other form of inexplicable events were ruled out because of the assertion that all problems were in principle solvable. God was pushed further and further back and was becoming more and more redundant (Bosch 1991:273). Bowen (1996:69) argues:

*The Western world-view has encouraged the idea that science can give a rational explanation to everything. Even though not many scientists today would make such a claim, the idea still remains in the minds of many people.*

Indeed it is true that the perspective of a person determines the way one behaves or acts.

The European worldview denies spiritual and supernatural realities. Reason, from their perspective, could ignore or explain away the supernatural world (Bowen 1996:152). Influenced by their own cultural perceptions, many missionaries had nothing to say about spirits or demons which dominated the lives of people in Africa. Missionaries were not sure of how to deal with these issues and nervous to call upon the Holy Spirit to bring holistic deliverance from evil spirits (Bowen 1996:89, 139, 163). They would try to deal with the attacks of evil spirits through their public science of medicine, but Africans believe that God and spirits interact with their world (Bowen 1996:163). Jesus acknowledged the existence of and overcame evil spirits, which means He challenged those who denied their existence. To those who fear evil spirits Jesus Christ provided deliverance.

The seventh element of the Enlightenment regarded people as emancipated, autonomous individuals. It was the Age of Individualism, meaning people were free to think and behave as they wish in order to succeed and be happy in life (Bowen 1996:153). Religious beliefs were seen as a private category. Individualism pushed relationship and community from the centre to the peripheral.

A central creed of the Enlightenment, therefore, was faith in humankind. Its progress was assured by the free competition of individuals pursuing their happiness. The self-sufficiency of the individual over social responsibilities was exalted to a sacred creed (Bosch 1991:267). Each individual in turn should also allow all other individuals to think and act as they please. The individuals experienced themselves as liberated from the tutelage of God and church, which were no longer needed to legitimise specific titles, classes, and prerogatives. All were born equal and had equal rights.

The dominant characteristic of the Enlightenment period was its radical anthropocentrism. To the Church the development of science was both a threat and challenge. In the midst of these vast forces the very existence of Christian faith seemed threatened (Latourette 1954:1455). The effect of modernity on most traditional cultures is the impact it had on relationships because of its focus on individualism. The communal relationships were relegated because the reason and happiness of an individual took the centre stage creating, a self-centred society. In Africa the identity and worthiness of a person lies within the context of the community (Bowen 1996:156). Community is one of the fundamental characteristics in African worldviews (Ukpong 1999:112). One is only a complete person through and for others.

The immediate effect on Christianity of the perception that everyone was an emancipated, autonomous individual was the individualism which soon pervaded Protestantism in particular. The individualism that developed in the Europe contradicted in many ways the Biblical and African notions about community. The church also becomes peripheral, since the individual not only had the right but the ability to know God's revealed will. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:207) point out that one of the significant consequences of the Enlightenment was the eventual separation of church and state. Religion was relegated to the private sphere of opinion and belief, while secular affairs were concerned with the public arena of facts and knowledge.

The other dimension of the Enlightenment was the shift of power from the monarchy to the people. The people had the right to participate in and build the emerging states, which lead to the development of nationalism. As Abraham Lincoln later puts it: "The government was of, by, and for the people". Bevans & Schroeder (2004:207) state that one of the consequences of the development of nationalism was the idea of *manifest destiny* whereby individual European nations regarded themselves as being chosen with a unique destiny in history. The results of manifest destiny were the colonisation of other continents by the European nations and the "scramble for Africa".

As the eighteenth century progressed, the reign of reason was increasingly challenged, also by the Romantic Movement. According to Hill (2006:353) it was Immanuel Kant who argued that God is beyond the reach of reason. Romanticism according to Littell (2001:233) stressed feeling, spirituality and poetic and artistic sensibility as inborn human qualities. Romanticism taught that feelings of human beings could introduce people to reality and meaning. Romanticism held that the proper sphere of religion is feeling. The claim that scientific rationalism alone could provide a full and satisfying life and set mankind on the way to a golden age was rejected (Jay 1978:13, Hill 2006:354). Romanticism rejected rationalism. It believed that God was not to be rationalised, instead he was experienced and felt through the beauty of nature (Hill 2006:355). It touched almost every field of human activity,



philosophy, ethics, politics, art and literature. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), known as the 'father of Romantic movement', believed in feeling, spontaneity and nature (Hill 2006:354).

The effects of modern culture upon both the Europe and elsewhere in the world have been profound. Regardless of the negative effects of the Enlightenment, one can appreciate the many aspects that were for the good of humanity in general. The "light" in the Enlightenment was real light and should not simply be discarded (Bosch 1991:274). Whilst the real achievements of Modernity are commendable and welcome, one can deduce that it is not only the non-Western communities that are weary of Modernism, but even the Westerners themselves are seeing that it is not able to bring satisfaction to the needs of human beings.

What is needed is to realise that the Enlightenment paradigm has served its purpose and that we should now move beyond it taking what is valuable in it with the necessary caution and critique, along with us into a new paradigm. Bosch (1991:273) observes that during the course of time the Enlightenment period began to break up. Rationalism and empiricism increasingly proved incapable of supplying convincing answers to all the questions asked.

### **2.3.2 Mission and the Enlightenment**

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century the most significant factor that affected the church and mission in a profound way was the Enlightenment (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:206). The entire modern missionary enterprise is a child of the Enlightenment (Bosch 1991:274). This research believes that the theory and practice of Christian mission was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment ideas. It was the new expansionist worldview which pushed Europe to enlarge its area of influence and control and in the event paved the way for a worldwide Christian missionary enterprise.

It can be noted that the Protestant Reformation generally furthered capitalism (Latourette 1954:979). Roughly parallel with the growth of colonial commercial empires of European peoples went the spread of Christian faith (Latourette 1954:991). It is clear that expansion was often accompanied and followed by ruthless and quite unchristian exploitation. The association of Christian faith with Western imperialism proved a handicap (Latourette 1954:1469).

There were some major forces and ideas characterising Christian mission during this period. Bosch (1991:274ff) noted that the symbiotic relationship between church and state had been modified. There was interdependence between the pope and the kings or Emperors in the middle Ages. They operated within the model of "Christendom." This relationship changed because of the Reformation and the disintegration of the Roman Empire.

The idea of Christendom remained intact however, in each European state, leading to the establishment of state churches. This made it completely natural for European colonising powers to assume that they, as Christian monarchs, had the divine right to subdue pagan peoples. Therefore colonisation and Christianisation not only went hand in hand but were two sides of the same coin. To subdue and take the land of the “pagans” was regarded as a divine duty similar to the Israelite conquest of Canaan. The partnership between the church and state was one of the major factors that contributed to the emergence of the model of mission used by the Western missionaries of this period (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:271).

The phenomenal spread of Christian faith accompanied the equally phenomenal expansion of European peoples. Whatever their explicit intentions, missionaries became agents of the European imperialistic enterprise as the three “Cs” of colonialism became Christianity, commerce and civilisation (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:207). Latourette (1954:963-964) noted that some of the features of the expansion of European peoples were flagrantly contrary to Christian faith and hampered it. The lives of most of the nominal Christians were not portraying their faith. This manifested in greediness, sexual irregularities, violence, arrogance and aggressiveness and the exploitation of subjected peoples. The lifestyle of a majority of Europeans was accentuated by exploration, conquest, and settlement. This lifestyle was due to the influence of the Enlightenment philosophy.

The alliance between church and state however became increasingly strained within the Enlightenment paradigm and later the relationship was found to be unacceptable. The missionary enterprise by the eighteenth century had all but collapsed under the immense onslaught of rationalism (Bosch 1991:275). At the same time, there was a burst of religious movements within Protestantism against the Enlightenment spirit, such as the Great Awakenings in America, Methodism and the Evangelical Revival in England (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:2008).

### **2.3.3 The revivals**

According to Hill (2006:324) the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not only the age of Reason but also the Age of Revival. He argues that people during this era did not think of faith and reason as opposites. Some scholars like Benjamin Whichcote were of the opinion that spirituality can come through reason. The church experienced renewal through wide-spread revivals which manifested during this period. It was a reaction against formalism and sterile scholastic theology. As noted before during the age of Confessionalism, the Protestant churches’ effort was on formulating their beliefs and defending their standpoints. The kind of spirituality that characterised the first generations of Reformers was steadily declining (Hill 2006:325).

The movements that occurred in the eighteenth century, known as the Great Awakening, were influenced mainly by Pietists and related movements (Hill 2006:328). The spiritual change occurred mostly in the English-speaking world. The revival movements stressed the importance of an individual conversion experience, a warm devotional life, and a strict, even puritanical discipline (Jay 1978:11). The spiritual change had a profound influence on missionary activities to this present day.

What the Awakenings brought when they burst upon the British and American scenes from the early eighteenth century onward, was not regarded as alien to and in conflict with the ideas of the Enlightenment or with those of a warm experiential faith (Bosch 1991:277). According to Hill (2006:328), the Awakenings were not like Pietism for they were spontaneous and a series of connected phenomena across different churches and countries.

The First Great Awakening began in Dutch Reformed congregations in the Raritan Valley of New Jersey in America. These congregations had been influenced by the Dutch Second Reformation. The leading figure in the Dutch Reformed Church was Theodore Frelinghuysen who arrived in New Jersey in 1720 (Hill 2006:329). The awakening later spread to other denominations. Orthodoxy emphasised the objective criterion of what God had done and what the Bible taught. Pietists stressed the subjective criterion of personal experience (Bosch 1991:277). The key message of the revivalists emphasised the need for individual conversion and a changed life different from the secular society (Hill 2006:329).

The First Great Awakening (1735-1776) succeeded, under the guidance of Jonathan Edwards, a Presbyterian minister, in stemming the tide of shallow rationalism and breaking the fetters of petrified Puritanism. It was restoring a dynamic spirituality to the Christian church. Edwards, an orthodox Calvinist, was one of those people who combined Enlightenment intellectualism and Christian zeal (Hill 2006:329). Edwards's eschatological thinking was postmillennial, which became influential in North American missionary thinking into the twentieth century. The revivalists believed that Scripture without experience was empty, and experience without Scripture blind.

The First Great Awakening can be described more appropriately as a mixture of Puritanism and Pietism grounded in the crucible of the American experience. The Great Awakening was not an intellectual but a social movement (Hill 2006:334). The theological emphasis was a combination of God's elective grace and a sensitive spirituality (Hill 2006:329). Their revival meetings were held in a joyous atmosphere. The First Awakening laid the foundations for missionary enterprises (Bosch 1991:278). This was the first series of the Awakenings.

During this period of revivals John and Charles Wesley together with George Whitefield experienced a spiritual renewal. They led the revival that took place in

Britain. The three were influenced through their contact with the Moravians rather than the Awakening. According to Hill (2006:332) Edwards was the mind and Whitefield the heart of these renewals. Edwards was against the Enlightenment principles. He taught that conversion was an emotional experience rather than a rational one.

The second series of the First Awakening started in 1740. These series lasted longer than the first series (Hill 2006:332) and led to the beginning of Methodism. Methodism revealed the influence of the Enlightenment. Methodists did not see any real difference between nominal Christians and heathens. They were not distinguishing between “home” and “foreign” mission. The Christendom was breaking up (Bosch 1991:278). The whole world was a mission field, hence John Wesley’s famous adage, “The world is my parish.”

The Methodist revival had a great influence on the Anglican Church. The evangelical Anglicans remained allegiant to the church and wished to renew it from within. The revival movement had a profound impact on Britain and Scotland (Hill 2006:334). It was through such a series of renewals that some Scottish ministers participated in missionary work in Africa. This new Methodism ushered in the Evangelical Revival which spilled over into non-established churches as well, especially the Presbyterian Church (Bosch 1991:279). In America, the spirit of the first Great Awakening started to diminish and reached its lowest ebb in 1776. Rationalism had invaded the society and slipped quietly into many of the churches.

The “Second Great Awakening” brought a change in the situation as the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches began to experience marked growth after 1776. The American Methodist Church was transformed from being a sect into the largest Protestant church in the American south (Hill 2006:344). The Baptist church in the American south also experienced incredible growth. The new mood generate a missionary spirit. By 1817 the missionary cause had become the great passion of the American churches. The researcher argues that it is significant to note that revivals, even in our time, play a pivotal role in Christian mission.

In Britain it was not much different. The prevailing mood of this period was expressed well in Carey’s famous slogan, “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God!” The Enlightenment had reinforced this mood and helped to bring the entire world within reach of the Gospel. The story of the circumnavigation of the world by James Cook and the explorations of others made many to believe that God in his providence was opening a way for mission also (Bosch 1991:280).

The impact of the “Second Great Awakening” was waning by the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. In the 1820s the American north experienced a renewed revival through the leadership of Presbyterian minister Charles Grandson Finney (Hill 2006:344). Bosch (1991:282) observed that this simply served to underscore the fact

that awakenings are apparently not destined to last; they all run out of steam and need to be revived.

These revivalist groups had become the standard expression of evangelicalism by the middle of the eighteenth century (Hill 2006:338). By the end of the nineteenth century classical evangelicalism was divided, with one stream emphasising ecumenism and social renewal and the other stream confessional orthodoxy and evangelism (Bosch 1991:283). By the beginning of the twentieth century the first stream evolved into the social Gospel and the second into fundamentalism.

### **2.3.4 Mission societies**

One of the most significant products of the Great Awakening of the nineteenth century was the founding of foreign mission societies. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:206) state that the nineteenth century mission movement followed what can be generally called a society model. These were mission organisations that consisted of volunteers. The constitutive word was “voluntarism.” The nineteenth-century society mission model basically understood Christian mission in terms of church extension.

Bevans & Schroeder (2004:212) contends that one of the significant influences of the formation of the voluntary mission societies of this period can be traced to the ideology of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, that is, the social and political egalitarianism of the emerging democracy. Rather than depending on the authority of the institutional church and its official ministers, individual Christians could join together for a common cause.

The establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 (and many others in different states) marked the beginning of a new missionary model. The believers saw the need and importance of working together in Christian mission. Because of the realisation of the need and potential for denominational cooperation and interdenominational efforts, mission became the primary motivation for ecumenical openness within Protestantism in the nineteenth century (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:208). The ecumenical spirit culminated in the founding of ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).

In the beginning the societies were not formed exclusively on the basis of denomination or confession. The Christians from different denominations touched by the Awakening were no longer willing to sit back and wait for the official churches to take the initiative. They grouped together for the sake of world mission (Bosch 1991:280). This dynamic shaped the ecumenical movement within Protestantism. Later the churches began to establish denominational mission societies. The missionaries also developed approaches that were influenced by their time (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:211). We can note that throughout the history of the Christian faith

missionaries used different models that were relevant for their time. Many of the societies were known as faith missions.

It was the mission agencies formed in the eighteenth century that changed the idea of converting individuals to that of planting churches similar to their home countries (Bowen 1996:95). They began by establishing mission stations for the converts and taught them to read to enable them to read the Bible. The converts were also taught to dress, worship, use European musical instruments and the customs of 'Christianity' according to the cultural system of the missionaries (Bowen 1996:96).

The Enlightenment spirit succeeded in thwarting any church renewal on a scale comparable to the Awakenings in Britain and North America. But revival influences soon spilled over from England to Holland. Bosch (1991:281) says that it is important to note that evangelicals whether Anglicans, Lutherans, or members of non-established churches, were nonconformists in the true sense of the word.

It was those touched by the Awakenings who were moved to compassion by the plight of the people exposed to degrading conditions in slums and prisons, in coal-mining districts, on the American frontier, in West Indian plantations and elsewhere whilst the "official" churches were indifferent. It was people like William Wilberforce who fought against slavery (Hill 2006:349). William Carey also protested against sugar imports from West Indian plantations cultivated by slaves. Christians like these addressed the social evils of their era.

### **2.3.5 Women and Youth in mission**

The contributions of the young people and women in general are not very well acknowledged and appreciated in our societies. It is vital to mention that women and youth played a significant role in Christian mission. It will not be an exaggeration to say that they played the major role in the past and still are major participants today. During the period under review we see that women and youth shaped the mission model of the time. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:216) note that one of the phenomenons that had a major impact in shaping the growing mission interest and activity was youth and student movements.

The formation of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM) in 1888 and the World's Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in 1895 lead by John R. Mott and many similar ones had an immense influence in stirring a mission fever in the lives of many young people. The youth movements provided recruits and enthusiasm for cross-cultural ministry within churches and formed future leaders of world mission (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:217).

Women's ministry played a major role in Christian mission and continue to do so up to this day. During this era women ministries were a fundamental component of

mission. The highest percentage of missionaries in the field was women. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:218) aptly points out that on the one hand women's roles were determined, limited and under-acknowledged. On the other hand, their contributions to the missionary efforts were constant, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The reason for this situation was their subordination within the official male dominated church structures and social context. He continues to note that at this time, a woman could only take part directly in cross-cultural ministry as the wife of a missionary, and even then they were not regarded as missionaries at first.

In the nineteenth century many women's organisations such as the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes, Women's Union Missionary Society and the British Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, the World's Missionary Committee of Christian Women and others were formed. The women's missionary organisations later (1910) started to decline as they merged into the denominational mission boards that were of course male dominated. We can note that the women missionaries had a more holistic approach to mission because they involved themselves in every sphere of people's lives. They participated in health services, education and evangelisation. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:219) note that women were an integral part of the faith missions and the youth/student movements.

### **2.3.6 Missionary ideas in the Enlightenment period**

Prominent missionary ideas originated during this era. According to Bosch (1991:285) these motives and ideas were influenced by the Enlightenment frame of mind. It was a period in which centrifugal forces were at work.

The glory of God idea of this era by contrast was not understood to imply human passivity in the saving of souls. God's majesty was seen as being really the other side of his grace and love reaching out to humankind (Bosch 1991:285). Mission was to be done for the glory of God. The Enlightenment's influence led to the gradual decline of this idea because of anthropocentrism.

The theme: 'constrained by Jesus' love' (2 Corinthians 5:14) influenced the motives of this period. The love for God manifested in gratitude and devotion to him, together with the desire to promote the spiritual benefit of others little by little, became the dominant idea that motivated the Christians to mission (Bosch 1991:286).

The missionaries viewed themselves and pagans as all being fundamentally equal and therefore precious in the eyes of God. Love for God and the people often manifested itself in a remarkable commitment and dedication. The missionaries sacrificed themselves to the point of losing their lives for the sake of Christ. Even so, little separation between the soteriological and the humanitarian ideas was in evidence during this period (Bosch 1991:288).

The negative side of the idea is that it manifested itself in a curious mixture of both an optimistic and a pessimistic view of humans (Bosch 1991:288). Furthermore, the early Puritan tradition of individualistic salvation of souls took centre stage. The same individualism was imported upon the objects of Western mission on the “mission fields” and became the hallmark of nineteenth-century mission (Bosch 1991:289). Missionaries understood salvation more on an individual rather than a communal basis.

A shift occurred in the original love idea; compassion and solidarity deteriorated into patronising charity. The idea of the constraining love of Christ deteriorated into feelings of spiritual superiority among European missionaries and an attitude of condescending benevolence to Christians from other cultures.

The Gospel and cultural superiority is the third missionary idea that can be identified during the Enlightenment period. The European Christians, on the whole, did not have any doubt about the superiority of their own faith over all others. Their feeling of religious superiority would spawn beliefs about cultural superiority (Bosch 1991:291). Bevans & Schroeder (2004:230) explain that an overly pessimistic attitude coming out of Calvinistic doctrine of the radical corruption of humanity tended to place the recipients of the missionary efforts in an inferior position. Such a feeling is always portrayed by the powerful and dominant towards the weak and dominated.

Bosch (1991:291) continues and argues that in most cases there was no attempt to distinguish between religious and cultural supremacy. What applied to the one applied equally to the other. Just as the Europe’s religion was predestined to be spread around the world, their culture was to be victorious over all others. The presentation of the Gospel from the perspective of an European world view and not understanding and acknowledging the African culture had the danger of the hearers holding the message superficially while they continue to think and live according to their own culture (Bowen 1996:156).

The Christians involved in Christian mission, then, had little doubt about the depravity of life in non- European societies. The cultures in Africa were seen as “primitive” and its religion as chiefly “animism” (Latourette 1954:1303). Latourette (1954:1303) said that the nineteenth century witnessed the penetration of these congeries of “primitive” peoples by the white man, partition of their land among European powers, and the beginning of a disintegration of the inherited patterns of life. There was almost total absence of any ability to be critical about their European culture or to appreciate foreign cultures. Bowen (1996:89) contends that many missionaries proclaimed a Jesus who could neither question their own culture nor set free the Africans because they had domesticated Jesus, meaning they made him a comfortable part of their own Western culture.



The aim of the European missionary enterprise was seen as civilising and Christianising the pagan world. The European people were optimistic that the whole world would soon be Christian, as Europe was Christian. The missionary activity was part of the West's burden to bring "civilisation" to the people. They believed that they were great nations and had the right to impose the European image on the entire world, and make people 'English' in language, civilised in their habits and Christian in their religion (Bowen 1996:99). The cultures of these people were basically despised, thus there was no possibility for them of seeing Christian faith from the perspective of an African world view. Christianity was spread by means of a *tabula rasa* approach, that is, the local people were a blank slate on which to write while their culture was to be swept aside. It was assumed that local people would be able to practice Christianity in a pure manner (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:48, 49).

The African practices were swept aside by a mentality shaped by the Enlightenment which tended to turn people into objects, reshaping the entire world into the image of the Europe, separating humans from nature and from one another, and "developing" them according to the European standards and suppositions (Bosch 1991:294). The missionaries in general were blind to their own ethnocentrism and followed a more *tabula rasa* approach in terms of the interaction of the Gospel and human culture (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:231).

Many people in Africa who received the European missionaries could not distinguish between what the Gospel of Jesus Christ was and what the culture European missionaries brought was, because of the way in which most missionaries presented the message (Bowen 1996:81). Some missionaries in the past failed to challenge their own European culture with the Gospel and they made the people they were ministering to devalue their culture (Bowen 1996:84). Under the sway of the Enlightenment, culture became the dominant entity and religion one of its expressions.

The first Jewish Christian missionaries, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, struggled in order to avoid transmitting their culture to the people to whom they were sent. The faith life of the early Christians drew people to the Christian faith, not their culture or status, because they were a persecuted minority in a hostile world (Bowen 1996:76). Hendriks (2002:1) discusses what he calls the Acts 15 Agenda. This shall be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

The circumcision question raised by the believers of Antioch was about the relationship between the Gospel and a culture (Hendriks 2002:1). The question was whether the Gospel could be expressed within the Greek culture. The Jews decided that mission is not making proselytes. The missional church should give converts the freedom to inculturate the Gospel message (Hendriks 2002:1). Walls (2002:29, 32) states that the Christian faith must always be translated into human culture to remain alive and crossing cultural boundaries has been the life blood of Christianity.

European missionaries by and large made proselytes in Africa, transplanting denominations. The AICs is not doing that, it's much more akin to the churches founded by Paul and others all over the Roman Empire. The usual argument against the AICs is that of syncretism. The European denominations are infatuated with the Enlightenment syncretism, the DRC and the RCZ too. The story of Acts 15 indicates the importance of making the Gospel relevant and appropriate to the believers. The Gospel was to be expressed in ways that was known by the people in their contextual realities. Hendriks (2002:2) points out that the new believers could identify with Christianity because it was translated into their own cultural world. Everyone should be able to live the Gospel in their own culture not in an imposed alien culture.

The fundamental point that can be deduced from this period is that the Gospel message and European culture was regarded as one. Bosch (1991:297) concludes this idea by evaluating the intertwinement of the Christian Gospel and the European culture. He makes a few qualifications: First, the Gospel always comes to people in cultural robes. Therefore, there is no such thing as a "pure" Gospel, isolated from culture.

Whilst the observation by Bosch is true, it is also vital to point out that the cultural robes of the local people where one ministers are more important than that of the missionary. The disciple of Jesus should not impose on the local people which cultural robes they are to wear. The local people are to be given space to express the Gospel message in their cultural realities and to be critical of their own cultural systems too. Second, there is no point in denying the fact that the European missionaries' culture has also made a positive contribution to other societies.

Bowen (1996:95) quoted Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who says,

*Missionaries of the past made us Africans be ashamed of being ourselves because they so often tried to 'circumcise' us into Europeans before allowing us to be Christians... Yet these people from overseas brought us something too wonderful for words (as a result of which the liberation struggle was well and truly launched), even if they brought it wrapped in Western swaddling clothes. It must be the task of African Christians to share the priceless treasure with others and to ensure that it does not remain an alien thing.*

Third, there have always been those who realised, if sometimes only vaguely, that something was wrong somewhere and who did their best not to impose European European cultural patterns on other people. Bosch (1991:297) continues to argue that the arguments in mitigation should carry at least some weight. And yet, when all has been said and done, a dismal picture of (admittedly well-intended) imposition and manipulation remains. The European peoples had a condescending attitude towards Africans and even today some still believe and behave as if they are more important and more intelligent than Africans.

The fourth idea of this era is mission and the European ideology of a *manifest destiny*. There was a fundamental shift in the mentality of the European nations which were being permeated by the notion of European nations' *manifest destiny*. The missionaries and mission advocates were not sufficiently sensitive to this subtle shift (Bosch 1991:298).

The European missionary enterprises of this period proceeded not only from the assumption of the superiority of Western culture over all other cultures, but also from the conviction that God, in his providence, had chosen the European nations because of their unique qualities to be the standard-bearers of his cause even to the uttermost ends of the world. This period was also known as the "heyday of colonialism", that is, 1880-1920. *Manifest destiny* is a result of nationalism. The nation-state had replaced the holy church and the holy empire. It asserted the principle of national self-determination as the basis for a new political order and was profoundly permeated with the Enlightenment ideas.

In the course of time, these ideas were married to the Old Testament concept of the chosen people. The result was that virtually every white nation regarded itself as being chosen for a particular destiny and as having a unique charisma (Bosch 1991:299). The nationalistic ideology was absorbed into missionary theology, and Christians of a specific nation would develop the conviction that they had an exceptional role to play in the advancement of the Kingdom of God through the missionary enterprise (Bosch 1991:299).

The new mood was not free from paternalism and ethnocentrism. Forgotten were the pleas of Rufus Anderson and others for allowing younger churches and "new" nations to stand on their own and develop lives of their own choice. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:216) argue that the ideas for planting indigenous churches were eroded by the missionaries' view that peoples from non-Western origin were inferior, incapable and untrustworthy. They were looked at as a people that cannot really be trusted with the future of the church. Racism reared its ugly head during this imperialistic period among both the representatives of European governments and missionaries.

The phenomenon of an ideology of *manifest destiny* and mission owed its very existence to the spirit of the Enlightenment (Bosch 1991:302). Bevans & Schroeder (2004:214) say that during the course of time it became impossible to separate and distinguish political and religious motivations. There were some missionaries who were in solidarity with and stood up for the rights of the indigenous peoples but, as pointed out by Bevans & Schroeder (2004:216), on the whole, the missionaries were children of their time and they did not critique colonialism or the attitudes of *manifest destiny*.

David Livingstone believed that Christianity, civilisation and commerce would pave the way for a prosperous, free and non-violent life for the African peoples (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:214). His understanding was that the prerequisite for Christian mission among the African peoples was the opening of the interior of Africa by the West.

All these European ideas changed because of the two world wars and other events that showed all that the so-called civilised and Christian nations of the West can be as barbaric and cruel as anyone else (Bowen 1996:2, 99). Today the word 'missionary' has become as unpopular as the word 'colonialist' and most European mission agencies today have changed their names to ones that do not have the word missionary (Bowen 1996:99).

In concluding this section, it is important to point out that we are not to be over-critical of the European missionaries for their paternalism, ethnocentrism, superiority complex and collaboration with imperialism. It does not mean that one has to deny or condone their weaknesses and failures. They had their shortcomings but we are not to turn a blind eye to what they did for the betterment of the people. Most of the missionaries loved God, had commitment, and sacrificed their lives as the disciples of Jesus Christ in proclaiming the Christian faith. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:221) said that they proclaimed the Gospel in a way that made sense to them as children of their time influenced by the rationalism, pragmatism, secularism and optimism of the Enlightenment. Some of the cultural aspects of the West had positive effects for the African people.

In analysing the past paradigms, it can be noted that the context in which Christians lived had an immense influence on the theology and practice of Christian mission. A person's actions are influenced positively or negatively by his perception of life and this perception is framed by the context in which one lives. As one analyses all the mission paradigms from the early church to the present, it can be noted that the Gospel message is always conveyed through and influenced by the cultural eyes of the disciple involved in mission.

In these paradigms there were many models of doing Christian mission. Bevans & Schroeder (2004:197) contend that there has always been a plurality of mission models during every period of Christianity such as the Pietist and Puritan movements and the Quakers. As we have noted, even during the Protestant Reformation, a mission model emerged in the Anabaptist movement that was different from that of the other Protestantism groups such as the Lutherans and Calvinists. The Anabaptists' model insisted on absolute separation between the church and state.

This chapter shows clearly how the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment periods had influenced Christian mission of the past four centuries. These eras had a great influence on the missionary enterprise of the DRC. It is within the context of the

Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment that Christian mission was done in Africa. The research has shown that the European missionary model interpreted mission under the profound influence of the context they were coming from. The problem was that most of them failed and were unwilling to be sensitive and respectful to the context of the people where they were going. The perception of life of the missionaries derived from their cultural system which was framed by the European context. European missionaries brought a Christian worldview to Zimbabwe that was thoroughly engrained in the European culture (Lingenfelter 1998:12).

The European missionary activities are worthy of praise, but they were not perfect. They were carried out by human beings with a sinful nature. They read the Bible through the lens of their cultural perspective, combined with their prejudices. These made them fail to recognise and understand and appreciate the good qualities of African culture. They transplanted European denominations and culture to Africa, because of a lack of respect and appreciation for the rich African culture. It is as though one is transplanting a tree and its soil to another place instead of planting the seed of the tree in the indigenous soil. The DRC missionaries were influenced by the socio-cultural context of their country of origin in a profound way. A critical and detailed examination of the RCZ is therefore essential.

The Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands was one of the churches that were involved in Christian mission in Africa under the influence of the Reformation and the Enlightenment. It was her missionary enterprise which resulted in the establishment of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC) who sent missionaries to Zimbabwe.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In concluding this chapter and the descriptive history of the Christian mission, we realize that social factors shaped religious doctrines and the other way round. The Christian church grew in the spirit of triumphalism. The church was in partnership with colonialism and profoundly influenced by the Enlightenment philosophy. It is also a reality that there are many positive and commendable developments that were brought about by the Christian mission.

When European missionaries were working in Africa they presented the Gospel from their cultural perspective. Their cultural and socio-political contexts influenced their way of doing Christian mission. The sad thing is that they failed to recognise and acknowledge this fact. West (1991:221) says that the Bible itself shows that particular people interact with God in particular contexts and that God speaks specifically to specific people in specific life situations.

The research has shown that the European missionaries had conceptions different from those of the African people. They did not acknowledge and appreciate the African culture because they came with a superiority complex. They did not perceive the context of African people positively and with sensitivity. The research argued that the European missionaries failed to allow the Africans to interact with God in their local circumstances because of their distorted conceptions. They were insensitive to and despised the socio-cultural and perception of life of African people. This scenario failed to create enough space for the local community to experience the reality of the Bible in a transformative way. The research believes that authentic development can only take place where power has been given to the vulnerable. The people are to be conscious agents of their own development.

This historical-descriptive literary research has also shown that there was a difference between the mission work done by the official denominations and the mission movements. Actually missionaries that did go out were very seldom from the official denominational structures. European churches were not missionary minded in the sense of doing evangelising ministry and reaching out to other countries. It was the counter-movements that countered the rationalisation of denominations that really fuelled missionary movement. The missionaries that reached out in Africa had, on the one hand the intellectual worldview of the Enlightenment but on the other hand – in a way contradictory – the spiritual zeal of the counter movements and revival movements. Both these DNA strands are observable in the DRC mission into Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular.

In this chapter the research reflected on the ways in which the earlier European Christians were thinking and doing mission. The discussion focused on the key question of which contextual systems influenced the missionary model of the DRC. The reason was primarily to get a deeper insight into what Christian mission might mean for us today. It will enable our contemporary church to learn from previous mistakes and develop a relevant perspective and strategies for our own missional responsibility. In the next chapter the research will deal with the RCZ and her Christian mission responsibility. The RCZ grew out of the work of the DRC cross-cultural missionary enterprise. The research shall, amongst others, also briefly analyse the DRC and her missionary enterprise in the light of this chapter. The research shall argue that the identity of the RCZ was shaped by her missionary heritage and the social realities of Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PLANTING AND GROWTH OF THE RCZ

#### 3.1 Introduction

The discussion in the preceding chapter shows how the past paradigms of the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment influenced the Dutch Reformed Church's expression of Christian mission. Then, and also today, this has had great bearing on the RCZ's thinking and doing mission. One can note that the identity of the Church relates to her behaviour. The research believes that a better understanding of the identity of both the DRC and the RCZ will enlighten the members<sup>18</sup> of the RCZ to accept the *missio Dei* as their vocation and challenge. Now and in future, it will help the RCZ members who are participating in Christian mission to make more informed plans and decisions (Saayman 2007:8, 14). The research aims to tell the RCZ's story in order to understand her own identity. In the process of a critical hermeneutical dialogue between the realities of identity, world, Word and the *missio Dei*, the necessary discernment will take place that will lead the RCZ to transformation.

This chapter assesses the inception and development of the RCZ and her expression of mission. As noted before, this study is a historical-descriptive critical literary research. This chapter will examine literature on the DRC and the RCZ to prove the hypothesis of this research. As stated in chapter one, the research's problem is that, in her mission work, how can the RCZ develop appropriate approaches that are meaningful and relevant to being a catalyst of transformation? This chapter will furthermore argue that the key aspect of the problem is that the RCZ is still uncritically and conservatively clinging to the traditional missionary model inherited from the European missionaries, for example in an area such as health work.

As part of the hypothesis of this research, the key question with which this chapter will deal is: **How did the DRC and the RCZ express Christian mission in Zimbabwe?** The identity of the RCZ shall be discussed in a historical perspective. In an attempt to develop a framework for doing intercultural mission in the RCZ, it is extremely important to understand our identity. Who are we? Methodologically, in terms of the metaphor of the cross, this chapter therefore deals with the foot, left and right sides and the centre of the cross.

The foot deals with identity. The RCZ has to know her identity in God. The research proposes that the RCZ is to be a missional church. Our identity is in the Creator God

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<sup>18</sup> In this research, 'members' refers to the people who gather to worship together and are included in the RCZ membership.

who is essentially missional, which implies that the faith community, his body, is to be missional. The identity of the church is missional by its very nature (Guder 1998:11, Bosch 1991:392). Therefore, as argued by Bevans and Schroeder (2004:13), mission is prior to the church and constitutive of her very existence.

The RCZ is a faith community that is at the centre of the cross. It is a faith community in prayer, listening and discerning, struggling to discern the will of God for the present cultural context. In order to discern one should hold the four tension sides of the cross active in a critical hermeneutical and correlational dialogue. The faith community is the interpretive community (Kritzinger 2002:159). The theologising of the RCZ should develop within a personal communal framework and not within the European individualistic framework. Kritzinger (2002:159) emphasises the need for a communal hermeneutic if we are going to develop a transformative praxis.

The research argues that the Biblical communal aspect of the Christian faith and the African cultural system should not be exchanged for the individualism of the Enlightenment philosophy. One of the basic characteristics of the African worldview is community (Ukpong 1999:112, Zulu 2001:6, 7). The African way of life is described as *ubuntu* and in Shona the term is *hunhu*. The research understands communal theology as theology holistically reflected and lived in the community of faith. It is collective and interdependent, not individualistic. In the Zimbabwean context a person's identity is communal and is expressed in relation to others (Moyo 1996:9). The life of a person can only find meaning and being if it is life in communion with and among others (Moyo 1996:17, Taringa 2007:4, Goudert 2003:37). This identity is to correlate with its context.

The left side of the cross focuses on context and refers to the world to which God sent Jesus Christ (John 3:6). In this world there are the sent faith communities dealing with the wider contextual situation and local analysis (Schreiter 1998:4). The RCZ as a faith community discerning the will of God should analyse the world that is our context. As we look at the world (context), we should also look at the Word and keep them in critical dialogue in the discernment process. Kritzinger (2002:162) contends that context is an indispensable dimension of the praxis. It is an inherent necessity for doing theology.

The missional God is sending the missional church into the world (Guder 1998:4, De Gruchy 1994:133-134). Therefore the RCZ should equip and empower all her members as faith communities that endeavour to be faithful and effective witnesses within their cultural context. They are to be actively involved in attempts to address and solve their own cultural problems, needs and challenges. The research believes that theology is contextual by its very nature and that it must address the problems, needs, and challenges of society in an integrative way (Hall 1991:61). In this regard one needs the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Kritzinger (2002:162) explains that the



Holy Spirit is the searching, questioning and discerning Spirit, moving believers to ask questions in order to discern and understand what is happening in their context.

The theology of the RCZ is to enable the Tonga believers within the confines of their world to ask and answer questions. Questions such as: Who are we? Why are we here? What is happening? Why is it happening? What is wrong and what is right? How should we address that which is confronting us? (Kritzinger 2002:147). Therefore it is important to develop a **critical, correlational, dialogical, liberating and transformative hermeneutics** to be in touch with local problems and realities and be connected to the people. The historical and present contexts of the RCZ inform the critical hermeneutic process. The research argues that the RCZ was profoundly influenced by the traditional model of the DRC. The RCZ's identity is also critically correlated with Scripture and tradition.

How was our identity formed? How does our identity correlate with those with whom we should be "in Christ"? If we know what we look like we need to ask: "Is this what we should look like"? Or: "If the Triune God wants to shape us to His image and likeness, what in our present identity needs to change"?

How did the correlational-hermeneutical dialogue of the past form the present identity of the RCZ? Saayman (2007:132) explains that identity involves the way others view a person, but this depends on how one views oneself. It is important for people to know their identity, that is, who they are and the nature of their calling. As Guder (1998:46) puts it: "Any effort to develop a missional church for her context needs to take seriously the church as it presently exists."

The research believes that, in developing a relevant theology and outreach strategies for mission in the RCZ, it is important to describe and analyze the RCZ's past and how she functions at present. It is vital to know our past and present situation in order to transform and become a relevant Church for the present and future. In working towards a new Christian missional framework in the RCZ, the research needs to take the RCZ's past and present circumstances into account.

In this chapter, the descriptive dimension of the RCZ will not be an extensive historically focused account, as it is not within the scope of this work. The doctoral dissertation on the history of the RCZ by Rev Anos Rex Mutumburanzou<sup>19</sup> (1999) provides a better description. The reader could also refer to the more detailed work of Willem Jacobs van der Merwe (1981). The doctoral dissertation of Rev Rangarirai Rutoro<sup>20</sup> (2007) focuses on leadership in the RCZ and also contributes towards a

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<sup>19</sup> Rev AR Mutumburanzou is a former Moderator of the RCZ and Principal of the Murray Theological College. He studied at Stellenbosch University and was the first RCZ minister to obtain a doctorate degree.

<sup>20</sup> Rev R Rutoro is the Principal and Vice-moderator of the RCZ and was the second minister to receive a doctorate degree from the Stellenbosch University.

better understanding of the Church. In the light of the works by Mutumburanzou and Rutoro, the researcher regards it as unnecessary to provide a detailed historical analysis of the RCZ. But, for the purpose of this research, this chapter will briefly examine the historical background of the RCZ from a specific perspective, that is, to highlight the correlation between identity and mission methods.

On the basis of the DRC's missionary model, the research will scrutinize the RCZ's missionary activity. The mission or evangelisation work of the RCZ is according to the European missionary model. This traditional model was permeated with Enlightenment ideas and presuppositions as discussed in the previous chapter. The positive value of the South African DRC missionaries' work through the RCZ can hardly be denied - what she did among the people of Zimbabwe in general is commendable. Through this Church's evangelisation ministry, many thousands of people have become Christians, and the local languages were put into writing. The South African DRC's educational, industrial and medical services also helped the people of Zimbabwe. In general, the DRC has always been involved in developmental, health, educational and agricultural projects (Saayman 2007:7). This chapter will further discuss the research under the section (3.2.4) that refers to the mission's methods.

The research believes that the Zimbabwean people owe respect and appreciation to the DRC and the RCZ because of their mission work. As much as the Zimbabweans value the DRC's mission efforts, the work also had a negative side. Willem Saayman (2007:14) argues that one must not deny any human frailty in formulating and carrying out the missionary calling of the past, but acknowledge this reality. The research agrees with Saayman (2007:126) when he states that the DRC mission, with all her frailties and failures, was a human vessel containing a heavenly treasure. Therefore, a critical analysis needs to be carried out concerning the thinking and strategies of mission in the RCZ today.

The European missionaries won many Africans over to the Christian faith. In the case of Zimbabwe, the majority of the population are Christians, which is estimated to be 75% (Moyo 1996: vii). Some of the missionaries fought slavery and the slave trade which had developed and blossomed through colonialism and capitalism. Missionaries put many of African languages in writing. They played a major role in the translation and distribution of the Bible. The missionaries founded and maintained many schools and played a pivotal role in education systems. They pioneered hospitals bringing the European medical services to deal with the diseases of Africa. Fanuel Mashoko (2005:7) noted that despite the limitations of these missionaries they did commendable work which we should build on in Zimbabwe.

The main purpose is to establish whether the RCZ is relevant in her context in order to develop a communal-contextual missional framework in the RCZ. As stated

before, the presupposition of this research is that the RCZ is still uncritically rooted in the missionary model that the European missionaries transmitted to her. This causes her to fail in being relevant when expressing a contextually effective and communal-missional praxis. This chapter's assumption is that the problem that the RCZ faces today is that she inherited a missionary model that does not conform well to Zimbabwe's quite different socio-cultural circumstances.

While the DRC missionaries' work was commendable (as we shall see in this chapter), it should be said, according to the research, that they were not sensitive and did not regard the local people's culture and context positively. The problem of the DRC traditional missionary model is a contextual and cultural factor. Based on the research's understanding of contextualisation, the DRC mission has failed to allow the Gospel message to become flesh in the new Zimbabwean contexts and cultures. The model that the DRC created had more in common with her own culture and context than with that of where she was now living and ministering (Saayman 2007:139, Lingenfelter 1998:12, 172). Their European cultural systems had influenced their practices as human beings.

The research shall argue that the missionaries played a role in creating a superficial Christian faith in the lives of some of those people who heard and accepted their missionary message. Their work has managed to reach only the superficial life of most of the Karanga people. This research wants to know why something of this nature has happened, and is still happening. To a great extent this was due to the fact that European missionaries failed to comprehend the reality of evil forces, witchcraft and other indigenous beliefs. The research argues that the DRC missionary problem was a cultural-religious factor influenced by the socio-cultural features of the Enlightenment model. This chapter shall examine this in section 3.2.2.2.

Another aspect of this research deals with ethnicity. The other problem of the DRC's missionary practice was ethnicity. This was due to the theological factors as noted before. Their missionary enterprise in Zimbabwe concentrated on one ethnic group, thus creating an ethnic or tribal Church. This has always been a problem, because most of the members of the RCZ in all provinces are basically of the Karanga ethnic group. As stated in chapter one, the RCZ is known as 'the Church of the Karanga people' (*Kereke yevaKaranga*). This Church did not have members from other ethnicities, such as the Ndebele, Korekore, Manyika or others in Zimbabwe. Therefore, she could not develop sufficient sensitivity to cultural differences in cross-cultural ministry, such as in her Binga outreach. The research agrees with Saayman (2007:14) when he contends that the church of Jesus Christ should reject the planting and development of racially or ethnically separated churches.

The research shall also attempt to examine how rigidity and a conservative perception have negatively affected the Church in Zimbabwe. It is sad to note that

flexibility and creativity is unappreciated in the RCZ, because it is argued that this distorts church traditions; thus, only uniformity is encouraged.

In the light of her mission, the RCZ faces the problem of an inability to contextualise her mission holistically. The research proposes an intercultural perspective in the RCZ's thinking and doing mission. **If the RCZ would use the intercultural mission approach such as in the Binga outreach then she will transform the lives and culture of the Tonga people (or any other group) and will also be transformed towards becoming a missional church.** She must critically and constructively assess the theory and practice of mission that she inherited from the missionaries in order to develop a communal-contextual mission framework. If she fails to evaluate herself analytically and to transform in a holistic and contextual way, she will not be relevant and will not transform the lives of the Tonga people. This research is a proposal to initiate the process of developing an appropriate and relevant framework for doing mission in the RCZ.

The next section will briefly focus on the DRC and her missionary enterprise. The focus of this research will be on her missionary work in Zimbabwe.

### **3.2 The DRC and mission**

The history of the Europeans who came to Africa reveals a combination of the cultural, social, religious, political and economic dimensions of the time. A better understanding of the mission of the South African DRC is possible if it is related to, and placed in, various contexts of the European people's history (Saayman 2007:2). The history of the church is an important dimension of the world's history. Saayman (2007:6) rightly contends that church history can be differentiated, but cannot be separated from the human history. Christians should have a proper socio-historical understanding of mission in the past. An understanding of the socio-historical context will assist one's efforts to evaluate how Christian mission was expressed in the past.

In the history of Africa, the colonial period began with the scramble for Africa, when various Western colonial powers sought to assert their authority over the vast regions of Africa (Pauw 1980:11). To find a 'navigable route' from the east to the interior of Africa, the British government sponsored Livingstone's Zambezi expedition of 1856 to 1864. He was to investigate scientifically the geography and resources of the region in order to open up legitimate trade to replace the slave trade (Pauw 1980:11).

During these expeditions, Livingstone saw the falls in the Zambezi River, one of the great wonders of the world. The local people call it the *Motsi-wa-tunya*, meaning the smoke that thunders, but was later named Victoria Falls after the British queen. The research notes that by not respecting the African names proves that some colonialists were insensitive to the people of Africa.

On 4 December 1857, David Livingstone's famous appeal in the Senate House in Cambridge: *I go back to Africa to try to make open a path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry on the work which I have begun? I leave it with you*, and his subsequent death in 1873 were the two major factors that contributed to the arrival of Christian missionaries in Africa. David Livingstone's objective was to open the way for the Gospel. He also dreamt of the benefits that Western civilisation or modernity could bring to Africa (Latourette 1954:1308).

The three C's of Livingstone, that is, Christianity, civilisation and commerce, formed an integral part of colonialism (Saayman 2007:64), which came intertwined with the Christian faith. Christianity first paved the way for colonialism, but sometimes they coincided. Most of the various organisations and associations represented the European interests under the influence of the Enlightenment, not the interests of Africans. Christianisation was strongly linked to and often equated in the minds of most missionaries with European civilisation (Saayman 1990:313).

The 19th century saw a great expansion of the missionary endeavour. The denominational divisions that originated in Europe greatly influenced the way Christian mission was practised in Africa. The new African Christians were unaware of these differences that were transferred to them. It is vital to note that ecclesiastical divisions hamper the expression of Christian mission. Jay (1978:80) notes that 'comity' agreements were made by which a territory was regarded as the exclusive field of a particular denomination.

### **3.2.1 The DRC background**

The DRC in the Netherlands planted churches in some parts of the world. One of her missionary works was the planting of the DRC in South Africa. As mentioned before, the missionary enterprise of this Church started during the colonial period. As noted in the previous chapter, the Protestant Reformation and Enlightenment paradigms profoundly influenced the missionary understanding and practice of the DRC in the Netherlands.

The DRC was transplanted from the Netherlands to South Africa. Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape of Good Hope on 6 April 1652 leading the Dutch East India Company (Gerstner 1997:16, Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:5, 11, Van der Merwe 1982:9). The first congregation of the DRC was established at Cape Town in 1665 (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:205). For some time, this congregation, and several others established later, remained a colonial branch of the Church in Holland. From 1652 to 1824, they were under the ecclesiastical control of the presbytery of Amsterdam (Pauw 2007:62, Saayman 2007:34, Gerstner 1997:20). The Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort form the confessional basis of the DRC (Gerstner 1991:10, Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:12).

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the DRC adopted the role of the Dutch colonial government state Church in the Cape Colony (Pauw 2007:57, Gerstner 1997:20). The majority of the DRC's members were Afrikaners. They were loyal to the DRC because of the bond between them, and because of being a feature of their distinctive life and culture. Their Church was theologically very conservative (Latourette 1954:1306). The white settlers emphasised the covenant theology (Gerstner 1997:29, Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:12). Based on their understanding of covenant theology, the DRC supported the colonial state. Their theological understanding led to white settlers viewing being white as Christian.

The white settlers steadily increased in the Cape Colony subjugating the indigenous Khoisan people and seizing their land and livestock (Gerstner 1997:16). The local people were made poor through a painful process and had to depend on the white settler farmers for survival. This was done deliberately to force the indigenous people to work for the white settlers. This was the same approach used later in Zimbabwe. It is sad to note that the church in a way participated in this dehumanising process.

According to Saayman (2007:20), the Europeans, who arrived in South Africa by the end of the 18th century, no longer viewed themselves as Dutch, German or French. In their new home, they saw and established themselves as being 'Afrikaners'. This early white colonist development of group consciousness was ethnocentric. One of the consequences of the development of nationalism was the idea of *manifest destiny* whereby individual European nations regarded themselves as being chosen for a unique destiny in history (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:207). Jonathan Neil Gerstner (1991:3) states that the Dutch colonists' understanding of ethnic calling was closely interrelated with a sense of covenantal calling. European civilisation and Christianity basically characterised this ethnocentrism which was later distorted into ethnic superiority (Saayman 2007:21, 24, Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:7). These two dominant elements affirmed white superiority and were intertwined. The DRC life and theology, according to Gerstner (1997:16) played a significant role in the formation of a distinctive identity among white settlers and in their conviction of being superior to the indigenous people. This reflects the influence of the Enlightenment, discussed in chapter two.

The DRC faith tradition was reformed, finding its roots in the Calvinist tradition of the Netherlands and Pietist influence of the Scottish Reformed tradition (Pauw 2007:48). A strong infusion of the Pietistic strain of the Evangelical revival entered into the DRC and the Reformed evangelicalism revived the DRC's mission zeal (Pauw 2007:213 Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:18). Pietism which was discussed in chapter two nurtured individualistic spirituality in the church of the time and today still plays an influential role. The DRC mission was basically a Pietist tradition. Saayman (2007:40) says,

*Pietism played an important role and became a leading and lasting characteristic of the DRC mission.*

Rev Ritzema van Lier's influence (1786-1793) signalled the beginning of organised and sustained missionary fervour and involvement (Saayman 2007:15, 31). He grew up and studied in the Netherlands where the Enlightenment thinking impacted on his perception of life. Van Lier was influenced by the Dutch Second Reformation and the evangelical awakening in Britain (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:18). He experienced new birth and rejected the Enlightenment's uplifting of human reason because his experience was Pietistic. Saayman (2007:29) explains that Van Lier's pronouncements strongly emphasized personal experience, such as a personal salvation of the soul, a mystical approach to personal faith, and receiving direct revelations in his quiet time (Gerstner 1997:16). He was inclined towards a more experiential experience of the Christian faith - his motivation for mission.

In 1788, Van Lier formed the Pray and Work Society, in which women played a significant and leading role. This society was devoted to charity, education and mission among the slaves and indigenous people (Saayman 2007:30). He equipped and built the group so that they could participate in mission. Van Lier died in 1792, leaving a lasting inheritance of mission in the DRC.

Another influential person in the DRC mission fervour was the Rev Michiel Christiaan Vos, who was born in the Cape and studied in the Netherlands. Saayman (2007:32) points out that Vos suffered chronic illness in his childhood that complicated his schooling. His conversion around 1777 was a pietistic experience and he felt a strong calling to do mission work among the slaves. To study, he went to the Netherlands in 1781, and served congregations in the Netherlands until his return in 1793.

In 1794, Vos began his ministry and immediately announced his vision of ministering to whites, blacks and slaves (Pauw 2007:65). Gerstner (1997:27) points out that the white settlers viewed the religion of the Khoisan as no religion at all. The research notes that the white settlers including most of the DRC ministers were not sensitive to the cultural systems of the indigenous people. Saayman (2007:33) explains that, despite the objection from some members of his congregation who contended that this was not how things were done in their place, Vos still started to minister to a small group of slaves. Soon the opposition crumbled and the work grew in a remarkable way. Vos also went to minister in Sri Lanka and India in 1802 and returned to the Cape colony in 1809 ministering to various congregations (Saayman 2007:34). Vos impacted on the DRC in the Cape in a profound way. The research notes that from the very beginning the white settlers created second class Christians among the black people.

The influential role played by Van Lier and Vos indicates the importance of the Christian community's leadership in Christian mission. The researcher agrees with Saayman (2007:44) when he explains that the church should not be a one-person

show, yet the minister's leading and motivating role is important in creating mission zeal in the church. Basically, the focal point of the DRC mission zeal during this early stage was South Africa.

The DRC continued to grow and was authorised to have her own synod to enable her to make decisions in her own context (Davenport 1997:51, Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:18). The Netherlands reluctantly granted 'autonomy' to the South African DRC congregations when the British colonial rule was established in 1806. But it took too long (141 years) for the DRC to receive her 'autonomy,' which influenced the DRC mission enterprise, because she also took a long time to give 'autonomy' to the churches she would plant in other countries of Africa. It was basically political influence that played a major role in the granting of 'autonomy' to the RCZ. The DRC gave 'autonomy' to the churches she had planted as the spirit of nationalism arose and African nations struggled for independence from colonial rule.

In 1824, the first autonomous Synod of the DRC of South Africa took place with 14 constituting congregations (Davenport 1997:52) attending. This marked the beginning of the DRC's autonomous activities, including her missionary enterprise. This Synod passed an important resolution, that is, to ordain the DRC members involved in mission work among non-Christians (Saayman 2007:35). The ordained missionaries were to administer sacraments to the non-Christians whom they had converted. Saayman (2007:35) points out that this decision implied the introduction of a second-class ordination of an office that could not minister to white established congregations. Later, in 1962, this decision was revised, when the DRC Synod resolved to ordain missionaries as ministers, thus ending the distinction between the offices of missionaries and ministers (Pauw 2007:164).

Pauw (1980:44) notes several factors that played a restrictive role concerning a more permanent official missionary enterprise. First, the Church was still under control of the Church in the Netherlands and the state. It was only after an ordinance was passed on 8 November 1843 that the Church became free from state control and interference. Secondly, the Church faced problems in having to cope with a shortage of ministers to serve her congregations. The third factor detrimental to the missionary enterprise in the DRC was the actions and attitudes of certain foreign missionaries, notably those of the London Missionary Society that generated antagonism among many colonists.

The church started to grow as more Europeans settled permanently in South Africa and Africans received the Gospel message. Because these whites came into contact with Africans, they brought the Christian faith to the indigenous people, which was in accordance with the policy of the authorities in the Netherlands of propagating the true Reformed faith (Van der Merwe 1982:10). The Africans were accepting the Christian faith, and the DRC was involved in preaching to them, but tended to treat them in a paternalistic fashion (Latourette 1954:1307; Saayman 2007:23).



The relations between whites and blacks were problematic, even during the early encounters between the two races. Ethnicity and identities remained a major problem in the DRC missionary enterprise then and in the future, including the cross-cultural mission in Zimbabwe. The DRC ministers attempted to open worship services to all races during the early period but some members objected on the basis that the black people and the slaves were dirty people (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:18).

The influence of the Enlightenment regarding the superiority of the European Christianity and culture influenced the DRC traditional missionary model. The European Christians did not on the whole have any doubt concerning the superiority of their own faith over all others. Their feeling of religious superiority would spawn beliefs about cultural superiority (Bosch 1991:291, Bevans & Schroeder 2004:230). Bowen (1996:89) contends that many missionaries proclaimed a Jesus who could neither question their own culture nor set free the Africans because they had domesticated Jesus, meaning they made him a comfortable part of their own European culture.

The cultures of indigenous people were basically despised, thus there was no possibility of seeing Christian faith from the perspective of an African worldview. European Christianity was spread by means of a *tabula rasa* approach, that is, the local people were a blank slate on which to write while their culture was to be swept aside. It was assumed that local people would be able to practice Christianity in a pure manner (Bevans & Schroeder 2004:48, 49). Saayman (2007:21) states that most colonists vehemently opposed any attempt to introduce equality between whites, slaves and the Khoikhoi, as the non-white people were regarded as second-class citizens. The slave owners were not comfortable to practise the same religion with slaves and non-white people. According to Saayman (2007:23, 24), the people perceived 'Christian' as synonymous with white and 'heathen' with black people (Gerstner 1997:16, 29). From the very beginning there was an uneasy co-existence between racism and mission zeal (2007:42). The racial tension in the DRC mission causes problems even today, because the RCZ and DRC white congregations in Zimbabwe find it difficult to work together truly.

The white population in the Cape Colony continued to increase, but some white farmers were disillusioned with the British administration and they started to move away from the Cape Colony. This was known as the Great Trek (Pauw 2007:66, Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:93). The Great Trek was a large-scale exodus of the Afrikaner farmers from the Cape Colony to the North. The main reason for this Afrikaner movement was their dislike of the social equalisation of whites, coloureds and blacks, introduced by the British authorities. The second reason was the poor economic situation of the Afrikaners involved in the movement (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:94, 96).

This mass movement of the Afrikaner people and their coloured servants encouraged a national awareness among the Afrikaners (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:34, 94). The Great Trek greatly affected the DRC, as the emigrating colonists were Afrikaners (Saayman 2007:38). The Great Trek provided an opportunity for the DRC and other churches however to evangelise more black people whom they encountered. The understanding that all non-whites were heathens and therefore objects of mission had a great impact on the DRC's understanding and doing of Christian mission.

During this Great Trek, the Afrikaners started to perceive themselves as 'the chosen people' like Israel (Saayman 2007:38 Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:7, Gerstner 1997:16). They viewed themselves as the vessel of God with which they could propagate the Christian faith and civilisation, and protect blacks from barbaric killings and fighting. Their perception was that God was going to protect the Afrikaner ethnic group from extinction if it engages in mission, but mission on their own terms (Kgatla 2002:51). This connotation originated in the concept of manifest destiny inspired by the Enlightenment, as discussed in chapter two. Saayman (2007:40) aptly points out that there is interplay between a socio-historical context and mission obedience. The idea of a manifest destiny was playing a significant role in the theology and life of the DRC and shows how a socio-cultural context and mission impact on each other.

Whilst the missionary zeal in the time of Van Lier and Vos focused on the DRC's work in South Africa, the spirit of mission that started in the 1860s focused across the borders. The American and British awakenings (discussed in chapter 2) influenced the development of foreign mission and caused a revival in the DRC (Saayman 2007:47). From the 1890s to the 1940s, there also developed an affirmation of a new Afrikaner identity. An important aspect of this identity was revealed in their reaching out to other nations in Africa with Christianity (2007:45).

Colonialism also played a major role in the cross-cultural mission zeal. The Afrikaners were convinced that they were chosen and called to adhere to the Reformed faith and propagate this tradition in darkest Africa (Saayman 2007:48). Pauw (2007:65) contends that the DRC provided a unifying basis for the Afrikaners' religious identity. Pauw (2007:213) quotes Bosch who contends that Reformed evangelicalism, as introduced by Andrew Murray, Kuyperian neo-Calvinism, and romantic nationalism were the three main forces that shaped the Afrikaner identity.

Kuyper is alleged to have designed creation theology. Botman (2004:126) argues that the creation theology would serve as an adequate cornerstone of a theology of race that would become the grand narrative of the shift from a missionary apology to a theological justification of apartheid. Pauw (2007:219) explains that the understanding of God's counsel meant the preservation of the Afrikaner nation. He continues to point out that the 1935 mission policy reflected this when the DRC pronounced that social mixing between black and white was undesirable.

Saayman (2007:49) points out that, in the biography of Andrew Louw, a DRC missionary in Zimbabwe, Louw reveals a clear and strong desire to evangelise, but is entangled with the ideological and ethnocentric claims connected with the role of the Afrikaner in Africa. The perception that God placed a white superior race in Africa to civilize and Christianise the heathens motivated the Afrikaners. The researcher agrees with Saayman (2007:65) who says that the Enlightenment idea of a manifest destiny, that was used to justify colonialism, played a role in the DRC's thinking and practise.

While the DRC was fulfilling their special calling, there was always a close relationship between the missionaries and the colonial government. As stated before, the research argues that this was based on their understanding of the covenant theology (Gernster 1997:29). The research points out that the relationship between the DRC and the state would be the same as in her missionary enterprise in Zimbabwe. As Saayman (2007:65) notes, the DRC missionaries practised their mission just like any other colonial missionaries. They sometimes sought the intervention of the military of the colonial authorities to force the black people to accept their missionaries (2007:65).

Of particular importance for the DRC's missionary enterprise was the arrival of the Scottish ministers whose moral sincerity and spiritual depth gave impetus to the movement that Van Lier had initiated (Pauw 1980:47). The name of the Murray family deserves particular mention. The Murrays mostly belonged to the 'Old Light Presbyterians', a section of the very sincere and devout Scottish Presbyterian Church (1980:45).

Andrew Murray (Jnr) played a most significant role in the life of the DRC. He was the son of the first Andrew Murray and, like his father, became a minister. Andrew Murray (Jnr) was born in 1828 and studied at Marischal College in Scotland, and Utrecht in the Netherlands. He came to South Africa in response to a plea, reinforced by the British governor of that time, for the clergy to meet the shortage of pastors in the Dutch Churches (Latourette 1954:1306). Some of the Scottish missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS) became DRC ministers (Pauw 2007:65). Most of the Scottish ministers (including the Murrays) were recruited from the Church of England. The Murrays later identified more closely with the Free Church of Scotland. Pauw (1980:46) observes that the role of Murray (Jnr) in Christian mission had a profound influence on many facets of the church's life and work. He was influential in developing the DRC mission policy and methods.

### **3.2.2 The DRC mission policy**

As the DRC grew, mission policies and practices started to develop. Saayman (2007:7) points out two dominant understandings of mission operatives in the DRC's history. Firstly, mission was mainly perceived as conversion of the Gentiles and

planting of churches. Secondly, mission was the work of white people towards, and for, black and coloured people. There has always been a committee for evangelising to oversee the ministry among white people, and a committee for mission to oversee the missionary work among black people.

The Synods of 1824 and 1826 dealt with various matters relating to mission, and the DRC's first missionary, L Marquard, was ordained in November 1826 at the Synod. At the Synod of 1834, it was resolved that non-white members (heathens) would be considered as full members of the DRC (Saayman 2007:36). The research argues that the Synod decision did not change anything because the racist practices continued to increase in the DRC. This affected the way mission was done in Zimbabwe, as the discussions will latter show.

The issue of racism proved to be a continuing thorn in the side of the DRC and her cross-cultural mission. Pauw (2007:68) points out that during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the DRC's official position was that all Church members, irrespective of ethnicity, were to worship together. When the question of race was discussed at the DRC Synod of 1857, the position of the Church changed. Saayman (207:37) argues that the decision of 1857 indicated that attitudes of race had hardened. It was resolved that Christians could not be differentiated because of race, but if the celebration of Holy Communion hampered the spreading of the Gospel because of the weakness of some white members, then the Communion should be served separately (Pauw 2007:60). This was decided with reference to Romans 14:1.

According to Pauw (2007:75), Murray (Jnr) submitted the following proposal after the Synod's discussion of separate worship:

*Synod regards it as desirable and Scriptural that our members out of the heathendom should be accepted and incorporated within our existing congregations, wherever this can happen; but where this measure could, as a result of the weakness of some, obstruct the advancement of the cause of Christ among the heathen, then congregations formed out of the heathen or which may still be formed, shall enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building.*

Saayman (2007:37) contends that the total edifice of the establishment of separate churches based on race was subsequently built on this pious decision. The DRC established ethnic churches, the DRC in Africa for black people, the DRC Mission Church for coloureds and the Indian Reformed Church for Indians. These churches were organised on the basis of a well established policy of separation in the DRC (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:206). This resolution had an impact on the future mission work in Zimbabwe. The research argues that the result was that the DRC established separate churches in Zimbabwe for the Shona people and for the whites. They later established a church for the Chewa speaking immigrants who came from Malawi and Zambia to work in Zimbabwe. It should be noted that the practice for separate

churches white settlers and the indigenous people was common in Protestant circles in Africa.

At the Synod of 1857, a Missions Committee was established to oversee the DRC's missionary work in the Cape Colony and beyond the borders (Saayman 2007:50; Pauw 2007:71). The DRC used the traditional missionary model of viewing them as 'home missions' and 'foreign missions'. These terms are no longer used. The research agrees with Saayman (2007:13), who contends that Christian communities are always found, all over the world, who simultaneously reach out to areas near and far. In this period, the DRC mission zeal was focused on some countries in Africa. One can mention however that the DRC traditional missionary model was deductive, with a top to bottom perspective. Kritzinger (1994:55) states that the scenario lacked the involvement of the local communities in the conception, planning and implementation of missionary enterprise. This would also have an impact on the identity of the RCZ which is deductive.

Andrew Murray (Jnr) was appointed a member of this Missions Committee and remained a member for virtually half a century until his retirement in 1906. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Missionary Training Institute at Wellington in the Cape, and took the initiative to open the way for the DRC to start work in Malawi. In due course, the DRC started mission work also in other countries, such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria and others.

Women took part in the DRC missionary enterprise, but very few women were involved primarily because of the social restrictions (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:27). Murray (Jnr) worked to raise the status of Afrikaner girls and also to plant the concept of evangelical piety and individual conversion (Saayman 2007:49). Through his work, he stirred women in the DRC to support and participate in Christian mission. He started the Huguenot Seminary that trained many girls, most of whom were involved in missionary endeavours. The model of training placed an emphasis on heart, hand and head, thus balancing intellectual achievement with practical training (2007:49). Many women who trained at the Huguenot Seminary went to Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi and other countries as missionaries and others married missionaries. The women's prayerfulness, commitment, ability to organise fund-raising ventures, and their willingness to enter the mission fields contributed immensely to the success of the DRC missionary activities.

The decisions of these early Synods also led to the establishment of mission committees. The missionary activities as managed and administered by various Mission Committees were referred to as the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM). The researcher views it as the missionary arm that followed the DRC's mission policies and practices. The DRCM used a multiple or comprehensive approach as its method of mission, consisting of evangelism, education, medical work, agricultural and industrial work (Van der Merwe 1982:122, Kritzinger 1994:53).

Kritzinger (1994:54) points out that all the DRC missionaries were convinced of the correctness of their traditional missionary model. The Father had sent Jesus Christ on a comprehensive ministry (Saayman 2007:5). The research shall later look critically at one of the DRC practices in mission, the medical services in Zimbabwe.

The DRCM applied the policy of studying and using the people's language when working and translating the Bible, and encouraged the writing of literature in the vernacular. Missionaries developed the Shona language into a written language, started to prepare Christian literature, and played a major role in the translation and distribution of the Bible. This policy had a lasting effect upon the Dutch Reformed missionary planning, and continued to influence the building and growth of the RCZ (Van der Merwe 1981:55). The missionaries also founded and maintained the vast majority of schools (education) and opened up hospitals, bringing European medical services to deal with Zimbabwean diseases.

The DRC missionaries were doing missionary work motivated by the love of God. The theme of being constrained by love which influenced the missionary motives of the DRC was the child of Enlightenment as discussed in the previous chapter. The research argues that this is a theological mission motif which should like others, be evaluated and used critically in mission work of the RCZ.

The love for God as gratitude and devotion to him, together with the desire to promote the spiritual benefit of others little by little became the dominant idea that motivated the Christians to mission (Bosch 1991:286). The research notes that this is an illustration of how a theological motif can influence mission theology, policy, practice and attitude negatively.

The Love for God and the people often manifested itself in a remarkable commitment and dedication. The missionaries sacrificed themselves to the point of losing their lives for the sake of Christ. Even so, little separation between the soteriological and the humanitarian ideas was in evidence during this period (Bosch 1991:288).

The negative side of the idea is that it manifested itself in a curious mixture of both an optimistic and a pessimistic view of humans (Bosch 1991:288). Furthermore the early Puritan tradition of individualistic salvation of souls took centre stage. The same individualism was imported upon the objects of European mission on the "mission fields" and became the hallmark of nineteenth-century mission (Bosch 1991:289). The research argues that the European missionaries understood salvation more on an individual rather than a communal basis.

There was a shift that occurred in the original love idea; compassion and solidarity deteriorating into patronising charity. The constraining love of Christ deteriorated into feelings of spiritual superiority among the DRC missionaries and an attitude of patronising compassion to Christians from Zimbabwean cultures. The research

argues that although the missionaries' love and commitment is commendable, it should be said that they did not respect our cultural system.

Indeed constrained by the love of God the DRC missionaries started to proclaim the Gospel to the Shona people. They slowly began to establish themselves among the Karanga people in Masvingo province.

### **3.2.2.1 The establishment of mission stations**

The DRC missionaries used the mission-station approach. This approach was technically known as the comprehensive approach which was based on the realisation that the proclamation of the Gospel had to be combined with education, medical, agricultural and industrial activities (Kritzinger 1994:53) Bevans & Schroeder (2004:261) point out that it focused on individual conversions and a tendency to isolate people from their social context. Bowen (1996:1) contends:

*The word mission expresses the idea of movement but it is strange that in many parts of the world Christians have set up Mission Stations which express the idea of standing still.*

The first mission station was founded in 1891 and was named Morgenster (meaning morning or day star), the name of the house in which Louw grew up in his hometown, Paarl. According to Cronje (1982:118) Louw's prayer was that the first mission should be like the Bright Morning Star heralding the coming of the sun of righteousness in the hearts of people (2 Pet 1:19, Rev 22:16).

As the missionary work in Zimbabwe was growing steadily, the need for more missionaries arose. Many women and men responded to God's call to participate in His mission. It is of great interest to note that many family members, who became missionaries, characterised the DRC mission in Zimbabwe. The Louws were related to the Murrays, Daneels and Steyns (Saayman 2007:66). The missionaries' children also followed in their parents' footsteps by participating in mission work. Most of the early missionaries in Zimbabwe came from prominent families in the Cape Colony.

The missionaries showed great commitment and faced many difficulties but, despite the then high taxing rate as a result of death and illness, by 1909, the number of white missionaries had risen to 21 (Saayman 2007:57). According to the research, the graves of missionaries found at the RCZ mission stations are a sign of their commitment to missionary zeal and faith.

Despite encountering many challenging situations, the DRCM established other mission stations that are Pamushana in 1901, Jichidza in 1908, Alheit in 1909, Makumbe in 1915, and Nyashanu in 1954. The Berlin Missionary Society of the Lutheran faith tradition founded Gutu in 1892, Chibi in 1897 and Zimuto in 1904, but,

in 1906, the German missionaries handed over these three mission stations to the DRC (Van der Merwe 1981:60-61).

The transfer of the Gutu, Chibi and Zimuto mission stations from the Lutheran missionaries indicates the cooperation of the DRCM with other churches and missionary societies in Zimbabwe. Another example was the DRCM's co-operation with the Church of Sweden in publishing a Christian magazine, a Karanga hymnal and the training of female nursing orderlies (Van der Merwe 1981:65). This reveals the co-operation and harmony between these different churches and missionary organisations. One could say that the DRC practise of mission was that of ecumenical approach and cooperation. The research believes that co-operation of churches in an intercultural mission is important and commendable.

As the colonial governments divided the continent of Africa amongst themselves, the various missionary societies also demarcated areas of operation for one another. The research regards the influence of the partitioning of Africa as a principle of co-operation that was used in the missionary enterprise. The Enlightenment context, from which they came, had moulded and influenced the missionaries. The research contends that the strategy of setting mission stations in Zimbabwe by the DRC missionaries reflects the presence of cultural insensitivity and awareness. They viewed our culture and religion as nothing at all (Gerstner 1997:27). Saayman (1990:313) states that most European missionaries had a very negative view of the cultures of the African peoples.

The setting up of mission stations to the research's view was destroying the Zimbabwe communal understanding of life and forcing the culture of individualism. The idea of mission stations also separated the missionaries from the people of Zimbabwe. It lacked identification with indigenous people as stated by Mashoko (2005:43). The DRC missionaries should have had greater impact upon the Karanga people if they had made more effort to identify with them. They were not in communion with the local people.

In these mission stations and other areas the DRC was ministering, they used the comprehensive approach as mentioned earlier. The research shall discuss the four practices of the DRC missionary enterprise briefly and critically look at one of them, the medical service in section 3.4.3.

### **3.2.2.2 Evangelism, education, medical and industrial work**

In establishing mission stations, the DRC missionaries combined evangelising ministry, education, medical, and agricultural-industrial work. The DRCM thus was involved in social ministries.



The evangelisation of non-Christians was Andrew Louw's life-long passion - a passion shared by this missionary team to Zimbabwe (Van der Merwe 1981:65). Evangelisation took place in an atmosphere of prayer. According to Saayman (2007:68), the primary motivation remained evangelisation of the heathens and was a lasting proof of Andrew Murray Jnr's profound influence on the DRC mission.

The missionaries applied a policy of studying and using the language of the indigenous people. They translated the Bible and encouraged the writing of literature in the vernacular. The importance missionaries put in the vernaculars in Africa profoundly affected the cultures (Sanneh 1989:3). This policy had a lasting effect upon the DRCM's missionary planning and has continued to influence the building and growth of the indigenous RCZ (Van der Merwe 1981:55).

Sanneh (1989:3, 69) states that language is the intimate and powerful expression of culture and lay at the heart of Christian mission. God uses human language whenever he is interacting with human beings (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:4). The use of the indigenous languages was a good approach in evangelising the people of Africa. Sanneh (1989:4) explains that the translation into local languages provided a fertile ground for the growth of Christianity which we are experiencing in Africa today. The translation of the Bible into the vernaculars also enabled the people of Africa to express the Gospel message in their cultural context. Sanneh (1989:214, 176) refers to translatability of the Christian faith communicated by European missionaries although stemming from unintended consequences. The Gospel transforms, penetrating a society's culture, translating Jesus Christ, making the Word flesh within it (Walls 2002:14).

Evangelism was closely related to education, thus schools were opened at every station and the DRCM started a teachers' training college at Morgenster. Education was implemented as an instrument to evangelise non-Christians in Zimbabwe. Education was perceived as an instrument of mission during this period (Zwana 2007:71). This strategy was based on the Roman Catholic missionary premise that 'the one who controls the schools will own Africa' (Saayman 2007:73).

Teachers had to be evangelistic. Most of the first converts attended school, as the youngsters at school were more receptive to the Christian message than the adults. The DRCM had compassion for people with physical disabilities and established schools for them. They ministered to children with hearing as well as visual impairments through the Henry Murray School for the Deaf (started in 1948) and the Copota Schools for the Blind (started in 1927) respectively (Van der Merwe 1981:98,99)

It is sad to observe that, today, the RCZ does not put much emphasis on reaching out to young students, especially college and university students. The Pentecostals have capitalised on this and most of their growth can be attributed to their ministering

to college and university students. The research believes that we must equip people to minister in a way that takes cognisance of the modern trends in these institutions of higher learning. This was part of the RCZ's earlier identity that was later somehow neglected. The church needs to reclaim that essential part of her identity in a new communal and contextual way. The research's viewpoint is that it would enhance transformation of the church.

The negative dimension in the DRCM's educational policy in Zimbabwe was the establishment of separate education for white people. According to Van der Merwe (1981:71), Andrew Louw and his wife started a boarding school at Morgenster to cater for the needs of the white settlers. The white people highly appreciated this educational initiative of the DRC missionaries. One may argue that the colonial settler regime's educational policies prohibited mixed schooling. The research argues that it was well-suited to their ethnocentric superiority complex. The research believes that their ethnocentrism, which led to the establishment of the DRC policy of separateness, had a profound influence on the sad development in education in Zimbabwe.

In the European traditional missionary enterprise healing was also important. The Christian healing ministry was understood from the scientific Enlightenment view. Jansen (1995:298) explains that medical mission had begun as a supporting service to evangelism but later achieved its own place as a practice in what is known as the comprehensive approach. Ekechi (1993:290) points out that the medical mission was an influential practice in promoting traditional missionary evangelism. The DRCM, like most European mission societies, practised medical ministry in Zimbabwe as a supporting service to the evangelising ministry.

The DRCM medical ministry started at Morgenster and Gutu by opening hospitals at these stations. The work at the Morgenster Hospital became a beacon of the DRCM's health services. This was reflected in the state's recognition that the colonial governments gave to Dr Steyn. He was presented with the MBE by the British monarch (Saayman 2007:68). Van der Merwe (1981:68) quotes Dr J Helm as saying:

*At the call of the Lord I am going to the heathen resolved first to be a missionary and then a doctor.*

In rendering medical services, the medical personnel also witnessed for Christ and proclaimed the Gospel wherever opportunities arose. Medical work was also started among lepers who were considered as outcasts in the Shona society.

Health services were the church's healing ministry. However, one aspect of the healing ministry that was not addressed adequately in the context of the Karanga people was the concept of the relationship between illness and evil forces. The European missionary model did not take into cognisance most of the African cultural values, which led to the superficial Christian life of the RCZ members, then and now. This made it difficult to address problems adequately when dealing with for instance

the source of spirits and demons, illness or any other problem associated with evil powers and magical forces. Poythress (1988:161) mentions that in many third-world ethnic cultures, the prominent existential question is how to escape the power of evil spirits. Most European theology is far less equipped than the Bible itself to address such a question.

This approach indicates the influence of the Enlightenment's rationalism on the DRC missionaries. The danger of seeking to prove faith through reason was that Biblical teachings that could not be rationally demonstrated would be rejected (Hill 2006:317). This rationalist view found its expression in deism. This meant that rationalized religion had no space for revelation and miracles (Hill 2006:317).

Influenced by their own cultural perceptions, many missionaries had nothing to say about spirits or demons that dominated the lives of people in Africa. Missionaries were not sure of how to deal with these issues and nervous to call upon the Holy Spirit to bring holistic deliverance from evil spirits (Bowen 1996:89, 139, 163). They would try to deal with the attacks of evil spirits through their public science of medicine, but Africans believe that God and spirits interact with their world (Bowen 1996:163).

The missionaries rationalized the African people's fears of witchcraft, their possession by evil spirits, magic, curses and omens and death, under the influence of their enlightenment. When Zimbabweans suffer misfortune, they look for the causes in the invisible which overlaps with the visible to form one world (Moyo 1996:36). The cause might be an angry ancestor spirit or a wicked spirit operating through a witch. Mwaura (2004:105) explains that this misconception created a void in African people, which the African Initiated Churches (AIC) and Pentecostal Churches filled with their emphasis on the outworking of the Holy Spirit that manifested in healing, exorcism, deliverance and prosperity. A theology of struggle between forces of good and evil, deliverance and healing resonates very well with the African spiritual worldview. This will be discussed later on this chapter.

The other side of the hypothesis that is presented in this chapter is that, in her outreach to the Tonga people, the RCZ has demonstrated an inability to deal with similar issues of spiritual forces among the people to whom she was bringing the Gospel. The research believes that the RCZ must have ways of addressing this contextual reality among her membership. The research believes that a communal-contextual-missional framework, to be developed in the RCZ, should enable the members who participate in intercultural mission to address the issues relating to evil spirits. In the last chapter the research shall propose how this can be done.

The DRCM also used industrial work as one of the vehicles to propagate the Gospel of Jesus. Industrial aspects of mission were the product of the conviction in Church

circles that mission should be self-supportive. Thus, lay-people<sup>21</sup> with industrial skills were sent as missionaries to Zimbabwe. Principles were set along which the lay-missionaries' work was conducted. These were based on the views that the Gospel could best be brought to the people by non-ordained men and women who would teach them industrial skills and work manually with them (Pauw 1980:30).

One of the DRCM policies was to offer instructions in agriculture as part of the curriculum of the mission schools. Farming was done by planting trees at stations. A workshop was started at Morgenster to train artisans. A printing press was installed at Morgenster to enable the Church to provide mission literature in the vernacular language. The Bible was translated into *Chikaranga*<sup>22</sup> and published in 1950 (Van der Merwe 1981:105).

One of the DRCM strategies was to establish a network of preaching posts outside the mission stations (Van der Merwe 1981:73). As their missionary activities increased, the DRCM encountered a challenge. The British colonial government started to take land from local people. The colonial government forcibly displaced indigenous people and allocated them to infertile areas. The local people were removed to make way for farming settlers. The DRCM's policy was to establish mission stations close to indigenous people. One of the areas where they had started a mission was turned into a ranch and black people were displaced (Van der Merwe 1981:76).

This forced the DRCM to abandon the Jena mission station started in 1909 in Nyajena. The Sotho missionary, Micha Makgato, had been ministering in this area. The mission was 32 kilometres from Morgenster and a white missionary, WJ Combrink was posted there to lead the process of establishing a mission station (Mutumburanzou 1999:57; Van der Merwe 1981:76). The research considers it important to mention that, now, the RCZ is in the process of establishing a mission station in Nyajena about 50 kilometres from Morgenster. Later in this chapter, this will be discussed further.

The missionaries also planted local churches in the rural areas that the colonial authorities had created. Although the DRCM's work concentrated on the rural areas, they were forced to start to work in towns because of urbanisation. As the Karanga people moved to urban areas for employment, the DRCM had to follow their church members to provide for their spiritual needs and establish congregations. Thus, mission work spread to urban mining and farming areas (Cronje 1982:121, Van der Merwe 1981:77).

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<sup>21</sup> 'Lay' is a term used in this context and refers to members of the Church who are not ordained ministers.

<sup>22</sup> Chikaranga is a Shona dialect spoken mainly in the Masvingo Province and part of the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.

In the course of time, the DRCM decided to use other methods, such as photographic materials, sound films, and audio tapes as a means of communicating the Gospel. This evangelising outreach venture and programme was named PENYA (*Paridza Evangeri muNyika yeAfrica*), meaning: preach the Gospel to the whole of Africa (Rutoro 2007:106). A mobile unit was introduced and radio programmes were compiled for the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). PENYA co-ordinated the church work at the ZBC. A Bible correspondence course was also started at Morgenster by the Murray Theological College who administered it (Van der Merwe 1981:160). These practices used by the DRCM pointed towards a comprehensive missionary approach.

The DCRM's missionary activities indicate that she was intensely concerned with both the spiritual and physical wholeness of the people (Saayman 2007:68). The research believes that this is very important because God cares for the wellbeing of the whole person. As stated before, this research is proposing that the Tonga people should work together with the RCZ to develop a framework for intercultural mission that is communal and contextual.

The main weakness of the DRC mission was its failure to take cognisance of the positive aspects of the Zimbabwean people's cultural context. Every culture has good and bad elements, because culture is the product of sinful human beings. Mission should at the same time affirm and transform (Sanneh 1989:37). None of the cultures of people worldwide are free from evil (Kgatla 2002:50). The ethnocentric superiority of the European people became strongly a characteristic of the white society; and as such ethnocentrism determined the DRC's self-identity. The research believes that members involved in intercultural mission should know and appreciate their identity, but they should not see their identity as something based on ethnocentrism, as stated by Russel Botman (2004:129).

As noted before, identity depends on how one views oneself, but it also involves the way others view one. It is important for people to know their identity, that is, who they are and what their calling is. Kgatla (2002:46) states that the recovery of true identity is the goal of mission. The members who know their identity are able to participate in transformational mission. The research argues that members participating in intercultural mission should encourage the people whom they serve and to whom they minister to know and appreciate their own identity. God restores a dynamic identity in any community that encounters the Gospel. The RCZ should help the Tonga people to rediscover why, what and where they are before God (Kgatla 2002:47).

The research viewpoint is that people must define themselves in line with the intention of God, the Creator. The presentation of the Gospel is to be faithful to what God intended human beings to know and experience in their context (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:9). It is also of great importance for the members of Christ to identify

others as fellow human beings created in the image of God (Kgatla 2002:47). In line with the methodology of this research, the members who participate in intercultural mission should continually return to God to discern their identity in Him. Only God enables people to transform their identity. Kgatla (2002:47) explains that it is God who makes all things new and those who are touched in this process become transformed and so strive to bring transformation.

Mission should not be superhuman and supra-cultural (Saayman 2007:126). Communicating the Gospel is about establishing relationships between culturally conditioned human beings and the culture-free God who is the Creator of the universe (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:42). The research argues that the members of Jesus, who participate in God's mission, should know and acknowledge that they are human beings with a human culture. Therefore, they must accept people of other cultures as equally human, with a human culture. The research believes that the RCZ should not be determined by ethnocentrism and should not be perceived as the 'Church of the Karanga people,' in the way the DRC is viewed as 'the Church of the Afrikaners'.

The DRC's ethnocentrism thus negatively influenced the RCZ because it saw itself as the Church of the Karangas. The DRC's feeling of religious superiority would generate beliefs about cultural superiority (Bosch 1991:291, Bevans & Schroeder 2004:230). Therefore, the RCZ became the Church *for* others but *without* others (Saayman 2007:131). The RCZ should reflect that she is the church of Jesus Christ to and for all ethnic communities in Zimbabwe. The research argues that the church of Jesus Christ should not be exclusive; otherwise she will be a false church. What happens is that an ethnic group can easily use the church for its own political, social and economic endeavours, as was evident in the relationship between the DRC and the National Party in South Africa. The DRC ideologically supported the National Party's government policy of separate development (Weisse & Anthonissen 2004:1). The Church even developed a theology of racial separation (Botman 2004:124).

Ethnocentrism in the DRC had a negative influence because the definition of mission was dependent on racial categories (Saayman 2007:130, Gerstner 1991:3). This in general led to the formation of separate Reformed Churches in Zimbabwe. We have the DRC for whites, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) for the Chewa people and the RCZ for the Shona people. Pauw (2007:62) argues that the development of the Afrikaner identity also influenced the idea of separate churches.

The critical question is whether it is right and theologically justifiable to continue having three separate Churches planted by one DRC. The research agrees with Saayman (2007:130) who contends that it is completely impossible and unacceptable to try and argue for the continued existence of the separate Churches in Zimbabwe. It is sad to note that just like the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa, the three Reformed Churches in Zimbabwe are prepared to share

government institutions, schools and even political parties and unions, but not one Church (Saayman 2007:130). The research agrees with Kgatla (2002:52) in stating that transformational mission is unifying.

This discussion indicates that the Dutch Reformed family of Churches in Zimbabwe was planted along ethnic lines (Pauw 2007:55). From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ethnicity began to influence the organisation of DRC congregations and culminated with the planting of separate Churches (Pauw 2007:66). The traditional missionary model of the DRC's separate Churches for different ethnic groups was well suited to the white people's view of separate development (Pauw 2007:58). Kgatla (2002:49) explains that the establishment of different ethnic churches supported the Afrikaners policy of separate development. The continued existence of these separate Churches reflects negatively on the DRC's mission enterprise. The research contends that it was wrong to subsequently promote this policy as the correct practice of mission. Pauw (2007:59) points out that the formation of separate churches is partly the result of the mission practice modelled on the 'three selves'<sup>23</sup> of Gustav Warneck and Henry Venn.

The research argues that many missionaries who were involved in Gospel proclamation in Zimbabwe were committed and sincere. Pauw (2007:59) notes that, whilst this is true, their practice assumed that white Europeans were the bearers of the light to the heathen nations of darkest Africa and that they (the whites) were to remain guardians of the indigenous churches.

According to the research, the framework being proposed should build upon the foundation that the DRCM had laid. A Shona saying, '*Kurasha mbereko nokufirwa*,' literally means throwing away the sling used to tie the baby to the mother's back, because of the child's death. This means that a person should not throw away what is useful because of challenges one encounters. In the quest to develop a relevant missional framework, the RCZ must be careful not to throw away the baby with the bath water. The cultural weaknesses of the DRC missionaries are the 'bath water,' but the mission nature of the Church, the 'baby', is to be retained. In this case the RCZ in her Binga cross-cultural outreach should work together with the Tonga people on what should be retained and what to disregard.

After discussing the identity of the DRC and her missionary enterprise the research shall turn to describing the RCZ.

### **3.3 The establishment and autonomy of the RCZ**

The section shall discuss the RCZ's growth and identity, that is, her past and present situation. The argument is that the RCZ was profoundly influenced by the DRC

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<sup>23</sup> The understanding is that the indigenous churches must be established as self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending churches (Pauw 2007:59).

traditional missionary model. The focus of this chapter is on the identity and historical analysis of the RCZ as an institution, and her mission in a specific time, place and situation. It examines how she previously was, and still is, involved in her calling in the past and present realities. This section will study the hermeneutical dialogue or correlational hermeneutic of how Scripture was interpreted and how previous mission approaches were realised in the Zimbabwean context. Moyo (1999: viii) states that the traditional missionary model in Zimbabwe, as in the whole of Africa, associated Christian faith with European culture. The critical question for the RCZ today is whether it is possible to have an alternative framework for expressing the Gospel message in a new way.

After five years of DRCM work, the first two converts were baptised on 16 September 1896 - the same year that the first congregation was established at Morgenster. In June 1909, a Church Council (*Rangano Doko* or *Dare*) was started and, in 1918, a Council of Congregations (*Rangano Huru*) was constituted (Mutumburanzou 1999:50). On 9 September 1952, 61 years after being founded, a Synod for the Shona Reformed Church was constituted with 20 000 communicant members (Van der Merwe 1981:109).

In 1950, at the Council of Congregations, Elder CA Nhapata proposed a motion to establish a synod for the young Church that was adopted (Mutumburanzou 1999:52). The name that the missionaries gave to the newly planted Church was exclusive. How would other ethnic groups view such a Church? The research argues that it will be a Church *for* others, but *without* others.

At the time of constituting the Council of Congregations, there were ten congregations: Morgenster (1891), Gutu (1892), Chibi (1893), Pamushana (1901), Zimuto (1903), Jichidza (1908), Alheit (1909), Makumbe (1915), Betere (1934) and Chikwanda (1949). The Shona Reformed Church continued to increase in numbers. By 1964, the membership rose from 20 000 to 30 221, but then started to decrease and was 26 823 by 1975 (Van der Merwe 1981:178). This was due to the liberation struggle of the colonized Zimbabwe and Apartheid as it was experienced in Zimbabwe. During the period from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the DRC zeal for mission in Central Africa waned. One of the reasons was the war of liberation that led to the escalation of bloody conflicts. The spirit of nationalism that swept over Southern and Central Africa increased racial conflict and tension (Van der Merwe 1981:139). The number of the DRC missionaries was drastically reduced as some returned to South Africa. Saayman (2007:108) explains that the political relationship between South Africa and independent countries in Southern-Central Africa had reached its lowest ebb because of South Africa's Apartheid policy. The research believes that this indicates how Christian mission was, and will continue to be, influenced negatively or positively by the socio-cultural context.



During the 1970s, the membership of the RCZ shrunk. Van der Merwe (1981:121) observes that in the RCZ there was backsliding and a superficial Christian faith. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the research argues that the European missionary model did not take into cognisance most African cultural values, then and now. Thus it created a superficial Christian life in the RCZ believers.

This made it difficult to address problems such as the source of spirits and demons, illness or any other problem associated with evil powers and magical forces adequately. Some members joined the new African Initiated Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal Churches. Although there are notable exceptions in some areas, the ministry of missionary-started churches was declining, understaffed and had steadily decreasing congregations. As some members 'improved' themselves, they moved out of the missionary-started churches to small welcoming churches (Jay 1978:127).

In spite of the lethargy of many of its adherents, the RCZ proved herself to be a witnessing Church. After independence, her numbers started to grow even though there was, at the same time, backsliding and a superficial Christian faith (Van der Merwe 1981:121).

In the DRC mission work in Zimbabwe, the office of evangelist was established. The evangelists were non-ordained black people who had some basic theological training (Pauw 2007:164). In 1925, the training of evangelists started at Morgenster and, in 1936, the training of ministers, because the DRCM would raise future leaders to take over responsibility (Van der Merwe 1981:112). In 1940, the Rev Ezra Shumba became the first black ordained minister in the RCZ. In the course of history, black leaders of integrity rose from the ranks of the RCZ (Van der Merwe 1981:180). The researcher found however that the leadership of this newly planted Church had been in the hands of white missionaries for too long, causing the black ministers to experience the pain of being excluded from the leadership of the young Church (Rutoro 2007:103). Rutoro (2007:101) argues that black members were afraid to challenge the white missionaries' views causing tension between black and white members, although not openly acknowledged.

In April 1905, a Mission Council (MC) was established to coordinate and administer the missionary enterprise in Zimbabwe (Mutumburanzou 1999:50; Van der Merwe 1981:72). AA Louw and PHA Fouche were the chairman and secretary respectively, and GS Murray became the secretary in the following year. Louw and Murray held their positions until their retirement. The MC was constituted by white missionaries as the only voting members (Van der Merwe 1981:141). On 9 September 1966, the General Administrative Board (GAB) comprised of blacks and whites replaced the Mission Council. Then, on 1 March 1977, the Synodical Administrative Board (SAB) replaced it.

As stated earlier, a Council of Congregations (1918) was established. Van der Merwe (1981:80) explains that this council had the legislative power and supervisory responsibility of both a synod and a presbytery. It was subordinate to the Mission Council and DRC Mission Board in South Africa. The Synod was later (1952) constituted, as previously stated.

The resolutions and regulations of the newly constituted synod were not subjected to the approval of the Mission Council. But the new constitution of the young Church stated that the DRC Cape Synod had the exclusive right to amend, extend and repeal the constitution (Mutumburanzou 1999:52; Van der Merwe 1981:124). The Moderature<sup>24</sup> elected at this Synod comprised only white missionaries.

The new constitution indicated that the Shona Reformed Church was responsible for the black ministers and the DRC for white missionaries whom the DRCM paid (Mutumburanzou 1999:52). Supporting the black ministers was a challenge for the young Church. They experienced much suffering, as congregations failed to provide financial support for their ministers. The research believes that this happened because the Church lacked effective teaching on the issue of Christian stewardship. Because the DRCM previously provided everything, the congregations never learnt and practised the Biblical teaching of giving and being financially responsible for the care of their ministers from the onset. The other factor is due to a dependency which was enforced by the institutional structures in the past and inequalities in relations of power in mission partnerships. During this period the members of the RCZ were economically unable to support the work of the church.

Several characteristic ministries developed during the founding years of the RCZ. The Church established fellowships to cater for the needs of various members and to be involved in reaching out to non-Christians. *Sungano yaMadzimai* (Women's Fellowship) was founded in 1933; in the same year a Christian youth organisation, *Varwi vaKristu* (Prayer Warriors) was started; and *Sungano yeVarume* (Men's Fellowship) in 1946. In 1977, the *Chiedza Chenyika* youth movement was founded because now *Varwi vaKristu* was a fellowship for everyone, that is, for young people, men and women. These fellowship groups shall be discussed further on.

In the 1960s an interesting development occurred in the Church. Local RCZ members and black ministers initiated annual evangelistic campaigns such as the young Church's mission project at Dzoro in Zaka district under Masvingo province. It was the Karanga people evangelising themselves. This mono-cultural evangelistic outreach grew until it was established as a congregation. These campaigns were also organised in Rusape, Mutare and Chipinge, but were later stopped. The research argues that this outreach can help the RCZ in developing the intercultural mission that enable the Tonga people to be agents of their own transformation.

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<sup>24</sup> This research prefers to use the term 'Moderature' which is more sensitive and inclusive, instead of 'Moderamen'.

There are a number of important events that reshaped and changed the identity of the Church. On 9 July 1954, the mission work and the congregations that the DRC (Orange Free State) had founded in Zimbabwe were transferred to the DRC (Cape). Thus the DRCM was able to cover the whole country (Van der Merwe 1981:135). The eight congregations that the DRC (OFS) had established were: Bulawayo (1941), Chivhu (1944), Gweru (1944), Mutare (1944), Zvishavane (1946), Kadoma (1946) Hwange (1948) and Harare (1952). In 1956, they decided to amalgamate with the Synod of the Shona Reformed Church that had eleven congregations. The research notes that the agreement between the DRC Cape Synod and DRC Orange Free State reflects the importance of cooperation in intercultural mission. When churches unite in mission they do much better and would not waste resources.

Their name was changed to the African Reformed Church (ARC) to accommodate the Chewa-speaking members in these urban congregations. Mutumburanzou (1999:53) explains that, because of the new ethnic diversity, the name had to be changed. Another development was relinquishing the Church to the black people. In 1976, a committee was appointed to draw up a new Deed of Agreement to replace that of 1966 (1999:131). On 4 May 1977, after the signing of this deed, all the DRCM's mission work and properties were officially handed over to the autonomous Church, the ARC (Rutoro 2007:106; Mutumburanzou 1999:131; Cronje 1982:132; Van der Merwe 1981:191). This meant that the ARC received autonomous status after 86 years of DRC missionary work.

The research believes that the DRC took too long to transfer autonomy to the RCZ. The influence of the DRC of the Netherlands also lasted too long before they granted autonomy to the DRC of South Africa, as noted before. The spirit of nationalism that was rising in Zimbabwe also played a role in the RCZ's receiving autonomy. As stated before, Zimbabwe's war of liberation against the colonial government started in the 1960s.

At this point, it is vital to note that the CCAP, the Harare presbytery of the CCAP Nkoma Synod of Malawi, refused to unite with the RCZ. They cited language as their reason for refusal to unite into one Church. (The DRCM Cape Synod had started the CCAP Nkoma work.) This also applies to the DRC in Zimbabwe which was, and is, for whites only. Whilst other denominations, such as the Evangelical Lutheran and Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, and Roman Catholic Church worked across tribal boundaries, the DRCM work produced several denominations in the one country.

The cultural, racial and ethnic differences that were combined in the establishment of the Reformed Churches created much division. This proves how problematic Afrikaner ethnocentrism was in the DRC mission, and sadly this was transmitted to the churches planted in Zimbabwe, as mentioned earlier (Saayman 2007:109). The Afrikaner ethnocentrism is part of their European heritage and DNA. The DRC was a

*volkskerk* in the Netherlands. European churches were pretty much connected to countries and their colonial enterprises in Africa.

The Enlightenment influence, discussed in chapter two, played a role in the DRC's policies and attitudes. As discussed earlier, the DRC in South Africa used Kuyperian theology in her argument to support the Apartheid ideology. As Hendriks (2004:12) states, and the research believes, we are united in Christ, the Head of the body, His church and He transforms our diversity from being a source of division and suffering into being a source of creativity - one of our richest resources. The research argues that unity should not only be on the surface - that is a 'cosmetic' unity - but should be a sacrificial unity in Christ Jesus.

The head office of the ARC opened on 22 April 1981, and was situated in Masvingo. The Synod of August 1981 changed the name of the African Reformed Church (ARC) to the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ), because she had prepared herself to serve the community in a changed context. The country had attained its independence from Britain and had changed its name from 'Rhodesia' to 'Zimbabwe' on 18 April 1980.

The RCZ now (2009 December) had 10 presbyteries and 62 congregations, but the number of members was not known due to poor management of statistics. However, according to the survey of the Reformed Churches, the membership was 80 000 (Bauswein & Vischer 1999:554). The research regards the surveying and statistics management in the RCZ as a topic for possible research, but this issue is not within the scope of this research.

The Karanga people dominate the Church, thus she is known today by many people in Zimbabwe as 'the Karanga Church.' The RCZ has a strong rural membership base of 47.3%, followed by 22.5% in urban areas, 17.5% from agricultural (farming) areas, 3.1% at mission stations and 9% at growth points (Runyowa *et al.* 2001:526). The main reason for this is that the DRCM's work concentrated on the rural areas.

The research shows that the RCZ was established on ethnic lines in the southern part of Zimbabwe. Their first name, Shona Reformed Church, was ethnic and exclusive, and was later changed to African Reformed Church to accommodate the Chewa-speaking people. The RCZ became autonomous after 86 years of DRC work. The research noted that black members were involved in an evangelistic outreach during the RCZ's initial growth. These events had a strong influence in shaping the identity of the RCZ, which can be seen when one analyses her development.

### **3.4 The development of the RCZ to the present day**

As referred to earlier, the rising tide of African nationalism partly strengthened the urge of the RCZ towards greater self-realisation. As the committee, headed by Dr AR

Mutumburanzou (1989:9), rightly put it in a booklet on the RCZ's life from 1977 to 1987: "The years between 1977 and 1980, during the war of liberation, was a time of confusion in Zimbabwe, but the hand of the Lord did not move away from His Church. The war left fear and uncertainty in the minds of some believers and Church leaders as to what would happen to the Church after the war of liberation. During this time, membership decreased drastically."

On 4 May 1977, during the period of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, the RCZ received full autonomy from the DRC of South Africa. During a ceremony at Morgenster, the Rev L Moolman, the DRC mission secretary, officially handed over the DRCM's work, and all the departments that it had established, to the RCZ (Rutoro 2007:106).

The DRC and the RCZ had entered a new era of missionary endeavour - the era of partnership in joint missionary activity (Van der Merwe 1981:187). They were to proceed together through faith. This had an influence on the identity of the RCZ. She was to develop herself to face the contextual challenges in Zimbabwe. The RCZ was to become more prominent in the missionary enterprise, as the DRC receded into the background, but her spiritual and material support of this missionary enterprise was, and still is, vital (1981:192). In this era, the RCZ would now be mainly responsible for mission planning, financing and organisation. The DRC can still substantially assist the RCZ by providing financial support, sending personnel upon the RCZ's request, and through continued intercession, which they have fulfilled to this day. This was a challenging time for both churches, but mainly for the RCZ as she took over responsibility.

### **3.4.1 Leadership and training**

Leadership plays an important role in the growth and sustainability of an organisation. Van Gelder (2007:122) argues that leadership is to be understood as flowing out of the church's missional nature. However, the scope of this research does not allow for a detailed analysis of the RCZ's leadership. Rangarirai Rutoro's work has given the RCZ a good and detailed leadership framework to implement. Rutoro (2007:53) aptly points out that the RCZ administrative structure is based on the leadership principles of the early Reformers. He argues that the RCZ has uncritically made use of the structures of the European world that developed within their own context. The research argues that the leadership and organisation model of the RCZ is not adequate enough to respond to a changing context in Zimbabwe.

The model that the RCZ inherited is the clerical paradigm or institutional approach. Rutoro (2007:11) argues that this paradigm describes the RCZ today. The model pays inadequate attention to the important and dynamic relationship between the faith community and its local context (Van Gelader 2007:127). The RCZ should however develop a leadership framework that will be appropriate and relevant to the

socio-cultural context in which she lives and ministers. It should involve the lay-people. Theology is to be done at grassroots and should not be a monopoly of a selected few, that is, the ordained ministers (Kalilombe 1999:167). Hendriks (2001:79) argues that the emphasis of the laity involvement in the church does not imply discarding church structures and leadership, but their role, function and style must change. The research proposes that theology in the RCZ needs to be communal and contextual in character.

As Van der Merwe (1981:164) mentions, the DRC's fixed policy was that her 'daughter' churches should become autonomous and that their indigenous leaders should fill the key positions. A policy on the incorporation of local people into leadership existed, but white missionaries only allowed them to be in the leadership structures with reluctance (Rutoro 2007:103). Thus, the nationals gradually became leaders of the RCZ. When the mission was transferred from the DRC to the RCZ in 1977, the staff of the mission in Zimbabwe totalled 696 (608 nationals and 88 foreigners), and was served by 32 ministers and 33 lay-preachers (Van der Merwe 1981:192).

As was the case with the DRC after the hand-over, the male dominance in the Church's leadership has continued to this day. The DRC missionaries' clerical paradigm and the traditional Shona cultural leadership culture profoundly influenced the leadership structures of the RCZ (Rutoro 2007:43, 59, 2001:521). Then and now, this has been one of the identity markers of the RCZ. The ministers, evangelists, elders, deacons, leaders in congregations, presbyteries and the Synod are basically all men. Women have been training as youth counsellors only.

In leadership development, acknowledgement of the past is vital, but where new life is imminent and new challenges to ministry develop, transformation is needed (Runyowa *et al.* 2001:522). It should be understood and acknowledged that the church is always forming and reforming, which means leadership and organisation is to be understood as always being contextual (Van Gelder 2007:122). For real change to take place in the Church, people's attitudes must be renewed.

One example of change in the RCZ is the issue of women's participation in leadership. In the RCZ, the underlying cultural, traditional church views and attitudes towards women should undergo a positive change. In the missional church leadership and organisation need to change over time if we are to respond effectively and appropriately to ever-changing contexts (Van Gelder 2007:122). The inclusion of women in the broader leadership will transform the administrative structure of the RCZ (Rutoro & Hendriks 2008:51). The inclusion of women in a broader RCZ leadership will allow them to participate fully in the intercultural dialogue within the Tonga people.

During the Synod of 1978, the women's fellowship group presented a motion on women being accorded the right to preach in Sunday worship services. The Synod agreed that women may preach in the absence of men, but were not allowed to determine the order of service (Synod Minutes, 1978:242/114; Rutoro 2007:107). This begs the question: "What is more important, the preaching of the Word or liturgy in the Reformed faith?" At the Synod of 1981, the request of the women's fellowship for women to be included in decision-making structures was rejected (Synod Minutes, 1981:432; Rutoro 2007:111). The research points out that the debates during the Synod indicates how formal polities that define leadership and organisation often end up becoming a hindrance instead of facilitating continuous communal contextualisation (Van Gelder 2007:123).

The women's fellowship again presented the participation of women in leadership for discussion at the Synod of 1984, which then passed a resolution to allow women to lead Sunday services using the order of service, to be elected as elders and deacons, and for women to be ordained (Synod Minutes, 1984:631/21; Rutoro 2007:112). According to Rutoro (2007:112-113), the socio-political situation in Zimbabwe played a role in the women's demand for equal participation in the Church. Women had participated in the war of liberation and were demanding inclusion in the decision-making structures of the new government led by Robert Mugabe. However, the Synod of 1990 reneged on its resolution allowing women's ordination (Synod Minutes, 1990:936/19).

The women continued with their struggle, and the Synod of 2000 appointed the Doctrinal and Church Order Committee to investigate in detail the issue of the ordination of women and then to report to the following Synod. Dr Rangarirai Rutoro and the Rev Wilbert Runyowa were also mandated to research this issue (Synod Minutes 2000:39/2; Rutoro 2007:116). The Synod of 2002 adopted the recommendation of the Committee to allow the ordination of women in the RCZ. Rutoro (2007:27, 74) called upon the RCZ to embrace a communion model instead of the institutional model of leadership - a contextual situational leadership - that incorporates the youth, women and men in the Church structures. This research regards this as a communal-contextual leadership framework.

This decision of the Synod led the Murray Theological College (MThC) to enrol one woman, Miss Tanatsiwa Tasiya, to train for ordination in 2003. In the Church, she had worked as a youth counsellor for many years and now was a lecturer in youth counselling at the MThC. In 2005, in the Harare congregation, the first woman to be ordained was the Rev Ndakarwirwa Mumbwandarikwa. She had self-sponsored her theological training (BTh) at Harare Theological College, anticipating that the Church will, in her lifetime, allow women's ordination. Since then, others have also undergone theological training and have been ordained, such as the Revs Tanatsiwa Tasiya, Modesta Masara, Marry Mazenenga, and Zvamaziva Madzivanyika.

In this regard, another encouraging development was the presence of female delegates at the Synod. Eight years after women were allowed to become elders and deacons, Mrs Majange, of the Zunga congregation, became the first woman to be a Synod delegate (Synod Minutes 1992:66/3; Rutoro 2007:115). The second woman was Mrs Martha Chidamba, of the Chinhoyi congregation, who became a Synod delegate in 1998. (The researcher was the minister of Chinhoyi RCZ during this period when it became one of the first congregations to have a woman delegate.) The empowering of women in the Church is important to the researcher. The researcher agrees with (Runyowa *et al.* 2001:528) who contend that the inclusion of women in the RCZ leadership could have a profound effect on the quality of its decisions. It is important also to note that the 2000 Synod had ten female delegates and that the number has been steadily increasing. While this is a positive development, the changes happening in the RCZ are not accepted well, especially among the old guard and the conservatives in the Church.

The RCZ has continued with training ministers, evangelists, youth counsellors, and now army chaplains, for the ministry. The first national to graduate was the Rev SB Ndamba in 1975, and the Rev AR Mutumburanzou was the first minister to obtain a doctorate in 1999, followed by the Rev R Rutoro. G Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1992) quotes Dr Kwegyr Aggrey who says:

*The man who is to be leader, must be given the best possible education, and needs a better education than is given to the people here as he has greater difficulties to contend with. If he is a theologian, he must have the best possible education because Africa has a contribution to Christian thought to make.*

The research agrees when Verkuyl (1992:51) mentions that Western churches, in mutuality with the indigenous church, should make scholarships available for training ministers and the laity.

The West should open doors to such students and encourages them to undertake post-graduate education so that their churches can then take another significant stride towards achieving selfhood. Through multilateral relationships, the RCZ has ministers who have completed their master's degrees, and others are pursuing both master's and doctor's degrees with the assistance of the DRC (Cape), the *Gereformeerde Zendingsbond* (GZB) of the Netherlands, NetACT and Commission For Witness (CFW).

Why does the research mention all these issues? The DRC's characteristic that gave education a significant role in her mission, impacted positively on the RCZ which has quite a number of ministers who did, and are doing, their master's and doctor's degrees. The research argues that these degrees gave them the background to address issues of leadership and the position of women in the RCZ. Now, those who have received further education are challenging the negative influence of the RCZ Shona leadership that has stuck to its rather authoritative leadership styles, modelled



on those of the tribal chiefs and missionaries. This is an important point that Rutoro (2007) raises.

In very much the same way, the research pursues the point that the RCZ should rethink her missionary paradigm. She can learn much from the DRC missionary effort that can be applauded, but she should avoid the mistakes that the missionaries made. Thus, Rutoro's (2007) hypothesis on leadership and lay-leader empowerment is a case in point, or a framework that can serve to help the RCZ's evangelisation outreach to contextualise her ministry while avoid making the same mistakes as the DRC made under the influence of the Enlightenment.

In Christian mission, ministers play a significant role in motivating, mobilising and facilitating. Reflection on the history of the DRC mission indicates the vital role that charismatic and influential ministers played (Saayman 2007:126). The researcher's conviction is that, for each time and context, God raises people with different gifts of the Holy Spirit to participate in His purpose. The research believes that appropriate and contextual training of ministers in mission is important. But, it is equally important to equip lay-people for mission.

In developing a communal-contextual missional framework, the RCZ should incorporate the training of both ministers and lay-people in relevant and effective ways to discern and address the challenges of our time and place. The research argues that training for mission is significant and a process of growth, entailing the formation of a whole person (Kritzinger 2002:123). The research argues that the question the RCZ must answer critically in this process is that of the relevance and quality of training offered at her theological college, Murray Theological College (MThC).

The research believes a missional church needs missional leadership. Van Gelder (2007:148) contends that the critical aspect that is at the heart of the life and ministry of a missional faith community is visionary leadership<sup>25</sup>. Kritzinger (2002:126) contends that there is still need for the training of all kinds of missionaries<sup>26</sup> to present the Gospel to all areas and peoples. MThC should produce missional ministers who are to facilitate missional congregations (Kritzinger 2002:127). The lay-people should be empowered through training. The research agrees with

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<sup>25</sup> Van Gelder (2007:148) explains that the emphasis of visionary leadership is not on the leader but on leadership. The leadership in the missional faith community plays a critical role in developing, forming, and guiding the life and ministry of the church. The focus is not on a person, because visionary leadership involves a large number of people who help shape the church's ministry. The research argues that the leadership and organisation of a missional church need to be understood from a collective and interdependence perspective. The missional church is led by the Holy Spirit and recognises that it is He who brings about transformation in people's lives (Van Gelder 2007:151).

<sup>26</sup> Kritzinger (2002:123) identifies six groups of missionaries: theologian-missionaries, career missionaries, tentmaker missionaries, short-term missionaries, ultra-short-term missionaries and every-Christian missionaries.

Kritzinger (2002:130) who states that theological formation should not create or propagate the traditional dichotomy between the lay-people and the ordained minister. The ministry of the church belongs to all believers; therefore theological education should be seen as important for all the people of God.

How to improve what we have in theological education is a critical challenge to the RCZ. The research espouses a communal-contextual framework to missional training. The theological formation should be transformative, that is, reflective and integrative (Karecki 2002:133). Learning should be able to change people. The members are to be helped by the facilitators in training mission to ask critical questions. Karecki (2002:134) explains that we need to develop creative and engaging materials that will help the members to enter the learning experience and allow them to be changed in the process.

The experiences of a person should not be individualistic but in communion with other people. It is collective and interdependent. Mission training should equip the members participating in mission to become agents of transformation in their own lives and in their socio-cultural context (Karecki 2002:134). The RCZ through MThC can use the cross metaphor methodology as a critical hermeneutical tool in the training of both the lay-people and ministers.

The RCZ, through MThC, should search for ways that provides theological training for ministers and evangelists at different levels. The research's point of view is that training should take place in different classes and with different study materials. Currently, ministers and evangelists are being taught in the same class. The evangelist programme covers a two-year period, that of ministers, four years. The research believes programs should be developed to focus on intercultural mission, but on different levels as required by the level of training.

### **3.4.2 Evangelising ministry**

As a means of communicating the Christian message, the RCZ has adopted the approaches to evangelisation that the DRCM used (Van der Merwe 1981:160). In the research of Bauswein & Vischer (1999:554), they state that the RCZ is strongly committed to evangelism. Van der Merwe (1981:108) points out that AA Louw stated that the RCZ had taken over the understanding and practice of the DRCM's primary motive for Christian mission, which were the evangelisation of non-Christians and the nurturing of new converts according to the Reformed tradition. In doing this, the missionaries had to wrestle with the local people in their attempts to Christianise the culture and religious concepts of the Shona people. The RCZ opened new evangelism centres after her evangelisation work. In 1995, Dete centre in Karoi in Mashonaland West province was opened and, in 1996, another in Binga among the Tonga people (Bauswein & Vischer 1999:554).

In response to the challenge of reaching out to the people in the RCZ with the Gospel, the evangelisation spirit has been revived. As stated in chapter one, through the Evangelism Committee, the RCZ has embarked on the ministry of reaching other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. The Church should equip the members who have the zeal to participate in intercultural mission. Ephesians 4:12 says that some were appointed as apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors to equip the saints for ministry. The research's viewpoint is that the RCZ should contextualise and use training methods that are appropriate and contextual.

The other important aspect of growth to note is that, while new members continue to join, others continue to slide back, as was the case during the missionary era. The question is: Why is this happening? The Church should search for ways of addressing this challenge through self-evaluation and transforming herself to be a relevant church of Jesus Christ.

The RCZ should continuously ask herself the following question: What will be the best way to continue the evangelising ministry? The research argues that the RCZ should involve lay-leaders and members to present more practical and natural ways in terms of our culture and context. In chapter five, the aspect that examines intercultural mission, will be discussed further.

The research believes that the RCZ's intercultural mission should not focus on presenting the Gospel message only in Zimbabwe. The RCZ should be motivated to participate in the mission of God in Africa and in other parts of the world. The relationship between mission in 'Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth' should not be understood in terms of a strictly linear movement but in a never-ending spiral movement (Saayman 2007:123).

The research agrees with Saayman (2007:123,128) and believes that the members of Jesus Christ should participate in expressing the Gospel in their own localities (Jerusalem) and, at the same time, go outside their localities (Samaria and the ends of the earth). The 'ends of the earth' should not substitute Jerusalem, and the reverse is also true in mission, but the members of Jesus are to witness simultaneously in all spheres.

One dimension the research believes is important in mission is for the Church to formulate mission policies that must be flexible (Saayman 2007:127). The development of clear mission policy in relation to the Binga outreach is essential for the RCZ. The research argues that the RCZ should not use the DRC's way of top-down policy formulation. The policy will be appropriate and effective if formulated with and not for the Tonga people. Kritzinger (1994:56) rightly points out that if one is to develop people, policy formulation and implementation should grow from within and not be implemented from above. At present the RCZ is in the process of developing her Evangelism policy; she should therefore involve the Tonga people.

The research argues that the RCZ should create a position for coordinating the mission ministries at a national level. Whilst congregations are, and should be, encouraged to be involved in mission, the national coordinating secretariat should be supportive by means of training and the provision of literature.

The research's view is that mission should originate in, and be driven from, the local level through membership. The RCZ structures should, however, have a policy for training and inspiration, but not to own and control. The members should be given space for ownership, as mission should not be the monopoly of the RCZ ministers. The influence of the RCZ ministers in the Church should be used positively to train the preaching posts, their leaders and all the fellowship groups to be evangelists. Ephesians 4 clearly explains the role of the ministers - they should equip members for different ministries.

Another aspect that the RCZ inherited from the DRC is the construction of church buildings. Since 1977, the RCZ has continued to build many church buildings in rural and urban areas and renovated others. The spiritual workers<sup>27</sup> of the RCZ are also increasing but still not enough to sustain the evangelising ministry. The research argues that the RCZ needs to equip her members in order for them to participate effectively. The RCZ has congregations with too many preaching posts. Thus, the ministers are not pastors but administrators of the Holy Communion and 'cattle ranchers' who do not know their cattle by name as the ranch is too big. A personal relationship between the minister and the flock is lacking. The research states that congregations should be sub-divided into smaller, more manageable congregations.

The research argues that an evangelising ministry remains integral in the life of a missional church. The evangelising ministry needs to be expressed in a communal and contextual framework in order to be effective and appropriate for the Tonga people. Mission is about relevance and appropriateness as pointed out by Zwana (2007:76). Mission needs to be integrative. Thus, the research argues for the need to address both the spiritual and physical realities of the people in their context.

### **3.4.3 Education and medical ministry**

During the traditional missionary enterprise education was an essential aspect (Zwana 2007:75). He (2007:71) continues to point out that educational endeavours by the European churches were perceived as strategies for evangelism. The research points out that evangelising ministry is still closely related to education and medical services in the RCZ. Therefore, the Church still administers primary and high schools, schools for the blind and deaf, and a teachers' training college, and caters to the disabled. The new Church members are mostly young people who are more receptive to the Christian message than adults. The mission has played no small role

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<sup>27</sup> In the RCZ, the term 'spiritual worker' refers to ministers, evangelists and youth counsellors.

in shaping the history of our country. Today, many national leaders trace much of their history back to the work and influence of Christian mission.

Recently, the RCZ has started to build new schools; in Binga, two primary schools are being built at the request of communities. The building of a high school has commenced in an area south of the Morgenster mission, in the Masvingo Province. The community of Nyajena refused permission for the Seventh Day Adventists to build a school in this area and asked the RCZ to help. (Nyajena is the researcher's home village).

The RCZ has created the full-time position of Education Secretary, who is responsible for coordinating all the primary and high schools and tertiary education in the Church. This Secretary also liaises with the relevant government ministries. This indicates that the one particular aspect of the RCZ mission that has had, and still has, great influence even today, is her education services. The research argues that the education ministry should still be an important part of the RCZ mission. As stated by Zwana (2007:71) mission is not just about bringing people to Jesus Christ, but also about achieving influence through the development of personnel who can impact their context. Thus, the research believes that the RCZ needs creative engagement in order to influence communities to bring transformation through her education ministry. The framework of the education ministry should be communal and contextual.

The other strategy for mission historically was the notion of medical mission. The RCZ is still involved in a Christian healing ministry as passed on to her by the DRC missionaries. The DRC missionaries did not facilitate the training of local medical doctors. Jansen (1995:299) states that indigenisation was very seldom incorporated in the aims of medical mission. The lack of trained indigenous doctors negatively impacted the medical work of the RCZ. Thus, when the white missionary doctors left, the two hospitals at Morgenster and Gutu had severe problems, but now, the hospitals have local doctors and nurses.

The research points out that Morgenster and Gutu mission hospitals are very important to the communities of Zimbabwe, especially in Masvingo province. The *Gereformeerde Zendings Bond* (GZB) is helping to fund part of the operations of Morgenster Hospital. The Commission for Witness (CFW) supports the Gutu Mission Hospital. The Christian Blind Mission (CBM) is supporting the eye clinic at Morgenster. The eye clinic has become the Masvingo provincial centre. Discussing our partners' support in detail is not within the scope of this research. The research argues that it is important to note that the partnerships need to be based on equality, mutuality and respect (Jansen 1995:302). The RCZ also have clinics at these missions: Zimuto, Chibi and Jichidza and has also started a clinic at Tinde, in Binga, the first area where the RCZ embarked on cross-cultural ministry among the Tonga people. This will be examined in the next chapter. The Church is also in the process

of establishing the position of a Health Secretary in order to coordinate the health services as responsibly as that of the Education Secretary.

The research proposes that the RCZ should develop a communal-contextual healing ministry in intercultural mission within the Tonga community. The ministry of healing is essential in life of the church (Jansen 1995:300). As a participant observer the researcher observed that the RCZ is uncritically following the traditional missionary model in healing ministry. The research argues that to develop an appropriate and relevant healing approach in mission within the Tonga people it is critical to understand that different cultures approach reality differently.

The African worldview and the DRC missionary model conditioned by the European Enlightenment worldview in healing causes problems in the RCZ cross-cultural ministry among the Tonga people. The problem facing the RCZ is that some of her members in times of crisis will secretly seek help of indigenous healers (*N'angas*) and the AIC's healing prophets. In times of crisis African communities consult indigenous healers to know the cause and source of their sickness (Ekechi 1993:294). Walls (2002:18) argues that although they do this, at the same time they do not want to discard the Christian faith, but that they are unable to trust wholly, because nothing in the European modelled church as they know it offers any defence against the worst features of the world as they know it. Researches in Africa, as noted by Saayman (1992:39), indicate that a dual health system now exists in Zimbabwe. Ekechi (1993:298) points out that the introduction of European scientific medicine did not make the indigenous African medicine disappear, but that they coexist.

In order for one to have a better understanding of this phenomenon, the research argues that one need to look at European and African worldviews on sickness and health. The European and African view of sickness and healing influences the health system in Zimbabwe today. If we are to respond effectively and appropriately to the health challenges people encounter we need to be clear in our understanding of sickness and health (Saayman 1992:42).

The African basic culture views life in a holistic way with all its aspects interconnected (Ukpong 1999:113). The physical and spiritual are inseparable according to the African view (Ekechi 1993:291). The African view is that sickness and health is wholly religious (Saayman 1992:43, 44). Health in Africa is also viewed in relation to the community, thus health is experienced by a person who belongs to a healthy community (Saayman 1992:38, Ukpong 1999:112). As noted before life is understood within the concept of *ubuntu/hunhu*, that is, a person is only a person with others.

In Africa life can only be meaningful only if it is life in communion with and among others (Moyo 1996:17, Taringa 2007:4, Goudert 2003:37, Ukpong 1999:112). The

foundation of the community in Africa is interpersonal relationships (Saayman 1992:43). As noted before there is a strong understanding of collectivity and interdependence. The Zimbabwean people, like most African people, basically are still mostly centered on the extended family and village community (Saayman 1992:44). In Zimbabwe most people in the urban areas still maintain their rural village. The rural and urban relatives visit and support one another during sickness. There are still strong ties between the family members in the urban and rural areas.

The Enlightenment looks at life in parts, not in wholeness (Bosch 199:264). It has a dualistic view of the relationship between body and spirit (Saayman 1992:37). (Bowen 1996:69) states that the European worldview encourages the idea that science can give a rational explanation to everything. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Enlightenment emphasised human reason. Saayman (1992:31) states that the Enlightenment model encourages studying a problem objectively when encountering a problem. The thinking is that this will lead to developing even better theories which will enable us to explain and solve this problem. Saayman (1992:44) points out that the European view is that the cause of sickness is found primarily in the physical sphere. The research contends that scientific objectivity is a myth (Ukpong 1999:113). Saayman (1999:32) argues that the European biomedical model is not value free. The European missionaries use the biomedical model.

The European worldview denies spiritual and supernatural realities. Reason, from their perspective, could ignore or explain away the supernatural world (Bowen 1996:152). When the biomedical model fails to explain sickness, it will say it's nothing or it is belief. Ekechi (1993:298) states that most African people believe quite strongly that there are illnesses which the European medicine cannot cure which African medicine can cure. We have instances of people seeking medical services at a hospital, but are told there was nothing wrong with them (Mashoko 2005:55). Saayman (1992:48) contends that European healing is not sufficiently concerned with or cognizant of evil spiritual powers as a very powerful reality in the sick person's life.

The traditional missionary model had no adequate solution to these African realities. The traditional missionaries presented to African people a religion (Christianity) they could not integrate with their secularized scientific medicine. The failure of missionaries to integrate and contextualise the medical mission in African culture is one of the major reasons that led Africans to the growing AICs (Berends 1993:276, Saayman 1992:46).

Many people in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular are experiencing the understanding of sickness and health underlying the biomedical model as inadequate (Saayman 1992:33, Ekechi 1993:300, Berends 1993:276). Ekechi (1993:298) states that many Africans then and now remained suspicious of the white settlers' medicine even though it has been successful. Christianity coming from the

European world to Africa emphasised the separation of religion from the secular sphere of life whilst the Africans view religion as inseparable from the material well-being of human beings (Ukpong 1999:105, Moyo 1996:1). The research argues that the healing ministry needs to be communally contextualised in order to address the people's challenges effectively.

The view of African people on sickness is different from the European view. Moyo (1996:36) as stated earlier argues that when Zimbabweans suffer misfortune they look for the causes in the invisible which overlaps with the visible to form one world (Ekechi 1993:301). The cause might be an angry ancestor spirit or a wicked spirit operating through a witch. The traditional missionary model lacked cultural sensitivity and analysis in healing ministry (Saayman 1992:46). The question is what should the RCZ do about this reality so that she could be appropriate and relevant in her mission work among the Tonga people and any other community she ministers to and serves?

The research proposes the development of a communal-contextual missional framework in the healing ministry of the RCZ. Firstly, our theologising should not be fragmented but integrated in order to be relevant among the people we live and minister to as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is important to understand that the African worldview sees all in this world from a holistic perspective (Moyo 1996:20). Christian healing should be integrated Biblically<sup>28</sup>, contextually and communally into our expression of the Christian faith in Zimbabwe (Saayman 1992:48). Secondly, we need to acknowledge the existing dual health system in Zimbabwe and that the indigenous medicine is not inferior to European medicine.

Thirdly, there is need for cultural sensitivity, which means we must listen to and be willing to learn from the Tonga culture an understanding of sickness and health (Saayman 1992:40). In doing so an active intercultural dialogue that transforms both the Tonga people and the RCZ can be achieved. Saayman (1992:55) states that the intercultural encounter should bring profound change in the understanding of both the 'missioning' and the 'missionised'. Fourthly, the research argues that the Tonga Christians should be given space to use both the indigenous and European medicine. The dualistic approach of biomedicine we use in RCZ hospitals and clinics should be corrected by incorporating the holistic approach of the indigenous African medicine. Healing must be an integral aspect of the process of bringing humanness and freedom in Jesus Christ to the community (Saayman 1992:47).

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<sup>28</sup> A Biblical evaluation indicates that there are similarities with the indigenous African healing approaches (Berends 1993:281). The healing of king Abimelech (Genesis 20:17, Naaman (2 Kings 5:1 – 19) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1 – 7) have similarities with the indigenous African approach. The Psalms (17:1 – 12, 38:1 – 8, 31:9 – 13) ascribed the cause of diseases and misfortune to evil and the curses of the enemies of a person. Sickness and healing was perceived in the context of the community in the OT. In the NT passages such as James 5:14 – 16 and Acts 20:8 – 14) have similarities of healing and divination of indigenous approach.



Fifthly, related to the question on healing, is the issue of spiritual powers in the context of Africa. The thinking of intercultural medical mission should be contextual (Saayman 1992:55). The members of the RCZ still ask questions about evil spirit possession, curses, witchcraft and deliverance. What is the answer of the RCZ? Mashoko (2005:54) rightly points out that in most mainline missionary churches the challenges of demon possession and casting out of demons and healing has been a prohibited area. This indicates the influence of the European missionaries' worldview on the churches in Zimbabwe, including the RCZ.

The research argues that the RCZ should create space for the demonstration of spiritual power. Upkong (1999:111) argues that the church should equip the Christian with the spirituality needed for spiritual warfare against the evil. As stated before a theology of struggle between forces of good and evil, deliverance and healing resonates very well with the African spiritual worldview. The research contends that God provided a Biblical approach to address the reality faced by the Tonga people. God did not give us the spirit of fear but of power. Mashoko (2005:56) argues that this power frees one from fear of *n'angas*, witches, demons, fear of ancestor spirits, and of personal and generational curses.

Jesus' healing ministry was adequate to the needs of the people of His context. Jesus acknowledged the existence of and overcame evil spirits, which means He challenged those who denied their existence. To those who fear evil spirits Jesus Christ provided deliverance. Berends (1993:282) explains that Christians must seek to make their healing ministry relevant to the community they are ministering to and serving. The research agrees with Mashoko (2005:56) who points out that the people are not only to experience an encounter with God's truth but also to experience and encounter God's power. The Gospel presentation should demonstrate that the power of the Holy Spirit is greater than the power of evil forces.

The research argues that God has given the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the faith community to address the contextual realities of the people. The RCZ should therefore create space for members to exercise the spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit, such as healing and exorcising wicked spirits. The research does not agree with scholars who encourage Christians to consult *n'angas* (indigenous healers). God forbade his people the practice of divination (Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:10 – 12, Acts 16:16 – 18). Berends (1993:285) rightly points out that a continuation of the use of familiar spirits and local deities is against the teachings of the Word of God. The divination by *n'angas* (indigenous healers) creates and encourages people to live in fear of evil spirits and witchcraft.

The research accepts that evil spirits and witchcraft are a reality in Zimbabwe, but the power and dominion of Jesus Christ is greater than all evil spiritual powers (Berends 1993:283). The research agrees with Berends (1993:286) who argues that it is the new faith community through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that is to decide what

form the Christian healing ministry must take in their context. The RCZ should allow the Tonga people to come up with ways that will enable the Christian healing ministry to address their healing needs adequately.

The RCZ should use the communal-contextual missional framework in the Binga outreach to transform the lives and culture of the Tonga people (or any other people group) and they will also be transformed towards becoming a missional church.

#### **3.4.4 Agricultural and industrial ministry**

The RCZ took over the DRCM's understanding of the use of mission farms, which could help in sustaining missionary projects and institutions. However, they can also be a real obstacle in proclaiming the Kingdom of God by unintentionally creating the impression that the Church is greedy and materialistic (Van der Merwe 1981:163). On the farms, the RCZ has encountered problems with the influx of illegal settlers. The farms are also not profitable but are a liability, as they are not financially viable.

With the assistance of the GZB of the Netherlands, the RCZ managed to build a youth centre in Harare. The aim was, and is, to have a vocational skills-training centre for young people.

#### **3.4.5 Worship and stewardship**

The faith tradition of the RCZ is reformed, which finds its roots in the Calvinist tradition. (The research discussed Calvinism in chapter two). The confessional basis for the RCZ is the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, which the DRC had handed down. The RCZ adheres to this tradition without questioning its relevance for Zimbabwe's context. The research agrees with Bowen (1996:229) who says that the way we express our Christian doctrine in the RCZ must be evaluated in addressing our current contextual realities. The concept of contextualising the Gospel message is to frame it in a language and communication forms appropriate and meaningful to the local culture and to focus the message upon daily realities that affect people (Lingenfelter 1998:12).

The liturgies and methods used during worship services in the RCZ is a carbon copy of the DRC. Neely (1995:179) states:

*It is now generally acknowledged that one of the major mistakes missionaries made, a blunder no longer concealed nor defended, was the imposition of Western cultural values on national converts and churches, an imposition that included modes of dress and behaviour, worldview, theologies, ethical requirements, and even church architecture and forms of worship.*

Lingenfelter (1998:36) argues that the missionaries' assumptions and values created a preference for church structure, theology, and worship, and led them to assume that their ways were the best, if not the only viable ones.

The DRC missionaries were led by their deep assumptions and priorities for social and church life in their own context, to plant churches in Zimbabwe identical to their home churches in the West (Lingenfelter 1998:35). Bowen (1996:85) points out that Roland Allen noted that most of the mission churches he saw were buildings like those in Europe. They worshipped with European liturgies and tunes, followed European behaviour and rituals, and relied on foreign leadership. These mission churches gave no sign that they belonged to the culture around them. Bowen (1996:139) points out that the missionaries failed to understand that Jesus could be worshipped in accordance with the African culture.

The research argues that the RCZ is to develop a spirituality of mission that is communal and contextual. The RCZ must draw on the traditional values of African culture in nurturing her spirituality, in which the RCZ should not be rigid but inherently flexible. According to Rutoro (2007:118), the inability of the RCZ to radically transform her policy and structures has been an obstacle to the Church's growth. The research contends that, if the RCZ remains rigid, it will become a negative factor in her outreach in the Tonga community. For example, the worship services in the RCZ are not structured to reflect her cultural understanding of worship. They are not communal and contextual, because European missionaries condemned the African religious instruments, such as the *ngoma* (drums), *hosho* (rattles), *mbira*, clapping of hands, and dancing, but gave the RCZ an organ. Unfortunately, the RCZ has been unable to understand and move with the changing times.

Music is an integral part (an essential component) of Christian worship and is an inherent part of the Zimbabwean people. Neely (1995:180) explains:

*In a worship setting, music enriches and enhances the experience by capturing and expressing in rhythmic, melodic, and usually familiar reiteration what is both cerebral and emotive.*

European music is one of the cultural elements that the missionaries consciously brought to Zimbabwe. They then translated their hymns into the local language. They discarded the use of local tunes, instruments, and dance and failed to promote the composition of local music. Many missionaries were extremely uncomfortable with the instruments and music that Africans produced, because they viewed them as being tied inextricably to ancestral veneration. They also argued that they had to maintain the distinctiveness of Christian worship (Neely 1995:188). The research contends that this led to many RCZ Christians' belief that European music with; of course, no dancing was godly and civilized.

The research states that the contribution of foreign music was, and is, inappropriate in the RCZ corporate worship, and that culturally contextual musical forms must be developed. Neely (1995:182) argues:

*When music does not follow the rhythms and melodies indigenous to the culture, and when hymn texts are incorrectly or ineptly translated and interpreted, an emotional and intellectual dissonance ensues.*

The challenge to the RCZ is that we were trained to worship God in European hymnody. The development and utilization of local music in the RCZ depends on the desire, passion, effort and willingness of the local Christians. For a positive view of the local musical rhythms, cadences, accents and pitches, Christians, especially the ordained ministers, need a paradigm shift. The music composed by using the language, traditions and styles of the local culture is good and godly Christian music.

The ability to develop forms of worship that are familiar to the local cultural context is one of the processes of contextualising the Gospel message. Such development is noble, but some Christians may view it as an attempt to compromise the Gospel by syncretising traditional religion and Christian faith. Mitchell Hutchison (quoted by Neely 1995:187) notes in a case study of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe that music with European texts and tunes are regarded with high reverence and many Christians, including ordained ministers, cannot envisage abandoning their use. The research argues that the same is true of the RCZ and proposes that the use of local music tunes and dance should be the core in the RCZ congregational worship, but to incorporate European music and not abandon it.

The majority of European missionaries in Zimbabwe rejected expressions of African religious behaviour and forbade their converts to participate in them (Van't Spijker 2004:55). Daneel (1987) views the emergence of the African Initiated Churches (AIC) as 'a quest for belonging,' which is also the title of his book. The missionaries' failure to appreciate African culture and to distinguish between the good and the bad elements led to the emergence of AICs that resulted from the desire to develop an authentic African spirituality. They were striving for cultural identity and contextual spirituality and it was an authentic African response to the Gospel message (Mwaura 2004:104). The AIC's understanding of African reality and their addressing people's needs are holistic and contextual.

One can deduce that the desire for a relevant, meaningful, communal-contextual Christian faith that addresses the people's spiritual, social, economic and psychological needs in their local contexts forms the basis of the AICs. These Churches have produced a vibrant spirituality through creative liturgies and evangelistic revivals. They now have so much life and spiritual power that much of the continuing evangelisation of Africa is in their hands (Bowen 1996:140). But, they face the challenge of adapting to a modern culture in which the newer African Pentecostal Churches have succeeded, but still continue to pray for the power over evil spirits, sickness, unemployment, failures, family breakdowns and curses and many others issues (Bowen 1996:140).

Mwaura (2004:108) states that the Pentecostal movements have developed a whole theology of powers (covenants with familial and territorial spirits) that resonates with African spiritual experiences. Their ability to address the fears of spiritual forces in Zimbabwe through the power of the Holy Spirit is one of the main reasons people are attracted to them. Therefore, the AIC healing has spiritual, social, physical, psychological, and cosmic connotations (2004:109).

The research contends that, in the RCZ, the whole issue of power encounters, in which healing and deliverance has a significant role, is not adequately understood. Many RCZ members seek assistance from the AIC, Pentecostal Churches and even witch-doctors when they encounter real problems. Bowen (1996:140) argues that people will continue with this practice until the ministers learn to deal with these questions that lie outside the teaching they have received from their mere academic studies. The Holy Scriptures show that Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to preach, teach and heal. The research states that the healing ministry should be experienced in the communal context with a celebration of life and the victory of Jesus Christ over sin and evil.

The Pentecostal movement has challenged the missionary-founded churches that have been focusing on a 'proper' understanding of and analysing their faith, rather than experiencing it (Bowen 1996:151). The immense resistance to the charismatic movements in the mainline churches, including the RCZ, led to the expulsion of members and the founding of many Pentecostal Churches. Bowen (1996:152) points out that in some of these churches; recently they have learnt to be more flexible and to accept charismatic movements.

Worship in the AICs and Pentecostal Churches is participatory, and flexibility is essential. There is great freedom of expression by, and for all (Mwaura 2004:110), characterised by spontaneity. There is greater involvement of all worshippers in their service than in the RCZ, where the minister does basically everything - from the prayers to the choice of hymns, and preaching. The AICs have evolved an authentic and relevant liturgy that addresses the African context by employing African spirituality (2004:111). The free African liturgy of music and dance in the AICs is the most obvious demonstration of contextualising the Gospel message. Their worship creativity has contributed to the growth of the AICs. Africans want freedom to express their spirituality, not the formalism and rationalism of Europe.

The research argues that the AICs and Pentecostal Churches have contributed positively to the development, renewal and growth of Christian faith in Africa, and particularly in Zimbabwe. But, there are some shortcomings in their theological practices. Mwaura (2004:114) points out that too much reliance is on the prophet or God's anointed person, to the extent that healing power is identified with the person, and not its source, which is Jesus Christ. Their leadership also tends to be dictatorial.

In some instances, these churches are personalised and have become the personal property of the charismatic leader, which has led to many divisions and schisms in these Zimbabwean Churches. Mwaura (2004:114) also states that the emphasis on the spiritual nature of evil can divert people from taking concrete action to alleviate their marginal conditions. Sometimes, evil is depicted as so overwhelming that the love of God is masked. The Gospel of prosperity fails to address the meaning of the cross in terms of suffering. The Holy Scriptures teach that we are to know the power of Jesus Christ's resurrection and share in His suffering. However, the poor are depicted as being responsible for their poverty status and this distorts Jesus Christ's teaching of love for, and solidarity with, the poor.

Today, the expression of the Christian doctrine must be appropriate to the Zimbabwean people's cultural context. The research agrees with Bowen (1996:229) who contends that the RCZ needs to work on new statements of faith that meet the heresies of today's world and answer questions, just as the old ecumenical creeds met the needs of the Hellenistic world that was so different from ours. We are in the world to participate in the mission of God in present context and He does not want us to continue to live in the past (1996:229).

An aspect of the life of the Church that the research argues to be significant in the Church's spirituality is stewardship. Stewardship is an essential part of Christian worship. According to Mutumburanzou (1989:12) and his committee, the RCZ suffered heavily between 1982 and 1984, because of two major factors. First, there was a great drought that covered the whole country and since most of its congregations are in the rural areas, the financial contributions by the members were at their lowest ebb. It can be noted that the identity of the RCZ is 'rural' by nature. Secondly, it was also at this juncture that the DRC decided to gradually cut down her assistance to the Church at a time when financial assistance for reconstruction was greatly needed.

The RCZ applied for assistance from other Churches, such as the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. Through the GZB, its missionary arm, this Church was in many ways supportive of the RCZ. After the liberation war, the task of rebuilding and consolidating the Church's work was a real challenge. The main problem regarding the financial problems of the Church, then and now, is poor teaching of stewardship.

The RCZ took over the DRCM's understanding of stewardship that, then and now, it has been the general practice of Protestant Churches of fixing pledges (*Nhendo*), i.e. the amount that Christians should contribute annually towards the Church, whether rich or poor. They did not follow the Biblical teaching of stewardship. This led to a deficit of \$6 400 in 1967 and about \$2 million (Zimbabwe dollars) in 1987 and, at that time, it was a great deal of money. This was the practice until the RCZ reviewed the system at the 25<sup>th</sup> Synod of 2006; the Church then had pledges (*Nhendo*) which were fixed yearly. The other ways of raising funds in the Church are the Sunday

collections and the annual church celebration of joy, the Harvest Festival (*Matapona*). This happens basically after harvest time and members take the opportunity to praise God for the harvest.

In 1994, the deficit was covered, and now there is a great improvement in the Church's finances as it works towards self-realisation. Verkuyl (1978:208) states that the Christian enterprise in most African countries under the missionary auspices of the European churches was not organised on the basis of the economic resources of the indigenous communities, but rather on material resources and, in some measure, the material standards of the supporting Churches. Then and now, this has created a dependency syndrome in the RCZ.

#### **3.4.6 Fellowship groups**

In the RCZ, the work of fellowship has grown in the following groups: *Sungano yeMadzimai* (Women's fellowship), *Sungano yeVarume*, (Men's fellowship), *Sungano yeVasikana* (Girls' fellowship), *Sungano yeVakomana* (Boys' fellowship), and the *Chiedza Chenyika* Youth Movement (Light of the World). These groups now exist in all congregations. They are involved in evangelism, Bible studies, funerals, weddings, and intercession. But the *Varwi vaKristu* (Prayer Warriors), which was a Christian youth group, is now open for anyone in the RCZ. It is the only group that emphasises prayer and evangelism, with the meeting of young and old, men and women. The RCZ recently created a ministry for married couples. This fellowship exists mainly in the urban congregations, and a policy document is being developed.

#### **3.4.7 The women and youth work**

The youth and women are an integral and vital part of the Body of Jesus Christ. The framework that this research proposes is communal, meaning that it calls for the participation of all the members of the Body of Christ. The position of women and the youth has raised hot debates in the RCZ. Rutoro (2007:117-118) contends that the youth and women of the RCZ have been excluded in major decision-making structures. The clerical paradigm model of the DRC's hierarchical mission and the Shona traditional customs still influence the role of young people and the women. The research agrees with Runyowa, Rutoro, Erasmus & Hendriks (2001:522) who state that the hierarchical leadership model of the RCZ stifles the ability of God's people to perceive themselves as members with the capacity to take initiatives.

The work of Rutoro (2007) that focuses on leadership details the position of the youth and women and raises vital suggestions for the RCZ to consider critically. The research will not repeat what Rutoro discusses. This section looks at how women and the youth should express the mission of God in the RCZ's intercultural mission and will be discussed further in chapter four.

The youth comprise 45%<sup>29</sup> of the RCZ membership, according to the 1998 Synod report of the Moderator (Moderator's Report 1998:17/39). If this statistic is correct, the research argues that the RCZ must come up with a missional framework that meets the challenges and needs of the youth because her missional strategies should incorporate the young people. According to the research, the youth are the church of today and tomorrow; therefore, they should participate fully in Christian intercultural mission.

In an attempt to minister to the young people, the RCZ created a position for a youth director - a national full-time post. Each Presbytery has a youth coordinator to work with the director (Synod Minutes, 1988:892/101). As Rutoro (2007) points out, the youth do not participate in the appointment of the director and the coordinators at national and presbytery level respectively. In the youth ministry, the Reformed tradition of infant baptism allows children to be received into the society of the Church and to be reckoned as God's children together with other believers (White 1980:195).

In the history of the Church, women have always played a significant role. The DRC history of mission clearly reflects that the motivating, organisational, and fund-raising abilities of women played a significant role in building and sustaining the missionary zeal (Saayman 2007:128). In the RCZ, women comprise 60% of the membership (Rutoro 2007:211, 2008:40). If this is correct, the women's gifts must be identified, recognised and utilized. The research argues that the missional church should be able to create space for and recognise the God given gifts women have (Chitando 2007:8). The situation includes the Tonga women who should be empowered to participate effectively at all levels in the RCZ.

Women in Africa are playing an active and significant role in the growth of Christianity (Chitando 2007:10). Women are very active and participate more than any other members in the RCZ; 82.7% of the women attend Sunday services regularly, and 81% of them spend much time in congregational activities (Runyowa *et al.* 2001:527). But, as the research argued before, the statistics<sup>30</sup> of the RCZ leaves much to be desired. In the RCZ, 46.8% of women have a high school education and 18% have a college or university education, which proves the impact of the RCZ education services (2001:525).

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<sup>29</sup> This membership includes Sunday school children, *Sungano yevakomana* (boys' fellowship), *Sungano yevasikana* (girls' fellowship), the boys' and girls' brigade and the *Chiedza Chenyika* Youth Movement (Rutoro 2007:116).

<sup>30</sup> Statistics management is a problem in the RCZ. There is a need for research on this subject in order to find ways that encourage sound statistics management. As the RCZ's General Secretary, the researcher's position has allowed him to observe that ministers and congregational councils do not regard church statistics as very serious.



As in the case of the DRC in South Africa, the participation of women in decision-making in the RCZ has always been limited. As stated earlier, the institutional model (clerical paradigm) and Shona cultural systems have hampered women's full participation in the RCZ. They were excluded from most decision-making structures of the mission work, while male ministers made the decisions. Women are to participate actively in all decisions and plans to bring transformation of our church and society (Chitando 2007:8, 10). The issue of women's participation in mission shall be further discussed in the next chapter that investigates the RCZ cross-cultural mission among the Tonga people.

The communal-contextual missional framework to be developed in the RCZ should open equal opportunities for the youth and women to appreciate and maximize their missional potential. Women and the youth have an important role to play in the RCZ, and space should be created for them to use their God-given potential.

### **3.4.8 Prophetic witness and social involvement**

In her missionary activity, the DRC discouraged ministers in the planted Churches to participate in activities deemed political. Pauw (2007:166) explains that this was partly due to the evangelistic and pietistic spirituality found in the DRC. The pietistic spirituality was the influence of the Reformation paradigm as discussed in chapter 2 of this study. The emphasis of pietistic teachings is that the vertical relationship with God is more important than horizontal relationships.

As with the DRCM, then and now, the RCZ has adopted the policy of refraining as far as possible from making statements with political implications on the issue of social justice, thus subjecting the Church to criticism on certain occasions (Van der Merwe 1981:167). This attitude was, and is, interpreted as being an indication of support for the Government of the time. The silence of the Church implies that the RCZ supports the perpetrators of social injustice in Zimbabwe, just like the DRC did during the Apartheid era. Until today, which is in 2009, there have been no drastic changes to the position of the RCZ. The difference now is that the voice of the RCZ is heard through the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), which is the ecumenical body that represents mostly the mainline churches in Zimbabwe.

### **3.4.9 Partnership in mission**

Partnering in Christian mission is important and must be cherished and encouraged. The Apostle Paul appreciated the spirit of co-operation that the Philippian members reflected (Philip 1:3-5). The DRC has often been rather 'paternalistic' in her attitude towards the churches in Africa, that is, a mother-and-daughter relationship. Such a relationship bears the stamp of European ecclesiastical colonialism (Verkuyl 1978:313). Hedlund (1990:274) emphasises an important fact when saying,

*Mission is not the monopoly of any one person, group, or structure, and it is the obligation of every church and believer in the West as well as of those in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.*

The relationship between the DRC and the young churches was mainly based on paternalism. The DRC was perceived as the 'mother' church and the young churches were the 'daughter' churches (Pauw 2007:162). The young churches, including the RCZ, deeply resent this relationship. As Hennie Serfontein (quoted by Pauw 2007:162) states, according to the view of the young churches, paternalism reflected the DRC's attitude of white superiority.

As the churches that the DRC planted grew, they sought autonomy. The DRC had formulated the constitutions of these churches. As these indigenous churches were granted autonomy, the DRC replaced their constitutions by designing Deeds of Agreements (Pauw 2007:90). The idea was to continue the bond between the two churches. The research agrees with Pauw (2007:90) who says that the idea is noble, as long as it does not retain a paternalistic relationship. At present there is an existing Deed of Agreement between the DRC and the RCZ that needs to be revisited. The research argues that there should be a new partnership agreement that the two churches must formulate together, not only the DRC.

To some extent, the European mission approach to partnership was that of giving and teaching. The African church in partnership was, and is, supposed to receive and learn (Kritzinger *et al.* 1994:22). It is surprising how the indigenous people learnt to subject themselves (as though inferior) to the missionaries. In the RCZ, members still perceive a missionary to be a white person.

The church in the West was, and sometimes is, controlling the decision-making of the local church through their conditional financial aid that is subject to confusing and authoritarian conditions. The partnership must not stifle local initiatives, but should be characterised by flexibility, and should not perpetuate a relationship that leads to a dependence syndrome. There is the danger that the RCZ may create a partnership with the Tonga people in Binga that leads to a dependence syndrome. Collins (1995:333) spells out the ideal partnership:

*While the nature of partnership includes mutuality and consultation in decision making, the primary authority for priorities, programmes and personnel should reside with the African partners.*

Partnership is vital for the growth and success of Christian mission. The Holy Scriptures say:

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can

defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken". (Eccles 4:9-12 [New International Version]).

The research argues that the partnership should be communal and contextual. In this partnership, the context of the supported church is a priority. The basis for partnership in Christian mission is the God-given vision and call to proclaim His Kingdom. Fellowship must be the heart or centre of working together and must be an equal, not paternalistic partnership that should foster interdependence in the Christian communities.

The RCZ and the other churches, whether Zimbabwean, African, Western, Asian or Latin American, must work together as true partners embodying the image of the Body of Christ. The Holy Scriptures say,

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

The research argues that when the local church calls for assistance, such help should be given without stifling indigenous initiatives and insights. This does not mean that supporting churches should provide help on demand and have no part; they should participate in mission together, with the RCZ having the leading role. The partnering churches are accountable to God and to each other. Thus, the research argues, accountability becomes very critical in missional partnerships.

The missionaries from other partner churches or organisations must work with, and through, local churches and become members of the local church. They must not work as representatives of mission boards. There should be changes in the structures of relationships, which are in line with the Scriptures, while inquiring how the New Testament sense of churches' interdependence can best be expressed (Verkuyl 1978:313). There should be mutuality as the churches worldwide work together to fulfil the mission mandate.

The research also believes that the RCZ should co-operate with other churches in Africa, such as the Reformed Churches in Zambia and Mozambique. The work should be communal. The researcher believes that there is no need for reinventing the wheel when one can contextualise and use what is available. The Reformed Church in Zambia has a good programme that the Booth Centre offers for Evangelists and Lay-leaders training. However, the scope of this research does not allow for an examination of the work of the Booth Center.

The RCZ is an ecumenical Church. She should work in partnership with other churches and para-church organisations in Zimbabwe and other countries. The RCZ is a member of the ecumenical movements that drew together the Protestant Churches of the same confession. These networked denominations exist all over the world in World Alliances. In 1970, the RCZ became a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). In 1980, the RCZ joined the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches (WARC). The two ecumenical bodies merged in June 2010 to

form World Communion of the Reformed Churches (WCRC). In 1982, she also became a member of the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches, which is now known as the Alliance of the Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA). And, in 1982, the RCZ became a member of both the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the WCC (Bauswein J & Vischer L 1999:555).

### **3.4.10 Administration of the RCZ**

The RCZ has basically maintained the administrative structures that the DRCM had put in place. The leadership structures in the RCZ are hierarchical and were taken from the DRC's clerical paradigm model (Runyowa *et al.* 2001:521). Now (2009), the Church has one Synod that comprises 62 congregations and 10 presbyteries. The presbyteries are Bulawayo with 5 congregations, Gweru with 6, Harare with 8, Highfield with 7, Makumbe with 5, Gutu with 6, Alheit with 5, Morgenster with 5, Chibi with 8, and Pamushana with 7. The RCZ has 53 ministers and 2 European ministers from churches that are in partnership with the RCZ, 7 youth counsellors and 15 evangelists. Among the 53 ministers, 5 are chaplains in the prison service, armed and police forces, seconded by the Synod as from 2009.

The Synod is held bi-annually and the presbyteries meet annually. The Synod is the highest board of the Church; it lays down the policies and can amend the constitution. The Synodical Committee, which consists of the Moderature and two members from each presbytery, administer the work of the Synod. The members of the Synodical Committee are elected at every synod, except for the General Secretary who has a six-year term of office and the Treasurer with an unfixed term.

Other committees and boards that report to the Synodical Committee, elected at each Synod, are: finance, evangelism, youth, doctrinal, education, audit and building committees; health services, CBAP, business unit and college boards. The Synod also appoints members who represent the Church in the ecumenical boards, such as the ZCC, WCC, ARCA, WCRC and others.

The Synod officials have their offices at the Synod Centre in Masvingo, the Church's head office. The General Secretary is the chief administrator of the Church and is a minister. This post was created at the Synod of 1975 in Bulawayo, acting on the demands of the contextual realities of the RCZ and following the example of other Reformed Churches in Zambia and Malawi. The white missionaries were not contented with this development and, in the beginning, made it difficult for the General Secretary to function (Mutumburanzou 1999:129). The research argues that the white missionaries opposed this decision because change is always difficult to accept and they were not yet prepared to allow the new black leadership to lead them. The General Secretary works with all the committees and gives the different committees' reports to the Synodical Committee or Moderature. The Moderature

meets on a regular basis to administer the work that the Synodical Committee cannot do and delegates, because of its large membership spectrum.

The Treasurer is the financial director of the Church and is a member of the Moderature. The Treasurer works with the Finance Committee that has the responsibility to control the finances of the Church and advise the Synod, or its Committee, on the course to be followed. The Church established a centralised system in financial management in all her departments. This has brought the spirit of joint responsibility to most congregations. The research believes it is a communal-contextual framework. The RCZ created an internal audit department headed by the Chief Internal Auditor responsible for implementing the audit systems of the organisation. The officer works with an Audit Committee.

The Education Secretary administers the work of the RCZ education system and services. The Education Secretary works with the Education Committee to monitor that the heads of schools and colleges adhere to the RCZ's education policies. The officer liaises with the Ministry of Education on related issues that affect our education policies.

The Church has introduced the position of a full-time youth director. The office was at the Zimuto mission, but is now at the RCZ head office. The youth director organises the youth ministry in the Church. This person works with the Youth Committee to oversee the work of the youth at national level. In the Church we have the manager of Mabuku Bookshop and Printing Press, a literature development and stationery sales department. There are also managers responsible for farms and butcheries, the Copota workshop, the director of PENYA Radio Ministry and the director of TEE. All the heads work with committees of each department.

The Synod mandated the Evangelism Committee to plan and facilitate the RCZ outreach ministry. It is the work of this committee the research is focusing. The DRCM had instituted a Mission Committee, but it was not operational after the RCZ's autonomy. The involvement of the Evangelism Committee in the Binga outreach will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has explained and critically reflected on how the RCZ was established, and described her present situation. It diagnosed the past and present situations of the Church. According to the methodology of this research, which is a Biblical-communal-contextual missiological perspective, this chapter focuses on identity. It has proved that the DRC missionary model has profoundly influenced the RCZ's identity, which relates to how the RCZ behaves in her effort to obediently and faithfully participate in God's mission.

In this research the indication is that the identity of the RCZ has not changed in a profound way. It is basically still the same as the DRC missionary model. The RCZ faith tradition is reformed, finding its roots in the Calvinist tradition. The confessional basis for the RCZ is the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. The RCZ also maintains the institutional model (clerical paradigm) derived from the DRC.

Another characteristic of the RCZ's identity is that she is an ethnic Church, just like the DRC. The DRC's policy of separate development in mission work led to the formation of three churches in Zimbabwe. The research argues that the church of Jesus Christ should not accept and allow the planting and development of racially or ethnically separated churches. In her cross-cultural mission, the RCZ still uses the methods that the DRC used. The research believes that the positive value of the work done by the DRC missionaries cannot be refuted. What they did to uplift the Karanga people is commendable and should be appreciated.

This research has proved that the RCZ still clings uncritically and conservatively to the missionary model inherited from the DRC, which has led to her failure to contextualise her mission work. The research argues that, for the RCZ to be a catalyst of transformation among the Tonga people, she should develop appropriate, meaningful and relevant approaches.

The research has proved that the RCZ has functional structures. Together they help the Church to fulfill her mission in the world. Nevertheless, the Church needs to be cautious about viewing organisational systems as the goal of mission. There can also be the danger of bureaucracy that can hamper and distort the Church's mission. The RCZ should not be satisfied only to repeat the tradition as she received it, but she is to take her place alongside the churches of older origin in contributing her response to the Gospel to the stream of the Christian tradition. The research agrees with Rutoro and Hendriks (2008:40) when they state that the implication of being reformed is that of a continuous process of reforming, of doing theology as a correlational hermeneutical activity in which the Bible is brought into dialogue with the phenomena of ever-changing contextual realities.

The history of the RCZ has something of interest that may be helpful in expressing the missional praxis. Christian mission is an act of faith or trust in God. Prayer plays a fundamentally important role in the success of mission. It reveals that mission is not an act of the church, but of God, and believers depend entirely on Him. God chooses to use whomever He desires, whether weak or strong, rich or poor, for His own glory. In the history of the RCZ, God used children and women to fund the missionary enterprise and the laity as missionaries. God provides when there is vision, will and commitment to respond to His call. Communication is important to raise prayer, financial support, awareness and encouragement for people to be personally involved. We should not demean the work of our co-workers, but recognise them

despite their status. The seven black and coloured people who came with the European missionaries to Zimbabwe should have been given their rightful place and recognised as missionaries.

In developing a communal-contextual missional framework, the RCZ must undertake a reorganisation of the theory and practice that the European missionaries transmitted to her. There is a need for a critical and constructive evaluation of all theological formulations and institutional designs, so that the RCZ will not be a carbon copy of others. But allow Jesus to make her original, which is what He intends her to be, and to be culturally relevant within a specific situation and setting. The Church should be willing to change and not to seek security in preserving old traditions and in feeling proud of conservative theology (Rutoro & Hendriks 2008:43, 47). The research argues that the RCZ should embrace a communal-contextual theology for members, to experience transformation.

After describing and analysing the RCZ's historical and present situation, the following chapter attempts to provide more information on the Tonga people. The question is: Who are the Tonga people, and how has the RCZ been doing cross-cultural ministry among the Tonga people?

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE TONGA PEOPLE

#### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt with the issue of the identity of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and the Dutch Reformed Church. It reflected on the identity of the two churches. The discussion proved that the former was profoundly influenced by and uncritically upholds the missionary model of the latter.

At this point of this historical-descriptive-critical literary research, the focus is on a case study. The case study, as discussed in chapter one, describes a current trend in a real-life situation. As a research strategy, it focuses on a single organisation, institution, event, programme or group. This is the most appropriate strategy when the research question ‘how’ or ‘why’ is asked (Hendriks 2004:233). The Binga outreach shall be used in the research as an extended case study to discuss the problem statement. This research’s problem is that **the RCZ is struggling to develop appropriate approaches in her mission work that are meaningful and relevant so that they could be a catalyst of transformation within the contextual realities of the Tonga people**. The research will argue that the major aspect of the problem is that the RCZ is still uncritically and conservatively clinging to the traditional missionary model of the DRC. The RCZ uncritically took over their missionary thinking and practices.

In order to have a meaningful discussion of the RCZ Binga outreach (to be discussed in chapter five) this chapter needs to focus on the Tonga people. The key question is: **Who are the Tonga people?** The identity of the Tonga society shall be discussed. The research states that a person’s identity is founded on the cultural context in which one is raised and socialised. An attempt to know and understand the Tonga people is significant in developing an appropriate and meaningful missional reflection in the RCZ.

This chapter shall be a brief historical and socio-cultural contextual analysis of the Tonga people. Ukpong (1999:118) explains,

*The **historical analysis** investigates and accounts for the issues within the historical life experience of the people. It probes into its origin and development, and its effect on the lives of people through the years.*

The goal is to see how the RCZ can move towards contextualisation of her mission work. The research argues that the RCZ needs to come up with a communal-contextual framework if she is to be a missional church within the Tonga people.



The research shall argue that if the members of the RCZ attempt to know and understand the Tonga people, they would recognise the good qualities of their culture. They shall be in a position to appreciate and respect them. This does not imply the wholesale acceptance of all cultural practices of the Tonga people. The research believes that there is no perfect culture. Any culture has some features that are praiseworthy, some which are tolerable and some which are intolerable in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Bowen 1996:82). The RCZ must journey with the Tonga people and critique and work together to overcome the cultural practices that are harmful and dehumanising (Chitando 2007:19).

The strategies of the RCZ would then not fall into the same pitfall used by the European missionaries who had an ethnocentric superiority complex. The RCZ needs to participate in the mission of God with love and humility. She must not behave in a way that portrays that she thinks of herself as better than the Tonga people. The theology of the RCZ is to enable all believers, within the confines of their world, to ask and answer questions. Questions such as: Who are we? Why are we here? What is happening? Why is it happening? What is wrong and what is right? How should we address that which is confronting us? (Kritzinger 2002:147). In developing a communal-contextual missional framework in the RCZ it is vital to accept the influence of time, place and practises of the people the church is ministering to. As stated before, the research believes that the context of the Tonga people is more important than that of the members participating in cross-cultural ministry.

According to the methodology of the metaphor of the cross used in the study, this chapter focuses on the left side of the cross which is the world. The faith community in discerning the will of God should look at the world. As we look at the world (context), we should also look at the Word and keep them in dialogue in the discernment process. Kritzinger (2002:162) contends that context is an indispensable dimension of the praxis. It is an inherently necessity for doing theology. According to Hall (1991:61) Christian theology is contextual. The chapter basically deals with the local and wider situation. Schreier (1998:4) speaks of doing theology between the global and the local contexts. The research shall first pay attention to the wider contextual situation, that is, the specific time and place within the globalised world. Secondly, it shall deal with the local analysis, that is, where the Tonga people are involved in interpretation of their realities.

The Tonga people are a community mostly misunderstood by many people in Zimbabwe. Generally there is a wrong perception because people are misinformed about the Tonga people. Some people in Zimbabwe look down upon the Tonga community. The researcher also had misconceptions about the Tonga people as he was growing up and before the RCZ embarked on the cross-cultural ministry in Binga. Most of the RCZ members also had the same perception. The question we, as

a church, had at first, was: How can we reach these 'backward' people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

In the analysis of the Tonga people, it will be helpful to consider first the wider contextual situation. It is important to assess the context since religious phenomena do not occur in a social vacuum (Mouton 1996:54).

## **4.2 A wider contextual situation**

In order to appreciate the current situation, needs and challenges of the Tonga people, an outline of the world and the Zimbabwe contexts need to be considered. The Binga situation is influenced by the smaller and larger contexts of the country and world. The effects of globalisation on the Tonga community need to be discussed. The research agrees with Verstraelen (1998:25) when he points out that mission is not just Gospel proclamation but also calls for the application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the real problems and challenges facing people in their contexts.

The research argues that the RCZ must prepare to connect with people today and tomorrow by observing the contextual factors impacting the world. The Church will reveal a sign of maturity in recognising that the results of tomorrow are determined by the actions of today. The Church must project the future in her strategic thinking and planning. This shall affect her behaviour and strategies to avoid the negative influence of our time and create positive results. The following section shall discuss the world context. What does the world of today look like? How is it impacting on Zimbabwe, especially the Tonga people?

### **4.2.1 The world context**

The new context in which we now live is global and postmodern. Anthony Giddens (1990:3) is of the opinion that the present situation is not yet a postmodern era. However the world is experiencing the consequences of modernity by being more radicalized and universalized than before. Giddens (1990:149, 163) calls the time we are living in, radicalized modernity or high modernity. Bosch (1991:349) argues that postmodernity is a new paradigm and is still emerging. Bowen (1996:157) contends that emerging postmodernity is a Western culture. In this research the era we are now living in is understood as the emerging of globalised/informational postmodernity. The research will discuss this later in this section.

The world has become a global village. Manuel Castells (2000:68) states that at the turn of millennium the world saw the dawn of the Information/Global Age. Globalisation and modernity are deeply intertwined for they are the expression of the modernisation process (Goudzwaard & Vander Vennen & Van Heemst 2007:145). Globalisation is the extension of the effects of modernity to the entire world where, at

the same time, the compression of time and space is taking place (Schreiter 1998:4, 8).

John Tomlinson (1992:2) calls the globalisation complex connectivity, that is, the rapidly developing and ever condensing networking of interconnections and interdependences that characterise modern social life (Perrons 2004:1). Globalisation is defined by Anthony Giddens (1990:64) as,

*The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.*

Goudzwaard, Vander Vennen and Van Heemst (2007:142) have generated three basic conclusions from their observations of globalisation. The first conclusion is that globalisation is a phenomenon that is dynamic and interlocking. Second, at the centre of globalisation are modern technological and economic developments. Lastly globalisation has important social and cultural impacts from the outset.

This phenomenon is particularly realised in physical agility through a quick and efficient transport system and the advancement in communication technology such as the internet, satellites, cell phones and the mass media (Ndegwah 2004:83, Perrons 2004:2). Mouton (1996:52) explains this phenomenon and says that in various ways the local events are influenced by the broader context and, conversely, the global trends are increasingly affected by local events (Giddens 1990:64).

This informational Global Age has a new social structure which Castells (2000:381) calls the network society. There are global networks at different levels such as, the levels of communication, the environment, computers, financial markets, people, religious networks and others. Castells (2000:381) contends that in the past cultures have been generated by people sharing space and time, but globalisation is shaping a culture that transcends time and space (Perrons 2004:1). Tomlinson (1991:1) states that globalisation lies at the heart of modern culture and cultural practices lie at the heart of globalisation. This means that the relationship between globalisation and culture is that of reciprocity.

The world has changed and is still swiftly changing. According to Giddens (2000:19) the change people are experiencing is not confined to any one place, but worldwide. Giddens (2000:30) points out that globalisation are a complex set of processes. He perceives globalisation to be good, arguing that it should be embraced positively. Mouton (1996:52) explains that the increase in globalisation knowledge is the result of advances made in information and telecommunications technology. Globalisation is rooted in and imposes the Western culture on other cultures worldwide (Goudzwaard and others 2007:146, Giddens 1990:174).

Bowen (1996:157) contends that the emerging postmodernity is a new Western culture which has three elements. The first element is that it acknowledges and

enjoys the benefits which modernity brought to the whole world. The second is the recognition of the fact that human beings have numerous needs which modernity fails to address. The last element is that postmodernity seems to return to some of the cultural values that existed before the Enlightenment, which was holistic, concerned with community, relationships and the ecosystem.

The research noted in chapter two that the modes of knowing and assertion characteristic of the Enlightenment are no longer commanding respect and credibility as being objective and universally true (Brueggemann 1993:1). The first fundamental assault on reason did not come from the human sciences but quite surprisingly from the field of physics (Bosch 1991:350). Toulmin (1990:186-192) argues that there is a reversal of the process of Enlightenment as we move from written to oral, universal to particular, general to local and timeless to timely. Postmodernity accepts as true and valid what is oral, particular, local, and timely.

The new postmodernity era has characteristics that are contextual, local, and pluralistic. Kumar (1995:3) argues that postmodernity is the most comprehensive of recent theories because it includes all forms of change, namely cultural, political and economic. He (1995:105, 106) continues to explain that the postmodernity is characterised by eclecticism and pluralism. It emphasises choice and accept traditions rather than rejecting it, as was the case with modernity. The postmodern period is pluralistic in which Christianity is viewed as one of the many religions. It should not be perceived as a threat to Christian mission but as a positive opportunity in which the contemporary members of the faith community are to participate with eagerness. Kumar (1995:122) points out that postmodernity proclaims multicultural and multi-ethnic societies and links the local with the global. It links people with the aim to cultivate the ethos of particular places and particular local cultures (Kumar 1995:123)

Postmodernity developments have shown that science is not inherently hostile to Christian faith, but that there is still tension between faith and reason (Bosch 1991:354). Bosch (1991:353) continues to explain that we are to take the best of modern science, philosophy, literary criticism, historical method, and social analysis and constantly think through and rethink our theological understanding in the light of it all. The postmodern societies have not just become pluralistic. They have also become secular societies. They relate everything to human beings. Goudzwaard and others (2007:37) point out that the notion of the death of God and the emergency of a world that is now secular to the core came with the rise of the modern Western culture. The process of secularisation is moving at an alarming pace. The minds of human beings are being oriented to this world.

The postmodern world in which the faith communities live has become a global village. It will be disastrous for one to fail to accept the reality of living within a globalised world. Globalisation is profoundly restructuring the way people live

(Giddens 2000:22). It has to a certain extent had an impact even on the most remote rural communities including the Tonga society (Hendriks 2004:15, Giddens 2000:22).

The Tonga people are influenced by the modern education and health services system and information technology such as radio, cell phones and television. The Kariba dam development project generates electricity and accelerated the tourism industry. The construction of Kariba dam had a profound impact on the Tonga people, as discussed later in section 4.3.1. It reflects the impact of the informational global age. The specific time, place and context of a person are influenced by changes happening worldwide today. This time, place and situations will also continue to change because human life is dynamic.

The situation calls for the RCZ to position herself in preparation of these climatic changes. Knowledge and acceptance of the changing seasons helps a person with how to respond, for example, when moving from autumn to winter. Contemplating and envisioning what winter will be like will help to prepare for the new season so that one will not be found wanting. Therefore it is of great importance that this research briefly analyse the postmodernity period.

Postmodernity is something the faith communities are to acknowledge as the inescapable context in which we live where impervious absolutes of a scholastic kind simply will not do (Brueggemann 1993: ix). This culture and technology are irresistible and inescapable and if people want to succeed today, wherever they live, they must understand modernity and learn to communicate with it (Bowen 1996:153).

The research argues that the informational has impacted on the socio-economic life of the people worldwide.

#### **4.2.1.1 Economy and poverty**

The lives of most of the third world countries like Zimbabwe are not improving but are changing (Isbister 2006:1). Kumar (1995:132) contends that the plurality of perspectives and the differentiated identities constitute persons in the postmodern era.

The rise of Informationalism/Globalisation is interwoven with a rising inequality<sup>31</sup> and social exclusion<sup>32</sup> (Goudzwaard and others 2007:162, Giddens 2000:34). Castells (2000:165) says,

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<sup>31</sup> Inequality refers to the differential appropriation of wealth by different individuals and societies (Castells 2000:69). The globalised world is characterised by extreme levels of wealth and poverty (Perrons 2004:31)

<sup>32</sup> Social exclusion is the process that disfranchises a person of labour in the context of capitalism (Castells 2000:71). This process makes people fail to provide a living for themselves. It concerns both people and territories.

*Globalisation proceeds selectively, including and excluding segments of economies and societies within and without of the networks of information, wealth and power characterising the new dominant system.*

Castells (2000:78) continues to argue that globally there has been increasing inequality and polarisation<sup>33</sup> in the distribution of wealth.

The power gap between the rich industrialised countries and the poor developing countries, instead of narrowing, actually widened (Bosch 1991:357, Perrons 2004:35, 55, Isbister 2006:19, 228). The poor are becoming poorer and find themselves in abject poverty and misery (Perrons 2004:31). According to Isbister (2006:1) most people in the world are poor and live in the Third World countries. Castells (2000:78) says,

*The poorest 20 percent of the world's people have seen their share of global income decline from 2.3 percent to 1.4 percent in the past 30 years. Meanwhile, the share of the richest 20 percent has risen from 70 percent to 85 percent.*

Globalisation has marginalised Africa (Chitando 2007:17). Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced a decline in living conditions because it was marginalised by capitalism. This region's population of 500 million has been socially excluded. Globalisation has engulfed all nations, accompanied by unequal distribution of wealth among nations and communities, unfair trade practices, lack of justice, and increasing poverty in developing countries, especially Africa (Goudzwaard and others 2007:20, 87).

The growth of the developed world has led to an upsurge in poverty in the world and there are no signs that change is coming (Hendriks 2004:218). Well over one third of countries mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa live below survival level.<sup>34</sup> Women and children are the most vulnerable in such a context. The expected life span of the people in this region is very low. Castells (2000:81) states that one third of its people are not expected to reach the age of forty. One hundred and sixty million children under five are malnourished.

The African context is characterised by the violence, exploitation and destruction that affect all people, but especially women and the girl-child (Nyambura Njoroge 2001). On 21 May 2004, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) said that poverty levels on the continent had increased by 43 percent over the last decade with women making up to 80 percent of the people living on less than one US dollar a day. Poverty is largely concentrated in the rural areas which include the Tonga area.

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<sup>33</sup> Polarisation is defined by Castells (2000:69) as a process of inequality that occurs when the top and bottom of the scale of income or wealth distribution grow faster shrinking the middle and sharpening the difference between two extreme segments of the population.

<sup>34</sup> According to UNDP estimates the number of people with incomes less than \$1 a day is increasing. It is estimated that between a third and a half of the people in sub-Saharan Africa live on less than \$1 a day, whilst more than its three quarters live on less than \$2 (Castells 2000:81).

Sub-Saharan Africa has been characterised by the disintegration of many of its states and the collapse of its economies. Whilst the other parts of the world are more or less enjoying the dynamic global economy, Africa and because of its political turmoil, Zimbabwe in particular, experienced a substantial economic deterioration. Perrons (2004:31) shows statistically that during the 1990s, 54 countries became poorer the majority was in sub-Saharan Africa. Botswana and South Africa are exceptional. The exports from Africa in 1950 came to 3 percent of the world exports and now have dropped to about 1.1 percent (Castells 2000:83). What is even more disheartening is that 92 percent of the exports are primary commodities. The prices of primary goods have been depressed. Castells (2000:87) continues to state that agricultural production has been lagging behind the 3 percent annual population growth rate.

The economy of Sub-Saharan Africa has been growing at a lower rate than the rest of the world. The region is characterised by a dependence on international donor funding and foreign borrowing for survival. Africa has become the most indebted part of the global world. The uniform adjustment policies of the IMF/WB have increased dependence on primary commodities and have played a role in Africa's misery (Isbister 2006:228). The research argues the programmes of these institutions are not sensitive to the contextual situations of each specific country. The amount of capital the developing countries, especially Africa, are sending back in the form of interest and debt repayments are more than that sent by the industrialised countries. Goudzwaard and others (2007:20, 150) note that the repayments made by the developing countries in 2000 equalled 6.3% of their gross domestic product (GDP), yet direct foreign investments came to 2.5 % of the GDP, while official development assistance (ODA) was not more than 0.6%.

The research argues that one of the main reasons for Africa's marginalisation in the global world is corruption and bad governance. The independence movements have produced tyranny and terror instead of freedom (Isbister 2006:3). The little that African countries get is siphoned out to international banks for the benefit of the few wealthy people (Isbister 2006:4, 27). The research argues that these foreign banks and economies are benefiting from the looting of African resources, which is why they basically support and welcome them. The Financial Markets now exist to serve their own objectives (Goudzwaard and others 2007:97). Chitando (2007:27) aptly states that the poverty of Africa is a scandal. God blessed the continent because natural and human resources are in abundance in Africa.

Castells (2000:90) summarises the reasons for the marginalisation of Africa as: first, an unreliable institutional environment, second, a lack of production, communications, infrastructure and human capital and lastly, erroneous economic policies. He continues to argue that investing in Africa is a very risky venture.

Scientific and technological progress has made the industrial revolution possible. Goudzwaard and others (2007:41) argue that technology is not evil. It is now changing the face of the earth. According to Castells (2000:372) the driving forces of the informational global economy are productivity and competitiveness. Perrons (2004:27) contends that the organisation of production and distribution is at the heart of globalisation. Informationalism is oriented towards technological development which is focusing on improving the technology of knowledge and information processing (Castells 1996:17). Perrons (2004:27) argues that the current developments have been possible because of new technologies in transport and communications, global financial institutions and global multinational companies.

Castells (2000:390) contends,

*The promise of the Information (Global) Age is the unleashing of unprecedented productive capacity by the power of the mind. I think, therefore I produce.*

This thinking is still based on the Enlightenment premise of individualism, rationality and progress (Kumar 1995:3). The research is not in agreement with Castells (2000) who argues that the dream of the Enlightenment, that reason and science would solve the problems of humankind, is within reach. The research does not believe that reason and science will solve all humankind's problems. People have put their trust in the technology they created and now it has begun to control humanity. It is out of control and the wisdom of human beings is failing to harness scientific technology (Giddens 2000:20, Isbister 2006:3). Thus technology has become an idol (Goudzwaard and others 2007:21, 43). The development of science and technology gave people hope for prosperity for the whole world.<sup>35</sup> The promise of social change which the Third World people were anticipating has not yet materialised, especially in Africa (Isbister 2006:1, 3).

The research agrees with Jay (1978:119) who observed that the pace of all this has been such that the world suddenly finds itself confronted with new problems. What does the production of weapons of mass destruction help the people in Africa? How is the exploitation of African minerals solving the problems of African people? Giddens (2000:21) points out that science and technology are involved in attempts to counter risks, but it is also true that they have contributed to creating them in the first place.

The rise of globalisation and the rising complexity of our postmodern society are failing to explain the uncertainties about the future (Goudzwaard and others 2007:19,

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<sup>35</sup> The science and technology process has transformed the Third World in creating the new phenomenon of a massive urban, unsustainable population explosion and rural poverty (Isbister 2006:21, 24). The rural poor include the Tonga people. The research agrees with Isbister (2006:96) when he says that we are not to complain about the successful colonial public health system in the Third World, including Zimbabwe.



Giddens 2000:25). The changes in the world are so profound that the people are no longer sure of what the future holds for them. Giddens (2000:21) states that globalisation brings new risks and uncertainties no matter where one lives. It is amazing to see that with all the technological progress made, the ability to find new solutions and implement them proved to be elusive (Goudzwaard and others 2007:19, Giddens 2000:21). The research argues that the individualistic and rationalistic approach of the Western culture will not sufficiently address the problems of humankind. According to the research, the framework that will help addressing the needs and challenges humankind faces should be theological, communal, and contextual.

#### **4.2.1.2 Effects of technological development**

Technology is impacting on the whole world in an immense way. Technology, particularly those fuelled by digitalised hardware and software is making the world smaller and faster (Perrons 2004:169). As technology proliferates, those who have it may have a significant advantage over those who do not have it or are slow to acquire it, thus creating not only affluence gaps but information access gaps. Technology affects both where and how people work and the type of work people do. As people become more comfortable with and confident in the internet, more products and services will pass through this channel of information distribution (Perrons 2004:179). Internet enables colleagues around the world to be more accessible than those next door not using it. According to Giddens (2000:53) we are not to take a negative attitude in this global context, but living in a global age means we are to cope with a diversity of new situations of risk and uncertainty. The African churches must position themselves in order to seize the opportunity to be part of the revolution of information technology (Chitando 2007:28). The church today is operating in a world which is under siege.

Technology has made it possible to utilize raw materials so rapidly that supplies for future generations are in jeopardy. The raw materials of Africa are being extracted at a frightening pace to sustain the standards of living mostly in the Western world. In reality technological development meant the economic expansion of the West. Hendriks (2004:218) says,

*In the meantime 80% of the world production takes place in countries with 20 to 25% of the world population. Now planet earth's natural resources are in a danger zone. Infinite growth cannot take place on a finite planet.*

There are problems of ecology as the result of technological advancement (Goudzwaard and others 2007:17, 153). One such problem is the polluting of the atmosphere and waters by the waste products of industry. Pollution has posed a threat to plants, animals, the ozone layer and human life through global warming (Giddens 1990:21, 126).

Technology has given to human beings instruments of destruction such as nuclear weapons which, if used, could result in the destruction of the human race (Jay 1978:119; Giddens 1990:125-126). According to Giddens (2000:74) one of the dimensions of globalisation is the world military order. Military advancement, even of the poor countries, receives greater funding than social funding. He (1990:126) contends that the most catastrophic of all current dangers is nuclear war. Wars have been industrialised with the flow of sophisticated weaponry and military techniques. There are wars in Africa using the sophisticated armoury provided by the West and China for their monetary benefit that has brought terror in the world (Goudzwaard and others 2007:17).

Technology has destroyed moral values; it is true that the present ethical behaviour leaves a lot to be desired. The violence, rape, corruption, terrorism, abuse of power, high divorce rate, and manipulation of the natural resources are acts that reveal the rate at which ethical values have decayed. Technology has created urban populations so vast that it proves increasingly difficult to provide for employment and essential services or for law and order (Giddens 1990:125). This study needs no further elaboration on these aspects, for it is not its focus.

At a meeting of economic experts and academicians in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, it was noted that export-price fluctuations were responsible for the failure of many African countries to exit the debt trap of about US 360 billion dollars, keeping the continent in poverty bondage (IRIN, Business Herald, Tuesday 25 May 2004, page B4).

In this new global village, what happens in Asia, America or Zimbabwe can impact on the other parts of the world. The financial mismanaging by the business leaders in America led to the financial crisis the world is experiencing today. The financial markets have become global markets that are unpredictable and volatile (Goudzwaard and others 2007:23). The world experienced an economic crisis in 2008 that continues to reverberate (UNAIDS 2009:11). In his foreword of the annual report (UNAIDS 2009:4) the UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe points out that the global financial and economic crisis will affect all countries, with a serious and disproportionate impact on the poorest, and could leave 80% of the world's population without a social safety net.

Africa shall be hardest hit by such a crisis. Chitando (2007:24) contends that a vicious cycle of poverty has developed in sub-Saharan Africa. Giddens (2000:34) shows that 20 countries in this region have lower incomes per head than they had in the late 1970s. About 300 million people live in poverty in Africa. The WB estimates that African economies would need to grow by 5% per annum just to keep this number from rising. If the number of people living in extreme poverty is to be halved by 2015, as called for under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), not only would economies need substantial growth of at least 7%, but incomes would also

have to be distributed more equitably. At present it is clear that the MDGs will not be met by 2015 (Goudzwaard and others 2007:18, Perrons 2004:31, Isbister 2006:186).

The situation is compounded by high rates of maternal mortality, which stood at 940 deaths per 100 000 births. The poverty situation has also been exacerbated by the unequal distribution of resources among the people and the rising HIV and AIDS infection rates, especially among women and girls. According to Chitando (2007:23) the staggering number of orphaned children in sub-Saharan Africa is mostly caused by the HIV epidemic. This research shall not be able to analyse all the social challenges in Africa, but the HIV and AIDS pandemic shall be discussed in section 4.2.2.3.

The research believes that questions need to be asked such as: What is the possible function of the church in the present seemingly hopeless situation? How should the church express Christian mission today? There should be an increasing sensitivity towards the need for taking cognisance of social realities, of the nature of industrialised and technological society, of the unlikelihood of a decrease in the size of metropolitan areas, and of the highly mobile state of both the metropolitan and rural population. The missional church must not close her eyes to the realities people are encountering (Bosch 1991:10). The church needs to wrestle with these contextual realities today. The research argues that the church should develop a communal-contextual framework that seriously incorporates all the people in a particular community. Goudzwaard and others (2007:30) point out that one should never underestimate what the ordinary people can do today when confronting oppressive powers and systems.

Globalisation and informationalisation caused unprecedented cultural shifts worldwide. It brings with it an erosion of cultural diversity in the world. Cultural diversity is important because it enriches the world. It is an integral part of God's creation. Cultures house human identity and dignity (Goudzwaard and others 2007:154).

The Church and Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) must prepare themselves today for an effective response to the challenges facing the global village. The Church cannot ignore all of this if it is to operate meaningfully and relevantly in its context. The dynamic shift the world is experiencing will reshape the church. The RCZ finds herself in this new world and is called to participate in the mission of God in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is influenced by the Global-Informational Age. The next section will look at the Zimbabwean context.

#### **4.2.2 The local Zimbabwean context**

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country with a unique history. The total area is 390 757 sq kilometres (Kay 2006:1297). Kay (2006:1297) points out that the land has been

devided largely into six broad regions, based on bio-climatic conditions.<sup>36</sup> Zimbabwe is home to one of the world's natural wonders, the Victoria Falls, which is the largest waterfall of the world (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3535&1=1&gclid=CJu9iMXMnKAC>. 2010/03/03). The country is inhabited by various ethnic groups who were there before the Europeans came in 1891. In Zimbabwe, linguists say that there are up to 16 languages or dialects spoken in the country, of which the dominant ones are Chishona and Sindebele (Tsiko, Herald, 17 May 2004, page 7). At present Chishona, Sindebele and English are the only recognised official languages (Kay 2006:1297). The composition of the present ethnicity is Shona 82%, Ndebele 14%, and minor ethnic groups 2%. Whites are less than 1% and Asians and others 1%.

Ambrose (Moyo 1996: vii) states that officially Zimbabwe is a secular nation, but people have freedom of religion. Moyo (1996: vii) continues to argue that in practice it does not look like a secular state for Christianity occupy a special position in Zimbabwean society. The composition of the religions is 50% syncretic (that is, partly Christian, but also partly holding on to indigenous beliefs), Christians 25%, indigenous beliefs 24%, Muslim and others 1%. Moyo (1996: vii) says that the estimation is that 75% of Zimbabweans are Christians. According to the 1997 census 11 789 274 persons were counted (Kay 2006:1297). There was an increase in 2005 to an estimated population of 12 747 000 (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01).

In an article to the Herald, Sifelani Tsiko (Herald, 17 May 2004, page 7) noted that there are up to 14 minority dialects in the country, which include Tonga in the Binga, Omay and Nyaminyami districts, Kalanga spoken in Bulilimangwe district, Hwesa in the Nyanga district, Sotho in Gwanda South, Shangani in Chiredzi, Chitoko-Tonga in Mudzi district, and Venda in Beitbridge district. Other minority languages include Chikunda and Doma spoken in lower Guruve and Muzarabani districts, Chewa by immigrants in various parts of the country, Khoisan or Tshwawo in Tsholotsho, Barwe in Nyamaropa and Nyakomba districts in Nyanga. The other dialects are Tswana in Bulilimangwe and Fingo or Xhosa in Mbembesi, whilst Nambya is widely spoken in Hwange district and Sena in various parts of the country (Tsiko, Herald, 17 May 2004, page 7). These ethnic groups in Zimbabwe live a communal life.

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<sup>36</sup> Region 1 has good, reliable rainfall, suitable for specialised and diversified farming. It is 1.6% of the country. Region 2 has moderately high rainfall, suitable for intensive commercial crop production with subsidiary livestock farming. It is 18.7% of the land. Region 3 has mediocre rainfall conditions, suitable for semi-extensive commercial livestock farming with supplementary production of drought-resistant crops. It is 17.4% of the country. Region 4 with low and unreliable rainfall is suitable for semi-extensive livestock production. It is 33% of the land. Region 5 has a semi-arid climate suitable only for extensive ranching. It is 26% of the land. The last region has steep slopes, skeletal soils, swamps and is unsuitable for any agricultural use. It is 3% of the country (Kay 2006:1297). The Tonga community is mainly found in region 5 and 6 and sparsely populated. According to Kay (2006:1297) a real threat in the semi-arid region of Zimbabwe is desertification.

The ethnicity of Zimbabwe has diverse cultures. Chitando (2007:2) rightly explains that there is no single African culture. The cultures are highly diversified. This is also reflected in Zimbabwe where there are multiple languages, beliefs and practises. The areas inhabited by these ethnic groups are blessed with many and rich natural resources. The Europeans had an interest in these resources.

In the 1850s the first European explorers and missionaries arrived in Zimbabwe (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). The British were motivated to occupy Mashonaland drawn by the prospect of mining minerals. But the deposits they found proved limited (Brown 2006:1298). Cecil Rhodes, after cheating king Lobengula through the 'Rudd Concession'<sup>37</sup> in 1889, received a Royal Charter from Britain to occupy the land (Randolph 1985:1). Through the charter Rhodes took control of all the areas north of Limpopo under the administration of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). 1890 was the beginning of the effective occupation of the country by the BSAC (Verstraelen 1998:4). The Ndebele fought the white settlers but were defeated in 1893. The Matabeleland and Mashonaland area became a colony of the British government. They seized land from the Shona and Ndebele communities, after which white farmers began to occupy the land (Brown 2006:1298).

#### **4.2.2.1 Political situation in Zimbabwe**

On 1 May 1895 the territory under BSAC was named Rhodesia after Cecil Rhodes. The rule of BSAC ended in 1923 giving way to a government by European settlers when they voted to become the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). They drafted a constitution in 1923. Only the white Rhodesian settlers had voting rights. The new European settlers' administration introduced and passed laws that enforced racial segregation (Randolph 1985:1, 2). As a minority ethnic group, the white settlers were prepared to protect themselves regardless of the consequences for the black majority. Goudzwaard and others (2007:82) argue that if the main goal of a policy is to preserve oneself at any expense, then an ideology of identity is at work. They call it a civil religion.

In 1953 a federation comprising Nyasaland (Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was formed. Through the white settlers the Rhodesian Front (RF) party was voted into power in 1962. They were dedicated to upholding white supremacy (Brown 2006:1298). On 11 November 1965 the conservative white-minority government led by Ian Smith declared its independence from Britain by means of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). It then became an illegal state (Verstraelen 1998:51, Brown 2006:1298, <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01).

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<sup>37</sup> The Rudd Concession was an agreement to allow the British to occupy part of Zimbabwe. It was made between Rhodes and king Lobengula.

The European settlers thus became the owners of all the land. The local people saw that an armed struggle was the only way to be free. It was a struggle for land and black majority rule and to effect the transformation of society (Randolph 1985:11, Verstraelen 1998:51). Land was held communally in Zimbabwe. The white settlers attempted to destroy this African concept. They were not successful. They then segregated the 96 million acres of land as European, African and National. The African land was named Native Reserves, which was later changed to Communal Land by the new liberation government in 1982, and National land that comprised game reserves and natural resources areas (Randolph 1985:11-12).

This segregation impacted negatively on the missionary churches. White and Black Christians had to worship separately. The segregation and oppressive conditions set by the European settlers' government left a heritage of hate, fear and a deep sense of injustice in the hearts of Zimbabweans (Randolph 1985:14). The research agrees with Randolph (1985:13) who rightly observed that discrimination strikes at the heart of the Christian faith because God loved the world and became human to redeem it. The research argues any form of discrimination is dehumanising and a missional church must reject it.

Black Nationalist movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), led by Joshua Nkomo, were formed in 1957 (Matshazi 2007:19). The Rhodesian regime responded ruthlessly to the nationalist movement and banned it in 1959 (Meredith 2002:24-25, Matshazi 2007:20). The nationalists formed the National Democratic Party in 1960 with Nkomo as president and Mugabe as publicity secretary. In 1961 it was also banned. In that same year the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) was launched (Mederith 2002:29).

In 1963 the nationalist party ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo split. The breakaway party was named the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) under the leadership of the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe as the secretary-general (Brown 2006:1298, Meredith 2002:32). The research argues that the split was basically based on ethnocentrism. ZAPU and ZANU represented mainly the Ndebele and Shona people respectively. The Rev Sithole was removed as ZANU president in an internal leadership wrangle and was replaced by Robert Mugabe. But the Rev Sithole and others who followed him continued to use the name ZANU because their party was latter known as ZANU Ndonga. The Rev Ndabaningi Sithole and Bishop Abel Muzorewa of the United African National Congress (UANC) were moderates. The revolutionary leaders were Robert Mugabe and Dr Joshua Nkomo. They advocated an armed struggle to liberate Zimbabwe from European settlers (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01, Brown 2006:1298).

A bloody war of liberation was fought in the 1970s by two liberation forces, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe Peoples

Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). They were the military wings of the Zimbabwe African National Union – the Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union – the Patriotic Front (ZAPU PF) respectively. This liberation struggle led to the signing of the Lancaster Agreement in London on 21 December 1979 (Matshazi 2007:32). The guerrilla warfare resorted to by the independence movements, resulted from the extreme provocation of the patience of the black Zimbabweans. It was a just war against an exploitative, unjust and undemocratic system run by a European settlers' regime.

During the struggle of liberation indigenous religion played a major role. As nationalism was rising, indigenous religion was revived and spirit mediums became important, especially to the freedom fighters in Zimbabwe. Verstraelen (1998:53) rightly points out that the influence of indigenous religion operates on different levels. Indigenous religion is still very much part of most of the people in Zimbabwe and also impacts on the members of the RCZ.

Ian Smith's regime was resolute to continue to uphold white supremacy. But the intensification of the liberation warfare and a withdrawal of South African military support led to the collapse of Smith's eleven year resistance (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>, 2010/03/01). This culminated in multiracial democratic elections held in 1980. ZANU PF led by Mr. Robert Mugabe won an overall majority. The election was free and fair (Meredith 2002:13). At midnight 17/18 April 1980 the freedom of Zimbabwe was celebrated when the Rev Canaan Banana was sworn in as President and Mr Mugabe as Prime Minister. Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa of the Roman Catholic Church blessed the flag of Zimbabwe (Randolph 1985:9). The newly elected Prime Minister Robert Mugabe called on the new nation of Zimbabwe to walk a reconciliation journey (Matshazi 2007:48, 49). The research believes that this was the best message for the new nation. The church should engage the political leaders to remind them of the need to truly walk and live this message.

Zimbabwe, like most other countries in Africa, is encountering the challenges facing the continent. It will not be possible to detail the problems that are bedeviling Zimbabwe in this research. The country is in a socio-economic and political crisis. Zimbabwe can best be described as anxiously expecting a sudden turn of events. We desperately anticipate rediscovering our economic growth formula to regain the lost historical status of being the bread basket of Southern Africa. The nation is agonizing under an unpredictable economic and political environment. As a nation, we are looking up to God and waiting upon Him for a miraculous divine intervention.

The nation is faced by key challenges which include poverty, corruption and greed, centralisation of decision-making power, the polarisation of society, political intolerance and immaturity characterised by incompatible divergent views. The political and business leaders are enriching themselves without concern for the common people (Verstraelen 1998:61). The Church is caught up in a difficult

situation as it attempts to define its role in resolving the current crisis by means of the promotion of reconciliation, unity in diversity and national healing.

Zimbabwe did very well and experienced both political and economic stability after receiving independence in 1980. The leaders of the liberation movements moved from the peripheral to the central roles in the government of Zimbabwe and were gearing themselves for transforming the colonial state into a nation (Verstraelen 1998:45). During 1980 – 1990 they promoted socialistic models in their quest to bring development that would enhance the quality of all the people. One aspect in which they did very well was developing an education system that benefitted all the people of Zimbabwe. Rutoro (2007:164) rightly points out that the education in Zimbabwe was once celebrated as the rare success story of Africa. In Africa, Zimbabwe has an estimated 91% literacy rate as of 2003. It is second only to Tunisia (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01).

The government had to put in place systems that enabled the blacks to perform the duties previously reserved for Whites efficiently. To the government's credit, Zimbabwe has at its disposal highly skilled human resources in fields such as education, mining, agriculture, manufacturing and others. They also provided free health services, subsidised basic consumer commodities and introduced a minimum-wage system (Verstraelen 1998:58).

However, an unfortunate scenario developed in Zimbabwe. The people who fought for the freedom of the majority are now the new oppressors and are enriching themselves. Verstraelen (1998:46) sadly notes,

*Ironically, the nationalists who vehemently criticized the former colonial privileges have now inherited them and protect them by all means possible.*

This study will not be able to give a detailed analysis of the socio-political situation in Zimbabwe because it is not in its scope. But it is important to note that the Zimbabwean situation is complex. The research agrees with Verstraelen (1998:59) who explains that the situation in Zimbabwe is far from simple and that this calls for the church to attempt to become well informed on these realities in applying her prophetic mission.

As stated earlier the liberation government implemented socialism as their ideology in its quest to transform the colonial state into a people's nation. They were against the capitalistic enterprise of the European settlers. When most of the nationalist leaders started to view the State as their political property they started to advocate a one-party state. They therefore planned to stay in their political offices. The result was political instability. A division between the ruling political and economic leaders and bureaucrats and the common people emerged (Verstraelen 1998:46). In this situation opposition was unwelcome and ruthlessly suppressed. A culture of intimidation, violence and fear developed. The desire to protect one's own interest at



any expense began to manifest in the ZANU PF leadership. Goudzwaard, Vander Vennen and Van Heemst (2007:83) contends,

*The goal of self-preservation can infiltrate any human group or organisation. So much suffering on this earth has its root in this ideological distortion.*

According to the research, a sad part of the historical context of Zimbabwe is the disturbances that took place in Matabeleland between 1982 and 1986. The summary report of the Catholic Commission for Justice Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) indicates that banditry activities began in 1982 when armed men were killing, rapping and robbing people and damaging property. The government responded in a double attack, the first targeting the dissidents whilst the second was against ZAPU and its unarmed civilians (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:6). The atrocities perpetrated by the government soldiers in Matabeleland<sup>38</sup> reflect the depth of injustice to and dehumanisation of people (Verstraelen 1998:55). Meredith (2002:75) contends that during the *Gukurahundi* period more than 10 000 civilians were killed and many thousands were beaten, tortured and the entire Ndebele people victimised.

The Tonga people in Matabeleland North province who are the focus of this research were not affected by the disturbances. Matshazi (2007:80) points out that the violent campaigns of the 5th Brigade never affected the Tonga people in the Binga district. Matshazi (2007:69, 71, 75, and 81) argues that the work of *Gukurahundi* was to pacify ZAPU, and to carry out ethnic cleansing by killing the Ndebele people. He (2007:83) continues to contend that they were striving to harden ethnic feelings of the people of Zimbabwe. Matshazi states,

*Terror only serves to estrange those who you seek to dominate. If anything, they, in turn, relentlessly strive for the appropriate opportunity to strike back.*

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<sup>38</sup> The period of 1982 – 1986 is known as the dissident era. The dissident problem started when the former ZIPRA freedom fighters waged violent actions against the government. ZANU (PF) accused PF-ZAPU leadership of the dissident problem. ZAPU denied any relationship with the dissidents (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:6). The Apartheid South African government fuelled the situation by training ex-Zipra combatants and ex-Rhodesian black soldiers to infiltrate Matabeleland. The dissidents had a reputation for murder, rape and coercion (Meredith 2002:64, 66, CCJPZ & LRF 1999:9). The dissidents killed between 700-800 civilians during the dissidents' time. The government sent a special brigade in 1983 to fight the dissidents in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces (Verstraelen 1998:65, 66). The 5th Brigade trained by North Korean army instructors is remembered in Matabeleland for its brutality. The brigade under the command of Colonel Perence Shiri was called *Gukurahundi* by Mugabe who was then Prime Minister. It is a Shona word meaning 'the first rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains' (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:11, Meredith 2002:66). It was the civilians who suffered most during this strive. Some reports state that in all 2000 people lost their lives within a period of six weeks, hundreds of homesteads were burnt, and thousands of people were beaten, followed by public executions (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:12, Verstraelen 1998:68, Meredith 2002:67). There were reports of detentions, disappearances, tortures and raping of civilians by the *Gukurahundi* soldiers. The atrocities of the brigade brought immense bitterness, hatred and fear in the Ndebele people. In 1986 the 5th Brigade was withdrawn and disbanded (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:13). After the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, an amnesty for all dissidents and security forces was announced by Prime Minister Mugabe (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:15). In 2000 President Mugabe acknowledged the killings of civilians as an act of madness and blamed both sides (Medereth 2002:74).

The disturbances and hostilities that occurred in parts of Matabeleland and the Midlands ended after a Unity Accord was signed between ZANU (PF) led by President Robert Mugabe and ZAPU (PF) by Dr Joshua Nkomo on 22 December 1987 (Verstraelen 1998:65, CCJPZ & LRF 1999:6, Meredith 2002:73, Matshazi 2007:112). The two political parties merged and become one party, that is, ZANU (PF). The CCJPZ in conjunction with the LRF published a detailed descriptive and analytic report on the civil strife. The report is entitled; *Breaking the silence: Building true peace*.

Many people believe that true unity in Zimbabwe was not realised for it can only take place when and if the government is prepared to acknowledge and discuss openly what happened during this period (CCJPZ & LRF 1999:6). The report (1999:6) continues to state that the Matabeleland story is not just about the past, but about how the past affect the present, because much pain and bitterness is still in the communities. The research argues that the terrible things that happened during this time must be addressed to establish true reconciliation and peace (Verstraelen 1998:66).

How is the church to express the mission of God in such a volatile political situation? The research argues that the RCZ should not be involved in partisan politics. The church must not identify with any political system (Verstraelen 1998:48). The church should not become a political party. Yet, when government discriminates or fails to uphold and respect the rights of the people and treat its citizens unequally, the RCZ must boldly and humbly object. God created human beings in his own image and likeness. When standing up with a prophetic voice, the RCZ cannot work alone but should coordinate with other churches and NGOs such as lawyers, human rights organisations, and so forth.

#### **4.2.2.2 Socio-economic situation**

It was not until the early 1990s that the socio-economic situation began to show signs of negative change. The introduction of an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) immensely impacted on the majority of the population of Zimbabwe. The free-market system was forced on the government of Zimbabwe by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Verstraelen 1998:25, 58, Rutoro 2007:163, Perrons 2004:56). Perrons (2004:56) points out that this is the essence of neo-liberalism.<sup>39</sup> The government of the liberation movements then discarded their socialistic policies and embraced the capitalistically oriented policies without understanding them (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). This marked the beginning of the sufferings of the common people.

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<sup>39</sup> Neo-liberalism's premise is that development and modernisation are enhanced by open markets and free trade. Within this perspective the role of the state should be confined to providing a stable framework within which free markets and private capital can flourish; it should not therefore regulate wages or prices and should not be involved in productive activities (Perrons 2004:56).

All the gains in areas such as education and health care of the first decade started to be eroded; inflation rose, affecting the low-income earners (Verstraelen 1998:58, Rutoro 2007:163). The research argues that the IMF and WB programmes forced on African countries were for the benefit of the so-called first world countries. The hardships encountered by the common people were increasing, which led to demonstrations and riots. The protestors were harshly dealt with by government police and army.

The unity agreement of 1987 had removed meaningful opposition. The hardships the people were facing led to the formation of many political parties. But it was a party formed in 2000 mainly by the workers unions and civic groups, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) that grew into a formidable opposition. It was led by Morgan Tsvangirai. Rutoro (2007:160) calls it a civic-born party, formed in the late 1990s. Many white Zimbabweans including farmers and some prominent black business people joined and financed the new party. About 4 000 white commercial farmers owned a third of Zimbabwe's arable land at that time.

In 2000, the war veterans started to occupy land owned by white farmers, after which President Mugabe ordered the white commercial farmers to vacate the farms without compensation (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). It was said that the reason for the farm invasion was to reclaim the land taken under British colonisation. This was a political strategy by President Mugabe to remain in office. Moyo (2001:313) contends that the land issue was used by ZANU-PF as a political weapon to remain in power.

The research argues that it was important for Zimbabwe to venture into a land redistribution programme to address the Ian Smith land tenure act of 1969. The equitable distribution of resources must be pursued by any people centred government. This haphazard method of reclaiming land engaged by ZANU-PF, destroyed a once prosperous nation that was considered to be the breadbasket of Africa and made it into a food-aid recipient country (<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-186314228.html>. 2010/03/01).

President Mugabe was once heralded as the true champion of the liberation movement with concern for the people. Mugabe is now perceived by the international community as an authoritarian leader responsible for gross human rights abuses and for running the once prosperous economy of Zimbabwe into the ground (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). Britain and America imposed smart sanctions against President Mugabe, some companies and individuals aligned to ZANU (PF). The political crises have caused so much pain and suffering to the people of Zimbabwe, and the Tonga was not spared either. The research agrees with Rutoro (2007:160) who argues that the churches played a

significant role during the liberation struggle, but the government oppresses her voice whenever the churches challenge the violations of the state.

From 2000 up to 2008, President Mugabe's government has been accused of blatantly rigging elections. It is worth noting that the Tonga people in Binga have basically been voting for the opposition party. The community of Binga accuses the Mugabe administration of neglecting them. The discussion shall later look at the slow rate or lack of developing programmes in Binga.

The MDC won the 2008 elections with a majority vote. This was the first official defeat of President Mugabe since independence. The presidential results took a month before it was announced that Mr Tsvangirai defeated President Mugabe, with 47.9% to Mugabe's 43.2%. Mr. Tsvangirai withdrew from the run-off election citing a brutal campaign of violence against his party that left 85 MDC supporters dead and hundreds wounded (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). President Mugabe won the June 2008 run-off elections. The scenario put the country in turmoil as the MDC understandably rejected the run-off elections. The desire to protect themselves led the ZANU PF government to develop oppressive and unjust political measures to quell all opposition (Goudzwaard & Vander Vennen & Van Heemst 2007:62, 82).

The year 2008 will go down in the history of the country as the worst ever experienced. The people were facing hunger, empty shops, and a non-existent health system, the collapse of the education system, rampant unemployment, mind-boggling hyperinflation and political instability. A cholera epidemic broke out in August 2008 infecting 12 000 and killing over 1 500 people in one year (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3535&1=1&qclid=CJu9iMXMnKAC>. 2010/03/03). There was an impasse in Zimbabwe which was resolved by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) through a Global Political Agreement (GPA) of power-sharing, signed on 11 September 2008. The agreement was concluded in January 2009. Mr Morgan Tsvangirai was sworn in as prime minister, Mr Arthur Mutambara as vice prime minister and Mr Mugabe remained president.

Zimbabwe had experienced hyperinflation and an economic meltdown since 2000. The country's annual inflation was 300% in 2003, hitting 700% in 2007 and skyrocketed to a mind-boggling 231 000 000% by the end of January 2008 (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108169.html>. 2010/03/01). The Zimbabwe dollar was rendered useless and worthless up to now (2010). The government tried to reduce inflation by removing zeros from the Zimbabwe dollar but the move did not do anything to stem the economic crisis. The International Crisis Group (ICG) report indicates that the annual inflation of Zimbabwe was for several years the highest in the world. The hyperinflation wiped out all savings. In 2005 the government launched "Operation *Murambatsvina*" to forcibly clear urban shacks and illegal structures depriving over 18% of the population of their homes and livelihoods. The worst part

of this move was that it did not provide an alternative place for the people (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3535&1=1&qclid=CJu9iMXMnKAC>. 2010/03/03).

Many companies had to scale down or shut down their operations, whilst others relocated to stable neighbouring countries. Unemployment reached an unprecedented 80%. The lives of the people of Zimbabwe continued to deteriorate. Zimbabwean living standards had dropped drastically by 150% from 1996 to 2005 according to a government survey of 2006 (<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/A0862066.html>. 2010/03/01). The country experienced a brain drain as skilled persons migrated all over the globe seeking survival. This socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe impacted all the people including the Tonga people. The research argues that the Tonga community like any other communities in Zimbabwe is faced with the problem of high unemployment. The few skilled Tonga people are also migrating to countries such as South Africa and Botswana.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) brought an inclusive government to power which has brought some reasonable progress in restoring political and socio-economic stability. The government was not operational during most of 2008, but it started functioning again in 2009. It was a great relief for most Zimbabweans from all walks of life to witness schools and hospitals re-opening and functioning much better. Civil servants have returned to work and are being paid, and the cholera epidemic was contained (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6554&1=1>. 2010/03/03).

The inclusive government suspended the use of the Zimbabwe dollar and introduced a multi-currency system of using the U.S. dollar and South African Rand. All commodities have returned in all retail stores and people have access to food. The situation at present (2010) is better than in 2008. The commodity prices are more stable and inflation has been contained. The urban and rural authorities are now providing services such as refuse removal and residents are receiving clean water. There is a significant drop in human rights abuses according to active human rights groups in the country. However, for the country to be stable, there is still a long road to travel (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6554&1=1>. 2010/03/03).

Despite the significant progress, the ICG report indicates that there are still major concerns undermining the process. There is resistance of intransigent and still powerful security sector leaders and fractious in-fighting between and within ZANU-PF and the MDC (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6554&1=1>. 2010/03/03). The research agrees with the ICG who recommend that the international community should support the efforts of the people of Zimbabwe and the SADC. The SADC must take its GPA guarantor role seriously and monitor the GPA guidelines for implementation through to a successful conclusion. Failure to be

involved and support the inclusive government would lead to its collapse. The military establishment will then entrench itself more strongly.

One area the research believes is the most critical for restoring Zimbabwe is constitutional reform. The international community and SADC must financially support the call and aspirations of the common people to have a contextual people-driven reform process that will be really all-encompassing (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3535&1=1&gclid=CJu9iMXMnKAC>. 2010/03/03). The research argues that the process must lead to the adoption of a people-oriented constitution. The process should have a communal-contextual framework. The Church, the RCZ included, should ask how she should participate meaningfully in the constitutional reform process and ask global partners to support this mammoth task.

The harsh economic situation in Zimbabwe has resulted in children being forced to live on the streets in most urban areas. Chitando (2007:24) noted that the churches have been involved in seeking to transform the lives of the vulnerable children. They have helped them to access education and food. The RCZ needs to redouble her efforts to make a difference in the lives of orphaned and vulnerable children. Caring for them must be an integral part of her core activity as a missional church.

Postmodernity, globalisation and its vicious economic systems have also impacted negatively on our indigenous Zimbabwe culture. Castells (2000:162) states that in this informational global capitalism period, patriarchalism which is a founding structure of most contemporary societies are disintegrating (Perrons 2004:118). The research argues that patriarchal systems in Zimbabwe are being challenged but has not yet disintegrated. It is, however, weakening. The research agrees with Ndhlovu (2008:119) who contends that the churches and the African communities are still very much patriarchal and that women are mostly marginalised in decision-making.

Globalisation is a phenomenon that is influencing the family values everywhere. In many parts of the world the family systems are under threat and changing (Giddens 2000:22, Rutoro 2007:158). The attack on patriarchalism through the processes of globalisation has brought down the traditional extended family of Africa, thus creating a vacuum. Women and children are suffering because of the negative results of globalisation (Castells 2000:163). The family structures have been and are being weakened by this onslaught. Castells (2000:163) points out that there is no system in place to protect children against paedophilia and pornography. Children are experiencing systemic exploitation and abuse (Castells 2000:163). The orphaned children who could have been accommodated in the extended family are left to face the realities of modern life at a tender age (Chitando 2007:23). One of the challenges facing the family is the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

#### **4.2.2.3 The HIV/AIDS challenges**

The HIV and AIDS pandemic have had an immense negative impact on the Zimbabwean communities. Rutoro (2007:171) explains that Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV infection rates and its population is immensely affected. The UNAIDS update of 2008 estimates indicates that 1.3 million people in Zimbabwe live with HIV. The HIV prevalence rate of adults aged 15 to 49 is 15.3%. Zimbabwe prevalence rate is steadily decreasing since the late 1990s due to changes in sexual behaviour (<http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/zimbabwe.asp>. 2009/11/26).

Women and children are the most vulnerable to HIV infection and affection in Zimbabwe, as is the case with what is happening in other SADC countries (Chitando 2007:20, Ndhlovu 2008:114). Women aged 15 and up living with HIV in Zimbabwe are estimated to be 680 000, and there are 1 000 000 orphans aged 0 to 17 because of AIDS (<http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/zimbabwe.asp>. 2009/11/26). The UNAIDS Executive Summary (2008:22-23) points out that HIV widowed women in Africa risk social isolation or destitution. The Tonga women and children have not been spared either. Women play a vital role in any society, and therefore need to be empowered to play a leading role in combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Ndhlovu 2008:112). It must be of great concern to the church in sub-Saharan Africa and the RCZ in particular, to note that women account for 60% or more of new HIV infections in the region (Chitando 2007:20). As noted before, the women members of the RCZ are in the majority. This indicates that the impact on the RCZ could be immense and that they need to put more effort in responding to the AIDS epidemic.

The pandemic affects all social and economic groups in the region, impacting enormously on households, communities, businesses, public services and national economies (UNAIDS & WHO 2009:21, 23). Ndhlovu (2008:92) contends that the social effects of the pandemic are as dangerous and incapacitating as its physical symptoms. The UNAIDS Executive Summary (2008:22-23) points out that HIV widowed women in Africa risk social isolation or destitution. HIV macroeconomic effects are less severe than earlier feared. Nevertheless, it can slow economic growth, widen economic inequality and cause severe strains on households.

The RCZ have begun to minister to the people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS through Community Based Aids Programme (CBAP). CBAP activities are home based because the RCZ attempts to make a difference by reaching out to the infected and affected in their homes. The research agrees with Chitando (2007:31) who argues that providing family care to the people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS remains more ideal than institutionalising them. Children thrive much better in their own cultural context. The RCZ CBAP's activities are focused on the Masvingo district, which means the Tonga communities will be left out.

The research argues that the scourge of HIV and AIDS in the world and Zimbabwe has not left the Tonga community untouched. The number of orphans is increasing among the Tonga people. The research argues that one of the main reasons is that the processes of the European global capitalistic system negatively affected the traditional extended family of the Tonga people. The influences of informational-global processes will become clearer in the discussion of the history of the Tonga people, especially in the discussion on the development of the Kariba project.

This calls for the RCZ to make the ministry among people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS an integral part of her cross-cultural ministry in Binga. In its Executive Summary, UNAIDS (2008:11) noted that programmes that are most likely to be effective in producing changes in attitudes and behaviours in Zimbabwe are those that expressly aimed at transforming people through critical reflection, role play and other interactions. The research argues that the responses must not only be contextual but communal, which calls for the participation of all people. The church, youth, women, men, and people living with HIV must work together. In responding to the challenges of the pandemic the RCZ should work in partnership with other faith based organisations and NGOs. The research agrees with Ndhlovu (2008:231) when he says that the churches must learn to face the challenging contextual realities together rather than separately. The RCZ needs transformational leaders<sup>40</sup> to lead the church through strategic change and align with ever-changing contexts.

The cross-cultural ministry in the RCZ has to be reconceptualised in the context of HIV (Chitando 2007:49). The HIV and AIDS pandemic remains both a public health and development issue that requires responses that remain sensitive to local cultural contexts (UNAIDS 2009:11-12). The RCZ must be sensitive to the local context of the Tonga people. Whilst the missional church is to be sensitive to the local cultures she must position herself to critique the cultural practices that fuel HIV. Cultural practices that facilitate the spread of HIV, such as widow inheritance, must be denounced. The argument of this research is that if the RCZ is to be relevant and dynamic in participating in the Mission of God she should develop a communal-contextual missional framework. A communal-contextual framework is Biblical, holistic and seeks to find an alternative transformative praxis that will build a person as well as community (Maluleke 2001:137).

Information technology is spreading in Zimbabwe like forest fire and reaching the rural areas such as Binga. It is spreading through radio and cell phone networks. The Tonga community in Binga is also feeling the impact of change in their lives brought by modernisation. The critical question to ask is: how can the church express her mission in such a socio-economic-political context in Zimbabwe? If the RCZ is to be a

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<sup>40</sup> Transformational leadership refers to leaders distinguished by their ability to bring about creativity and change (Ndhlovu 2008:136). These leaders are communal-contextual agents of change in their contextual realities. They are leaders able to manage change and discerning the will of God in every situation (Ndhlovu 2008:136, 139).



missional church she must position herself to seize the opportunity to use, amongst others, technology to transform the lives of the Tonga communities. The next section will therefore discuss the Tonga people of Zimbabwe.

### **4.3 Historical background of the Tonga people**

The Tonga people live in the northwest of Zimbabwe along the Zambezi River which borders with Zambia. The Tonga people of Zimbabwe basically live in region five (semi-arid) and six (slopes & swamps) as mentioned before. The population of the Tonga people is up to 300 000. They are mostly subsistence farmers, living below poverty level. Reports indicate that their social condition is comparatively worse than their counterparts in Zambia. They constitute about 8% of the population of Zimbabwe <http://www.mapsofworld.com/zimbabwe/culture/tonga.html>. 2010/03/3. The Tonga people are the third largest ethnic community in Zimbabwe, as of 2009. They speak Chitonga, a minority dialect. Many of the Tonga community are also able to speak Chishona and some speak Sindebele ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonga\\_people\\_of\\_Zambia\\_and\\_Zimbabwe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonga_people_of_Zambia_and_Zimbabwe). 2010/03/01).

The Chitonga speaking people of Zimbabwe are culturally one and closely related with the Chitonga speaking people of Zambia. There might be minor cultural practice variations now because of the separation between them caused by the construction of the Kariba Dam. The Tonga people believe in a harmonious existence and friendship. They are also known as the 'Ostrich people' because of their peculiar feature of fused toes (<http://www.mapsofworld.com/zimbabwe/culture/tonga.html>. 2010/03/31). In relation to other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe one can note that no close connection exists between the Tonga, the Chishona and Sindebele speaking people, although all speak languages in the Bantu-language family (Reynolds & Cousins 1989: 28). David Livingstone was one of the first Europeans to encounter the Tonga people when he was shown the Victoria Falls and the Kariba gorge between 1855 and 1860 (Haworth 1961:15).

Some such as, Aeneas Chigwedere, the former Zimbabwe minister of education (The Herald, 17 May 2004, page 7) say that the Tonga people were the first people to come into Zimbabwe. According to Haworth (1961:19) there is no tradition of migration among the Tonga people and nobody knows for certain how or why they came there or where they came from. The Tonga people are located in two provinces namely Matebeleland-North and Mashonaland-West. They live in two of the least developed districts in Zimbabwe, that is, Binga in Matebeleland-North and Nyaminyami (Kariba) in Mashonaland-West provinces.

The name Tonga shows the importance of the Zambezi River to the people. The Tonga was originally known as *Balonga* or "the people of the river", for *mulonga* means a river. In time the letter 'l' changed to 'd' and they became known as *BaDonga* or the people of the great river, for *Donga* mean a very large river. As the

letter 'd' and 't' sounds are similar *BaDonga* became *BaTonga* (Tremmel 1994:14). Visitors to the valley gave the name *Kasambabezi* to the large river, meaning those who know where to wash. The name according to Tremmel (1994:19) pays respect to those that knew the waters and could wash in them despite the presence of hippos and crocodiles.

For many years the Tonga people lived along both sides of the Zambezi River in North-Western Zimbabwe (Colson 1971:3). The Tonga, a semi-nomadic people, led a secluded and rather peaceful existence. The river valley provided them with meat from the wild animals as well as wild fruit (<http://www.worldtrek.org/odyssey/teachers/zimbleasons.html>. 2009/08/29). The Zambezi River held a constant supply of fish. Eugene K. Balon (1978:43) explains that the common heritage of the Tonga was unique and a way of life intimately related to natural resources. The people knew how to utilise the alluvial river margin for their crops as well as every edible fruit and animal from their environment.

The Tonga people are communal. For Africans, Kalilombe (1999:220) argues humanity is first and foremost in the community. The Tonga people mostly lived in large villages along the Zambezi River before the Kariba Dam was built (Colson 2006:4). They moved freely back and forth across the river, using canoes to make the crossing. Men and women from one side of the river were married to those on the other side and drum teams from either side performed at funerals. People knew each other so well that their songs commented on what those across the river were doing (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:5). People loved their valley, where they said they could live as they liked. They were proud to call themselves "People of the Great River." Elizabeth Colson (2006:4) points out that the Tonga people living along the river emphasised self-sufficiency.

The Tonga community, like all pre-colonial societies in Zimbabwe, had no written history. The important resources for Tonga history are the people themselves and their oral traditions. Many of the older people remember tales and information given to them by their parents, their grandparents or even their great grandparents. As stated by Reynolds and Cousins, in their book "*Lwaano Lwanyika*" meaning the Book of the Earth, very little archaeological work has been done on the Tonga people of Zimbabwe (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:24).

The Tonga people acquired many traditions in the development of their chieftainships. In southwest Zimbabwe, the ancestors of the Shona speaking people began to develop class societies and to build wealth and powerful states. After the collapse of Great Zimbabwe in Masvingo, three important states developed in the southwest of Zimbabwe that had great impact upon the Tonga people before European colonialists arrived in Zimbabwe. Reynolds & Cousins (1989:24) stated that these were the Mutapa State (16th -19th century), the Rozvi State (1700 -1830)

and the Ndebele State founded in 1838 when Mzilikazi invaded Zimbabwe from South Africa.

About five hundred years ago the Mutapa state began to dominate and absorb many of the loosely organised peoples who were militarily weaker. These ethnicities include many of the original people of the plateau and the Zambezi Valley. The influence and power of the Mutapa ancestry and later, the Rozvi invaders, expanded and contracted over the centuries. The religion, the economy and the political systems of the Mutapa and the Rozvi changed as they absorbed the peoples whom they conquered or displaced. In some areas the Shona language became dominant. In others, Tonga continued to be the language of the majority of the people outside chiefly circles. Some Tonga withdrew across the river. In the Zambezi Valley the Tonga people remained independent. They were not absorbed but preserved their language and customs.

According to Reynolds & Cousins (1989:31) most Tonga traditions tell us that the indigenous Tonga speaking people of the northwest of Zimbabwe were overcome by the Rozvi. The Rozvi people married Tonga women, settled down, continued to maintain the shrines in the area and to observe the religious rites and became Tonga speakers. It is said that the chieftaincies of Saba, Pashu and Sayi were founded in this way (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:31). The Rozvi also overcame the Shangwe people and intermarried with them, which led to the Chireya or Sileya dynasty that is very prominent in the Tonga history. It held power and influence over an immense area and appointed for a time, various subordinate rulers such as Negande and Mola.

The weakened Rozvi state was conquered by the Ndebele in the 1830s. The Zambezi Valley Tonga people had few cattle and were thus not the major object of the Ndebele raiders, but nonetheless, many villages were destroyed by them. The young people were carried off as slaves; the old were put to death (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:33, Colson 2006:4). Although the Tonga people were no military match for the Ndebele, they fought back and sometimes won. The Tonga developed stronger leadership positions in response to the violent pressures of war, the need for defence, and the greater volume of trade with the Portuguese and other peoples (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:37).

By the start of the 20th century the imperial power of Britain had begun to control some aspects of life in the Zambezi Valley. The Tonga community rebelled against the colonial rule and was disarmed after they were defeated. The rebellion was the first war of liberation and took place in 1896. A hut tax of \$1.00 per hut was imposed in 1898 (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:38). The coming of the colonialists to remove the Tonga impacted negatively on their history and cultural identity. But the colonial rule brought relief from raiding by neighbours or from the expanding Ndebele and Lozi kingdoms (Colson 2006:4). The Tonga people, as noted before, are the third largest

language group in Zimbabwe after the Shona and Ndebele speaking peoples. But there are very few books written in the Tonga language and the Tonga history is not yet well documented in the new schoolbooks (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:20).

The Tonga people were basically isolated from the rest of the people of Zimbabwe and lived a very traditional way of life. Being isolated had advantages such as being free to hunt without control by the colonialist policies. But they also suffered from isolation being neglected by the colonial state; there were no schools, clinics or roads even as late as 1957 (Tremmel 1994:16). Many suffered from serious outbreaks of disease. Their displacement made the people lose a sense of unity and togetherness because villages became more scattered. They experienced stress, disappointment and suffering. One Tonga man said,

*I will never forget how the white people hurt us. This is painful for me to talk about. When we stayed by the river, the water was fast flowing and safe to drink. Once we were moved, we had to drink stagnant water and I think this is what killed my nine children (Tremmel 1994:42).*

The Tonga people were displaced in the 1950s and this was the beginning of great suffering for this community. They were resettled without their consent by the colonial government for the purpose of a major technical development: the building of the Kariba dam.

An in-depth discussion of the negative and positive effects of the construction of the Kariba dam is not within the scope of this research. However, for a better understanding of the Tonga community, the next section will briefly discuss the Kariba Dam development project that influenced the Tonga profoundly.

#### **4.3.1 Kariba development project**

In 1955 Kariba Dam was constructed in the Zambezi River to produce hydroelectric power. The Kariba Dam is one of the largest man-made lakes in the world (Colson 1971:4). As noted by Tremmel (1994:9), it forms a huge lake of 280 kilometers long, and approximately 25 kilometers wide, called Lake Kariba. The dam is a symbol of technological achievement and international cooperation (<http://www.mulonga.net/content/view/246/93/>. 2010/03/01, Colson 2006:5). The researcher argues that this dam project is a demonstration of the impact of global technology. Development is one of the key words of global capitalism. It is an economic offshoot of modernism (Hendriks 2004:218). Development was obsessed with rationality and its belief in effectiveness and evolution which are Enlightenment concepts and presuppositions.

The Kariba project was funded by a loan from the WB and other international finance houses (Colson 1971:4). The needs of the wider Southern African context influenced the local Tonga context. The lives of the Tonga people would never be the same again. The project aimed to produce electricity for the Copperbelt in Zambia and the

growing industries largely in central Zimbabwe. It was also painful and disheartening, because the labour to construct the dam was drawn from Italy, Tanzania and Malawi (Colson 1971:4). The research argues that the planning should have taken cognisance of needs of the Tonga community.

The Tonga community became victims of a massive uprooting and resettlement programme for the purpose of building the dam. This displacement affected about 57,000 Tonga people according to Reynolds (1989:14, Colson 1971:1). The business developers and political leaders most of the times do not count the social costs when planning for a development project (Colson 1971:1). The Tonga people have stories relating to their painful memories of being displaced and dealing with the hardships of resettlement. The Tonga community unsuccessfully attempted to resist the project violently (Balon 1978:44). Nyaminyami, the fish-like god of the Zambezi, and the Tonga's spears were no match for the armed policemen. The Tonga were displaced from the river valley and relocated to the higher, dry country.

In the construction of the Kariba dam much attention was given to the technical construction of the dam while the resettlement programs for the people were done without ample consideration and research. Compulsory and fast resettlement forced its victims to undergo extreme stress and left them feeling insecure (Colson 1971:1, 2). According to Tremmel, the Tonga people were only informed about events about a year before the actual displacement (1994:31).

When the Kariba Dam was built, "Operation Noah" rescued and moved thousands of animals whose habitat had been flooded by the dam. But what happened to the Tonga people who had made their life along the Zambezi River? The Panos report indicates that little attention was paid to the implications for the 57 000 Tonga people who had to leave their homes and fertile land along the banks of the river (<http://www.mulonga.net/content/view/246/93/>. 2010/03/01). The people's plight caused less concern than the much publicised "Operation Noah" (Balon 1978:44). The area where they were forced to settle is very mountainous. The territory has a harsh climate with poor rainfall and many droughts. It consists of vast pieces of land rich in wildlife, with big national parks.

Without access to the river the Tonga people were now dependent on the hunting of wild animals. The government soon passed the Protection of Wildlife Act, however the act required hunters to have permits in order to hunt. For the most part, the people could not afford to pay the hunting fees. Fishing on the newly created Lake Kariba was similarly restricted. The Tonga people, who had never farmed, were suddenly moved away from their homeland and expected to farm for their survival.

The Tonga people were now faced with perpetual hunger and poverty. It is saddening to note that the area that once could support and sustain a dignified Tonga population was turned into a place and people needing outside donations to

survive (Balon 1978:40). The research argues that the poverty of the Tonga community occurred because the development was not communal and contextual. The local people should be empowered through participatory action. Empowering the local people will enable them to transform the dysfunctional systems in their context (Hendriks 2004:216). People should have space to take full responsibility of their contextual realities and future. Participatory action is the appropriate methodology for the disciplines involved in intercultural ministry or empowering disadvantaged communities or groups (Hendriks 2004:219). Empowerment<sup>41</sup> in this research is understood from a communal point of view and not from an individualistic framework.

The Tonga community had very few benefits, if any, from this project. The research argues that the experiences of the Tonga in this hydroelectric power project illustrate the negative effect of colonialism and capitalism. One of the purposes of colonialism was the development of an industrialised economic system that benefitted from the exploitation of the resources of Africa. The main reason of this project was to have electricity needed to mine copper, coal and other minerals (Balon 1978:44). A relatively peaceful and secluded area of Zimbabwe was forcefully entered and exploited by the global forces and systems driven by the greedy Western capitalistic system. Amongst others, it was technologically driven.

The research argues that this huge development project in the Tonga territory had a major impact on the life of the Tonga people. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the culture of the Tonga community.

#### **4.4 The Tonga culture**

The Tonga people or People of the Great River, as is the meaning of the word, have a very rich culture bound together by a much respected social structure. It is not possible to express the Gospel among people without a good understanding of their culture (Moyo 1996:14). Culture is seen by the anthropologist Michael Bourdillon (1997:7) as everything that human beings learn in their society. Culture is dynamic and constantly changing to suit the current needs of the people. The research notes that it is essential to understand that African cultures have not been static, but that there has been continuous change due to interactions with the outside world and modernity (Kalilombe 1999:214). Chitando (2007:4) argues that identity is not given once and for all but is continuously worked and reworked. He (2007:5) states,

*Cultures are products of human imagination, which means that each generation of Africans has the right to uphold, transform or reject cultural beliefs and practices.*

Bowen (1996:82) defines culture as,

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<sup>41</sup> Empowerment is the process of increasing personal, interpersonal and political power, enabling people to improve their life's situation.

*The integrated system of learned patterns of a behaviour, ideas and products characteristic of a society.*

Lingenfelter (1998:15) said,

*Members of every society hold a collective worldview and participate in structured social environments.*

Lingenfelter (1998:16) rejects the notion of missiologists such as Charles H Kraft and Marvin K Mayers and others that view culture as a neutral vehicle through which God communicates to human beings. He (1998) continues to argue,

*Culture is created and contaminated by human beings and is the pen of disobedience from which freedom is possible only through the Gospel.*

In this research culture is perceived as distorted by sin but that God still uses culture to interact with human beings. There are some aspects of each human culture that are bad while some are good.

African faith communities need to question the notion that conversion implies making a total and complete break with our cultures (Chitando 2007:3). The traditional missionary model understood conversion to Christianity as meaning the adoption of a European life style and complete rejection of the indigenous cultures (Moyo 1996:11). It led most African Christians in the mainline churches to despise their culture and uplift and adopt the white people's culture (Moyo 1996:14). The research's viewpoint is that transformation and not a complete discard of indigenous cultural practices will create a lasting impact on the Tonga people. African cultures need to be celebrated but African churches should also critique African cultures (Chitando 2007:4). The missional churches should not hold to a static view of culture, but should realise that it is transformable. This aspect permits people to embrace new things and reject old irrelevant ones. This is also true of the Tonga culture.

The Tonga culture was and is their way of life. It is of significance to the study if we try to understand the life of the Tonga people socially, economically, politically, and religiously.

#### **4.4.1 The social system**

The social organisation of people evolves over time to suit the ecology, economy and political nature of their existence. There are always changes that take place in every society. Societies change over time and space. All peoples make rules, design structures and create belief systems, but these change over time. The Tonga community has had to change a great deal over the last 200 years as the section on their history shows. The social system of the Tonga people is not much different from most of the African tribes, but is unique in its own way.

#### 4.4.1.1 Values

It is true that all societies value certain qualities. Bowen (1996:82) states that a society is bound together with a sense of identity, value, security and continuity. The Tonga society praise qualities in life that gives meaning to who they are. Their proverbs, riddles (idioms) and story-telling show what they value, such as; “One fingernail does not kill a louse.” It expresses the value of teamwork. According to Reynolds and Cousins (1989:86) their values are: 1) **egalitarianism** - the Tonga believe that each person has as much value as any other as a political and social being, 2) **reciprocity** - the balance of giving and receiving, to share love and protection, 3) **co-operation** - that is working together to the same end, and 4) **personhood (freedom)** - persons are allowed freedom to act as they see fit.

The term Reynolds and Cousins use for the fourth value is individualism. This is not an African understanding but a European perception and it is not a true reflection of the Tonga values. There is no room for individualism. Communal life is held in high esteem. This is expressed by the following riddle; “When the tree falls others came from beyond the river to collect firewood.”

The Tonga people value intelligence over ferocity and see little worth in foolhardy bravery when craftiness or agility can avoid confrontation. Fortitude is greatly valued by the Tonga society. They believe in firmness when handling pain or trouble. Folktales show the lack of stress or emphasis upon warfare and open resistance (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:88). They value peace. However, the Tonga are famous in history for being brave and daring hunters; they hunted elephants, hippos, buffaloes and rhinoceroses with spears and harpoons.

#### 4.4.1.2 Kinship

Kin is a person from the same ancestral stock as you, a relation through your mother or father (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:42). Rules to do with kin regulate marriage and bride price, birth and naming, inheritance, succession, ritual, giving and vengeance. The Tonga rules take a matrilineal form. The kin ties are traced through women to a common ancestress. Yet the Tonga kinship system combines matrilineal descent with a strong emphasis upon a man’s control over his marital family.

#### 4.4.1.3 Clans

The Tonga society is organised into clans which have 12 or sometimes 16 households (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:44). Clans are one of the major organising features of the Tonga society. The Tonga clans, like most of Zimbabwe’s people, have certain animal names attached to them. These animals are not honoured, worshipped or avoided in any way. People address each other using their clan names, also known as totems, such as the elephant which is the *Bakuli* clan’s totem, *Bansaka* is leopard, *Bansanje* is hare, *Bafumu* is frog, *Bacindu* is lion, *Balango* is baboon, *Bankombwe* is buffalo, etc. A person is not allowed to marry someone from



the same clan. This is called 'clan exogamy' as explained by Reynolds and Cousins (1989:44).

The Tonga clan members do not claim any individual property. Clan members help each other especially when one member travels to a strange area. When newcomers arrive they are given clan membership and so drawn into the society. This makes Tonga society an open system (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:45). Clan membership is traced through the female line. Each person is also an honorary member, which is, with few duties to or rewards from his father's matrilineal group. Clans have joking relationships with each other; such joking is called '*kutukila*.'

There is no rigid structure among Tonga clans. Each matrilineal clan has a single body of ancestral spirits, which may affect any member of the line and to which all members of the line have an equal right of appeal. Ancestral spirits follow each person in his wanderings. They are not tied to shrines or areas. The word *mukowa* is used for a matrilineal clan and members of a *mukowa* who claim to come from one ancestress are called a *basimukowa* (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:45). Each *mukowa* has a recognised ritual head and when he dies, the person who takes his name also takes his position as head of the group. During a rainmaking ritual and at other important times the head speaks to the shade on behalf of his *mukowa*. He should attend funerals of *mukowa* members and be told about their marriages.

#### **4.4.1.4 Inheritance and succession**

Succession follows matrilineally, that is, when a man dies his sister's son succeeds him (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:46). He takes on the name, duties, responsibilities and shades of the one he succeeds. Shades are the ancestors, the souls of people after death. He receives the dead man's flywhisk, walking stick, spear, axe and hat. If a woman dies her daughter or grand-daughter usually becomes her successor. A successor is chosen at the grief ritual, a year after a person's death. He or she is chosen according to kin ties, character and personal qualities.

The possessions that a person leaves behind when he or she dies are divided among kinsmen by a member of the *basimukowa* (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:46). A man's children are never his prime heirs, that is, the ones who are given most of his property. A wife never inherits from a husband nor does a husband inherit from his wife. The successor does not get all the property but may get a large share.

Men and women can inherit land. For the Tonga people who lived beside the Zambezi River, land on the flood-plain was valuable and was passed from one person to another. The shade inheritor is given the first claim over land that had been controlled by the one who died. But the building of the Kariba Dam influenced the Tonga land ownership. Reynolds & Cousins (1989:47) explain that when the Tonga people were moved, it was men who cleared the new land. Men began to control the

land they cleared. Most women lost ownership of land, which provides the most important access to a means of production.

#### **4.4.1.5 Gender and age**

The Tonga society is egalitarian, that is, each person is of the same value. Men are mostly equal to one another and women to one another. No powerful leadership exerts authority over others, instead people set up alliances (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:55). Power is lost in old age. There will be less control of land, livestock, and labour by the elderly as younger people begin their own families. The old suffer first when crops fail and times are hard. Reynolds and Cousins state that old men alone have a harder time than old women alone because men need daily services of a housewife (1989:56). The very old people suffer socially for they are feared and accused of having medicine for success and a long life, which needs to draw on the lives of others to have life force. More old men than old women are accused of sorcery.

Among the Tonga people women are the backbone of agriculture. They work very hard. Women teach their daughters to work hard from a tender age and they are indeed the most important part of the agricultural system. A man has the right to the labour of his wife or wives and children. In working their fields, husband, wife and the children attached to their household, form a single work team. Different jobs are given to males and females. The tasks are shared according to the traditional division of labour down the sexes. The husband shares the food from these fields with the family. The birth of a girl is as welcome as the birth of a boy. It is said that women used to give a single shrill at the birth of a boy while they shrilled mightily when a girl was born, for it was in daughters that a woman found security in her old age (Colson 1958:239).

The Tonga women had more power and freedom both in marriage and at home than many other women in Zimbabwe. They can inherit and control land, acquire and control livestock and influence decisions that deal with inheritance and succession. They can become the focus of strong family clusters. They are not seen as ritually impure, and do not suffer any particular restrictions on their activities (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:59). Women as well as men can be prophets. Women too have local shrines built for them after they die. The person who looks after a *malende* (an area shrine) may be a woman. Women may make offerings to the ancestors. Women take a large share in rituals in the Tonga culture and are also part of the leadership structure. According to Reynolds and Cousins, one of the chiefs of Mola was a woman called Namankombola. Some are heads of hamlets, which are large clusters of homesteads (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:60).

The Tonga women have a strong position in their society. However, in many ways they are subordinate to men especially within marriage. Colson said that before the

wife brings food or beer to her husband, she must taste a bit of the dish to indicate that she has no designs on his life or death. The wife accepts the role of servant to her husband, bringing him water for washing and drinking, and fetching his tools, his food or whatever else he demands. A man rarely fetches and carries for his wife, but a woman thinks nothing of unceremoniously dumping the baby into her husband's lap with instructions to mind it while she occupies herself elsewhere (1958:141). How people are expected to behave in the Tonga society depends on whether they are old or young, male or female. Some of the Tonga women would have decorations on their faces, such as cicatrix, which are scars of healed wounds made on the skin as marks of beauty.

#### **4.4.1.6 Family Life**

The family life of the Tonga community is communal. As in most African cultures, family is the base of the Tonga culture (Verstraelen 1998:28). The Tonga people live together in clusters that together make up villages. They were highly mobile, would move freely from one village to another and one chieftaincy to another. The wars and raids of the 19th century caused the Tonga to live in the widely scattered villages. Elizabeth Colson states that the Tonga villages, before displacement, were larger and closer together than they are today, they were having a strong sense of unity among themselves (1971:23, 101). This unity enabled them to help one another when animals like elephants or lions approached their villages. They also built their huts high above the ground on stilts, because it was cooler and protected them from dangerous animals. People lived in thatched houses made of pole and *daga*.

The Tonga society accepts polygamy. There were very close ties with the relatives and ancestral spirits on the other side of the river, in Zambia, before they were forcefully moved. Tremmel (1994:31) says that to this day the hearts of the Tonga people are filled with grief, not only because their land and river were taken from them, but also because they were separated from their relatives and friends across the river.

The household is important to the Tonga community and, as noted by Reynolds and Cousins, is set up when a marriage looks as if it will last. The couple has a test period of several years between marriage and the setting up of a household (1989:66). A man should pay the full bride price (*lobola*) before he can have the full status of a householder. Sometimes a man lives at the home of his wife until he finishes paying the bride price. He would work for them as part of the payment.

It used to be firmly held that until the setting up of a household the man and his wife could not have a cooking fire at their home. She could not brew beer there nor entertain their friends and cook separately for him. The man could not dedicate the house to his ancestors, and could not claim damages for her adulteries. The women's kin would not purify the husband without payment if she died and his

kinsmen could refuse to inherit his wife if he died. If these guides to behaviour were not followed, the shades could be displeased and cause infertility or send illness or death (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:66).

The people believe that God, that is *Leza*, understands death. Death is seen also as one moving into the ancestral spirits' life to protect one's family. *Mizimu* (ancestral spirits) were to be appeased for they had power to harm or to protect (Smith 1950:62). After the burial of Tonga people there is an all-night ceremony of dancing and singing, playing drums and trumpets. People will dance on top of the grave until it is flat. That is why you do not see a well marked grave among the Tonga people.

In a polygamous family, which is common, each wife has her own household centered on her own fireplace. Until very recently, a girl's parents usually promised her in marriage when she was still small. Now, most couples elope. A polygamous man may not marry wives who came from the same lineage or closely related women (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:68). There is little ritual that surrounds the marriage until a new household is set up.

A ritual called *kwenga masua*, meaning to place the stones of the fireplace, is held to set up the household. It is said that a three-stoned fireplace is set up by both family members and the wife is ritually introduced to cooking. Beer is brewed and then the husband installs his ancestral spirits as guardians of the household. Only after this are the husband and wife recognised as fully mature members of the community and when they die, they become ancestral spirits in their own right (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:67). A marriage for the Tonga people only becomes a matter for public concern when the household of husband and wife is properly set up. The people of the neighbourhood would gather to celebrate the new household and share food and beer at *kuzibwa*, that is, the 'beer of knowing.'

Companionship between husband and wife is seen by the Tonga as being an important component of marriage. Husband and wife share an easy informal partnership and friendliness. They have an idiom (riddle) that refers to marriage which says, "When the tree falls others come from beyond the river to collect firewood". This shows that the marriage is communal and not individualistic, like the European marriage.

A marriage ends with divorce or the death of one of the partners. If a woman deserts her husband, his kin may claim back the bride price but if he mistreated her, they will receive nothing. On the event of death the remaining spouse must be purified before he or she can marry again. A widow will be offered a husband from the family of her husband. If she marries a man from elsewhere, the man must return the bride price to the husband's family. After divorce or death of a parent the Tonga children are often allowed to choose with which relatives they want to live (Colson 1958:224). The

right to self-determination among men, women and children is a deeply held Tonga value.

According to the Tonga people, idleness can have physical or mental signs and symptoms and may be caused by natural or spiritual agencies. Thus healers attend to an ill person's body but will also search for troubles in the mind and seek to ritually repair the problems in a person's moral, spiritual and social behaviour (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:71). Rituals draw the attention of family and community to the sickness or trouble of someone. In this way family and community attention is directed to the person who needs care. The shades are said to grant people healing powers and insist on right behaviour in using these powers.

The Tonga family works as a team. Their food is thick porridge, meat and fruit. Reynolds and Cousins (1989) observed that they have at least 51 different fruit trees. They also have field crops, such as sorghum, rapoko and vegetables. A man by the time of marriage would have acquired skills on how to fish, make a canoe, hunt animals, cultivate and build houses. A woman would have known how to cultivate land, and make household materials including clay pots and baskets, clothing, and salt. She would have had an extensive knowledge of the wild fruit and vegetables in the bush (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:30). There is a distribution of roles and responsibilities in the family which starts at a tender age.

There is a practice called *ntuntu* which is a Tonga tradition. During this event the young are taught about their roles as future husbands and wives. They would go to the bush for one month and pretend that they were married. This is an initiation ceremony. Aunts and maternal grandmothers taught young women, young men were taught by their uncles and fathers (Tremmel 1994:25).

Singing played an important role in the Tonga life. The Tonga were proud of their skills in song-making and drumming and of the intricate tunes they played using the one-note antelope flutes (*nyeli*). They sang many songs at different occasions of life, beat drums, and blew animal horns. They displayed skills in story-telling and were masters of the art of joking. The birth of a child was a time of joy. The newly born child would come out of the house after a week. They then applied a herb called *Nsambabacheche* to protect the infant. They would also pray to the ancestors to protect the child (Tremmel 1994:25).

#### **4.4.2 The economic system**

Land was and is a very important resource for the economy of a society. It is also true of the Tonga community. The system of the Tonga people derives from the use of land on the flood plains. There was good alluvial soil and plenty of water that made it possible to grow two crops a year and have permanent fields. Poorer soil on higher land was also used as fields by the people. The good land was in short supply and

the Tonga people made rules about passing on the rights to this land down through small lineages.

Ownership could be distinguished from occupation; this means that when land was passed on through a lineage the control of the land stayed with the lineage. It did not pass to the person who farmed it (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:48). Reynolds and Cousins explained that the basic principle of the land tenure system (land holding) was the right of a farmer over any land which he or she had cultivated. Even a stranger could clear and grow crops on unused land without consulting the ritual leader or headman.

The community (*cisi*) did not own the land but oversaw it. Even the ritual leader (*sikatongo*) did not have special rights on the soil or the produce of the area, nor did the headman or the chiefs. The shades regulate the inheritance of people and the distribution of authority. People who inherit the names of those who die, the shade inheritors, were able to acquire land more easily than other members of the community. The Tonga people valued their permanent fields and they did not move easily from their territory. If they moved, the shades went with them. Only the *sikatongo* and his lineage were never supposed to leave the area, if they left, the shades might send illness until they returned (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:49). According to Reynolds and Cousins (1989:50) the Tonga people do not believe that all members of the community should have equal amounts of land. Ambitious men try to control a lot of land by clearing it, having more wives and using their position in the lineage.

In the past the Tonga people did not regard land as private property, that is, a person could not sell or give away a field to just anyone without the agreement of others who might have claims to that land. Reynolds and Cousins (1989:50) state that the Zambezi Valley people had four sets of rights that ruled the use of fields. First, land cleared by the person himself or herself. A farmer who cleared the land had the greatest right because he or she could give it to someone who was not even a kinsman. The second principle applied to lineage land. The farmer could use the land as he or she wished but, could not give it to anyone he or she chose, especially not outside the lineage.

The third set of rules applied to land given to a farmer by a mother or father or grandparents. He or she may be called the owner of the land but it could be taken back at any time. The farmer could not give it to another person without permission. It did not become part of the property to be handed out after his or her death and heirs had no claim to it. The last principle applied to land allocated to a cultivator by a wife or husband or a relation by marriage. The use of the land depended on the marriage continuing and it could be taken away anytime.

The colonial state that came claimed ownership of all the land and then set aside areas designated as 'tribal' lands. The regime gave chiefs or headmen the right to allocate land in these areas. After independence, in 1982, the Communal Land Act empowered district councils with administrative powers. This means that the new local government institution gives out land according to the communal tenure system. The wealth of the Zambezi valley now lies in electric power, wildlife, tourism, fishing and mining which the Tonga are not entitled to enjoy in an equitable way.

The Tonga community, before displacement, utilised fertile soil along the riverbanks and also enjoyed a variety of ways to catch fish for enjoyment. Like the Nile, the Zambezi flooded annually and the flooded water left deposits of rich silts (soil) brought down from the watersheds of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Zambia. When the floods receded, the silts kept their moisture until the next flood. Careful management by the Tonga people could ensure them a good food supply (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:27). The flood and ebb of the river provided for fishing, and the surrounding bush was rich in edible plants and animals.

The system of landholding of the Valley empowered the people. Back then; they were able to feed themselves and their children. With their fields and gardens, they could have food throughout the entire year. And each boy and girl grew up trained in the skills they needed to provide for themselves and their children. Even tiny children had their own small fields on which they were expected to demonstrate their ability and willingness to work. This training was in tune with their belief that people should be self-reliant. Children were expected to think for themselves (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:6). They also herded a large number of goats and a small number of cattle because of the tsetse fly. They were involved in hunting and were very good hunters.

The Tonga people displayed skills in making drums, stools, beadwork, pots and baskets. Canoe making was a major skill known to only a few. They made some of their tools from iron. People exchanged the products of their own with one another and with other groups. A skilled metal worker, canoe maker and hunter could exchange his goods for food or other things he needed. A particularly good potter would trade her pottery. Families were fed with meat, clothed their bodies and made blankets from animal hides. The horns of animals were used as trumpets, which show that they made good and maximum use of the animals, not just for pleasure, like some tourist who now come and hunt as a hobby.

This all changed when they were forcibly moved. The people who first tried farming in such an area would have had no reason to change or move. The areas near the new Lake Kariba were reserved for National Park land and future tourism. Most of their goats died on the trucks before they reached their destination during displacement, and they were not compensated. In the new resettlement areas their cattle and goats died because of tsetse fly, and many children died from measles. They were also no longer permitted to hunt, for their hunting was now called poaching. Water

empowered them economically but they had to leave the river. Because of erratic and low rainfall and poor soil, the Tonga community have become a people dependent upon the government and non-governmental organisations and churches for relief food. The Zambezi river land used to sustain the Tonga people. Now the people needed donations from the outside world to survive (Balon 1978:48).

The tourism and fishing industry is there basically for the benefit of a few elite black and white people. They have established hotels, resorts, safari camps, lodges, crocodile farms, game farms for hunting and fishing companies along the shores of Lake Kariba. They built a new resort town called Binga, which is on the bank of the lake. It is the outsider who enjoys the abundance of the Kariba. The benefits of effective irrigation and a high fish production that had been promised the Tonga community remained unfulfilled (Balon 1978:44).

The Tonga people are no longer allowed to fish as they used to do, thus they are prevented from finding enough daily food for their families. They were promised that water will follow them but the water never followed the people who needed it most. The electricity generated is benefitting mostly other parts of Zimbabwe and is mostly out of the reach of the Tonga people (Balon 1978:45). Wealth from the Tonga area has persistently flowed to the urban areas and little investment has been made in return. Balon (1978:44) contends that to the Tonga these were dubious benefits. European capitalism ruined the indigenous economy when people were deprived of their land (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:12).

#### **4.4.3 The political system**

Before the displacement the Tonga society had a well functioning leadership system. The Tonga people did not have a paramount chief or king but are now familiar with the thought of subordinate chieftains holding authority under a higher chief. A village headman holds authority under district chiefs (Smith 1950:67). The Tonga law reflected the ordered way they lived. This helped the people to solve conflicts. The chiefs did not have a unique way of dressing but used to wear the same clothes as the people under their authority. The Tonga people were governed primarily through the Chief's court and his police rather than colonial authorities.

The chief is the judge during court sessions and he could beat or fine the guilty person (Tremmel 1994:26). This helped people to solve conflicts. The chief had the authority to give people permission to begin ploughing and announce days for rest. The Tonga people respect their leaders. The political system of the Tonga society is influenced by the Mutapa and the Rozvi kingdoms, as stated earlier in section 4.3. Originally the Tonga people did not have paramount chiefs. It was the Mutapa and Rozvi empires that introduced this system. The spirit mediums were playing an important role in the Tonga political system (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:25). They would give guidance to the chiefs.



Europeans who imposed their rule on the Tonga community made some rainmakers into chiefs with authority over others. This status then passed down the matrilineal line making chiefs hereditary. Before the displacement, the colonial government did not interfere much with the political system of the Tonga except when chiefs were instructed to collect tax to pay \$1.00 per hut. During the time of resettlement the chiefs had to go and look for new places to settle their people. Some unsuccessfully resisted the displacement. The District Commissioner of the Rhodesian government sent soldiers and police to literally beat them, tie them up and then load them into the trucks. Today the chiefs who are still respected by their people are operating under the Ministry of local government according to the state laws, many of which they do not understand.

#### **4.4.4 The religious system**

An African is a very religious person. Religion is part of the life of all African communities. Religion is inseparable from culture. It is a way of life which embraces every aspect of human relations in African people (Moyo 1996:1). One can note that religion forms the core of African culture (Verstraelen 1998:27). The mission of the RCZ was not done among an unreligious community and the Tonga people are very religious. Religion is part and parcel of the daily lives and activities of the Tonga people. The research agrees with Moyo (1996:4) who contends that there is no room for atheism in Africa. It is indeed alien thinking to African communities.

The Tonga community believe in one Supreme Being, thought to be very remote and transcendent, even though he is constantly spoken about in the daily life (Smith 1950:62). The common name for God to the Tonga people is *Leza*, which refers to the notion of a 'Great First Cause.' *Leza* is the ultimate power but is not immediately concerned with the everyday affairs of men and communities. Reynolds and Cousins (1989: 92) observed that no offerings are made to *Leza* and no priests or prophets claim direct access to the power of *Leza*. Whatever exists owes its existence to *Leza*, he is the creator and whatever happens is can be ascribed to his activity.

God is connected closely with natural phenomena which are reflected in Tonga idioms. Of rain they say *Leza wawa* 'God falls,' of lightning *Leza wamweka* 'God shines' (Smith 1950:63). *Leza* is also referred to as father, *Leza ngutateesu* (Smith 1950:65). God is believed to be above, *Leza wakujulu*. Tradition believes God moulded (*bumba*) man. *Bumba* is also the name of God. Smith (1950:72) continues to say that the other names of God are *Cilenga*, *Sympanga*, *Namulenga*, and *Nacanzo* referring to him as the creator of all things. They think of *Leza* as eternal, coming from the name *Munamazuba* (Smith 1950:73). God is Creator, responsible for origins, nature and human beings.

The Tonga people also believe in the veneration of ancestral spirits, *mizimu*. Reynolds and Cousins (1989:92) state that they are the shades. People who are recognised as full members of society can become *mizimu* after death. According to their belief, the spirit of a dead person is called back by the living and given a place amongst the ancestral spirits who affect the living. This is done at a grieving ceremony. As observed by Reynolds and Cousins people like lepers, murderers, those who commit suicide and sorcerers cannot become ancestral spirits (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:92).

The Tonga community do not believe in the immortality of the ancestral spirits. When the living forget the names of *mizimu* and no longer give them offerings they cease to affect their living kin and become nameless spirits wandering and perhaps, causing evil. They only affect those within the kinship system to which they belonged when alive.

The Tonga speaks of five types of ancestral spirits. The first type is that of all the spirits of former members of the lines of one's father and mother. The second is the guardian *mizimu* who are the ones whose names are given to newly born babies. They care for the child and may give him or her skills or aspects of personality. The third type is the house *mizimu*. These are those that an adult places as guardians of the households. The fourth type is the inherited *mizimu*. They are those associated with a person because he has been given the name of someone who recently died. The last type is the own *muzimu* which is the spirit that comes into existence only after a person's death (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:93).

*Mizimu* are to be appeased through offerings for they possess power both for good and ill. But they have inferior power to *Leza*. *Mizimu* are mediators between *Leza* and the people. They believe that these ancestors live with God the creator and they would share with God the misfortunes of the family they left behind. According to Tremmel (1994:23), the Tonga people believe ancestors beg God on their behalf to bring harmony, peace and healing. The ancestral spirits are said to give protection and help the living to get the good things in life such as children, good crops, livestock and social order.

The people believe in magical forces, the good and bad spirits. They believe that lost souls (wondering spirits) are a source of evil. The common evil spirits, *mizimu mibi* are *masabe*, *mampande*, *ngozi*, *moba*, *kandula mutwe*, *kangelegele* and *madansi*. These spirits bring misfortunes to the families therefore one has to be protected by the ancestral spirits. If one offends his/her ancestors, he/she will be exposed to attacks from the evil spirits. The ancestral spirits can also punish people who forget their customs. Immoral behaviour clears the path for evil to strike because the ancestral spirits then withdraw their protection. Those who would have been attacked and possessed by *mizimu mibi* were delivered through a ceremony of singing songs and clapping of hands (Tremmel 1994:26).

There are also spirits who have an effect on affairs of general community interest called *Basangu*. They speak through people who are possessed (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:92). There is a practice of witchcraft in the community. The Tonga people believe it is caused by the bad emotions of people, like envy, hatred (which can cause evil actions) and jealousy. Bad emotions cause suffering and death. They believe most illness is caused by witchcraft. Those who practice it are witches and sorcerers who are used by *mizimu mibi*.

Magic and religion do not make up the whole of life; however they play a great part in the life of Africans (Smith 1929:27). Magic is offensive as well as protective (Parrinder 1954:116). The term 'black magic' is used to describe the harmful variety. The 'black magician,' witch, sorcerer or wizard, is an evil person, feared and hated. The people believe that witches or sorcerers can control ghosts. Ghosts are known as *zelo* and as the spirits of the dead who are not ancestors. A witch or sorcerer may be introduced to evil ways at birth or while growing up and use material objects such as nail clippings from a victim. He or she can have animal familiars like the hyena or owl. The evil person may utter spells and curses against people, for all manner of evil are attributed to the malfeasance of magic. They also believe that some men and women who achieve some form of power over others and land are sometimes using powerful herbs.

Reynolds and Cousins (1989:92) noted that the Tonga people believe that there are spirits of animals and foreigners and that they cause illness, and in some places, dances must be learnt in order to control and exorcise these spirits. On the other hand, magical charms are made for teething troubles and may help a man in his incessant fight against diseases and witchcraft (Parrinder 1954:26). This is 'white magic' or good protective charms prepared by the traditional healer (*nhanga*) and is used to protect people from evil forces and witchcraft or for the well-being of humanity. The other name for traditional healer is *bangaza* (Tremmel 1994:25).

In the Tonga community it is believed that a *nhanga* uses his power for the good of the people, that is, positively and that the witch uses his powers to destroy people. But a bad *nhanga* can be bribed to use charms to bring misfortunes. An example of the use of charms for good is of a woman who sought from the healer a drug to get the love of a man to marry her. She puts it in her pipe and smokes it, and as she smokes she speaks to the drug itself. She says, "Uwe, *musamo, ndakufweba mulumbwana akantwale*," meaning "O medicine, I smoke you in order that a man may marry me." The drug is supposed to act telepathically, over a distance, stimulating the man to desire this particular woman (Smith 1929:33).

Many herbal medicines are used in the community for different functions. The infusion of bark or roots of the *mupandabutolo*, *mutowa*, *damba* and *sikalutenta* will increase manpower, sexual potency and fertility. The root of *mulungazuba* is

pounded and rubbed into small cuts on a man's back and abdomen to cure impotence (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:56). *Musumo* is medicine, which has a magical power to help conception (Smith 1950:71). *Chisila* stone is used to apply herbs on one's body so that one could approach animals without being killed (Tremmel 1994:28). The impressive faith, which the Tonga community has in the virtue of herbs or charms, suffice it to say that they resort to these things for a great variety of purposes. As Smith (1929:39) argues black and white magic do not differ essentially, for they equally consist in the employment of the mysterious virtues resident in charms.

The Tonga people observe their traditional rituals and beliefs very closely. Spirit mediums and chiefs prayed to the ancestors during their ceremonies. They enjoy singing and dancing, using drums, animal horns (trumpets) and clapping of hands at different ceremonial occasions. The horns of animals were used as trumpets when communicating with their ancestors. The *Basimalende*, the rain makers would pray for rain to the ancestors and pour beer on their ancestors' burial grounds (Tremmel 1994:23). They have a ceremony for permission from the chief to start cultivating fields, called *kubalomokela bantu bakwe*. A ceremony for thanks-giving was held just after the service, called *kuumpa zilyo* (Tremmel 1994:18).

Before people begin to eat the new harvest, they would bring some to the chief as gifts. The chief and the spirit medium would appeal to the ancestors and allow the people to begin eating from the new crops. Tremmel (1994:18) states that it was a very sacred occasion for them to bring new crops to the chief. In times of sickness, they would consult a *nhanga* (traditional healer) and pour beer and water from the river Zambezi on the doorsteps, for their ancestors. The *nhanga* could tell the people the cause of illness and they would brew beer to the ancestors. This was a divination (*kasonde*), where the diviner threw *hakata*, that is, sacred sticks. The divination was a time when people could be openly accused of wrong actions.

Patterns of their rituals reveal the way they express belief. Rituals hold communities together; they give a sense of togetherness. Reynolds and Cousins (1989:94) observed that the Tonga rituals have four categories. Firstly, the life stages or passages of rites, that is birth, naming, puberty, marriage, the establishment of a household, death and the recall of the spirits. Secondly, the social order, that is, kinship and neighbourhood. The third ritual category was for production. This focused on the agricultural cycle, hunting, fishing and rain. Lastly, it was dealing with health, namely curing, protection and divination.

When girls reached puberty, they had to live in seclusion for up to six months. During the period of seclusion they wore the dress for that period. In the household ritual, the ancestral spirits (*mizimu*) were appropriated at the door post of the house. The people have rites for the shades (*mizimu*) and for the earth. The practice of these rites ensures the continuity of social relationships (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:98).

The relationship between people and the order of their lives are strengthened by the belief in *Leza* and *mizimu*.

The community have two types of shrines for the spirits. The first consists of natural objects that have become sacred, like a hollow fig tree, or baobab, or a hill, or a spring. The spirits responsible for rain live in these places. The second type is man-made. They are small houses (Reynolds & Cousins 1989:98). Pots for offerings of beer and food for the spirits are placed beside the shrine. Circles of trees are usually planted at a shrine. These are built for the spirits of former leaders in the area and for foreign spirits who possess rainmakers. In the Tonga religious life there are ritual wives only among *basikatongo* (ritual leaders). The ritual wife works with the *sikatongo* in the rituals of the community. She brews beer, has the obligation of clearing the ritual field, and takes part in most of the other activities that the *sikatongo* must initiate. When she dies, she should be replaced by her granddaughter, who should also inherit her shade (Colson 1954). No bride price is paid for a ritual wife.

The displacement of the people following the construction of the Kariba disrupted many rituals and destroyed many shrines. When the time came for them to be removed, they organised ceremonies to inform ancestral spirits that they were to settle elsewhere. They asked their ancestors to move with and protect them. On reaching the new places, they performed ceremonies and informed their ancestral spirits that they had now settled in the new area and asked them to continue to look after them. The Tonga community believe that the offerings to appease their ancestors were greatly disturbed when they were forced to leave the great river (Tremmel 1994:36).

The life of the Tonga people was changed by their displacement through the construction of the Kariba dam and had a negative impact upon them. An uprooted and disrupted people socially, politically, economically and religiously are greatly weakened causing anger, bitterness and distress to them. But there was a relative absence of the colonial government which left the community free to honour their ancestral spirits and keep their traditions alive.

It is important to note that the Tonga religion influenced and was influenced by other religions. New ideas, including those of Christianity, have had an impact on their religious belief.

#### **4.4.5 Language**

The people of the Great River speak ChiTonga. In any society, language is the pillar of who we are as a people, because culture is embedded in the language. A people's language is the most important bearer of its culture (Moyo 1996:13). Sanneh (1983:3) contends,

*Language is the intimate, articulate expression of culture.*

The use of any language in daily life is the only way to ensure that it continues to survive and thrive. Nothing stays longer in our souls than the language we inherit. Africa is one continent with the world's most linguistically diverse people. Ngugi WaThiong'o in *African Visions* writes,

*People see many languages as a sin and say, 'No, we must have one language.' I think it is necessary for Africans to accept the reality of multilingual societies.*

God interacted with human beings using a particular language bond in a particular time and location. God speaks through human culture. Culture provides the context of reflecting about God and applying his intention. It is a lens, a worldview that impacts Biblical understanding (Kraft 1996:19). Shaw and Van Engen (2003:7) states,

*God's Word in the midst of God's people will look and feel very different in each human context because each society is distinct.*

The Gospel message that is expressed in a communal and contextual way must understand God and apply his intention within the boundaries of cultural contexts. All the people of God must be given space to seek God and to reflect on their experiences in the light of the faith of the Christian community (Ndhlovu 2008:174).

It was to the Tonga people that the RCZ felt led by the Holy Spirit to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The research argues that the RCZ should take cognisance of the Tonga culture, which like any other culture is not static but dynamic. Most cultures are in frequent change and even as they encounter others they are influenced, this means the process of translation is continuous (Walls 2002:13). The Tonga culture is not perfect. Thus as the Gospel encounters this ethnic culture transformation occurs.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has looked at the history and culture of the Tonga people in order to understand their identity. This, the research argues, shall help in addressing the problem statement. The research's problem is that, in her cross-cultural mission the RCZ is failing to develop appropriate approaches that are meaningful and relevant enough to be a catalyst of transformation. The goal of this research is to see how the RCZ can move towards contextualisation of her God mandated work.

The research argues that as the RCZ works towards a communal-contextual missional framework, the challenge of attempting to understand the consequences and implications of the concepts of a particular people, time, place and context are vital. In Christian mission the church must acknowledge and respect the mindset of the people she will be ministering to. Jesus did not send the church to culturalise nations but to make them his disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). This will direct the church to participate in the Mission of God in love and with humility.

In this chapter the research began to outline the global and local context of the world in which the Tonga people live. It also outlined the historical, socio-cultural background of the Tonga people in order to understand them. The information gathered in this process should be used to develop a training programme to equip the RCZ members involved in ministering to people of other cultures. If the RCZ is to be missional, the research argues that she should put together a communal-contextual framework for sharing the Gospel. In addressing the critical and crucial issues among the Tonga people, the RCZ must not prescribe to them.

The critical issues emerging from the Tonga from this literary research are economic empowerment, donor dependence, and compensation after forced relocation, the HIV & AIDS epidemic, fear of evil spirits and witchcraft, education, lack of infrastructural development, and leadership development.

The research has argued that we are now living in the emerging globalised/informational postmodernity era. The world has become a global village with networking as the new social structure. In the past cultures have been generated by people sharing space and time, but globalisation is constructing a culture that transcends time and space (Castells 2000:381, Schreiter 1998:4, 8, Perrons 2004:1). The characteristics of the era in which we are living are contextual, local, and pluralistic. Globalisation is profoundly restructuring the way people live. It has had an impact even on the most remote rural communities including the Tonga society (Hendriks 2004:15, Giddens 2000:22). Globally there has been an increasing inequality and polarisation of wealth distribution. The poor are becoming poorer and find themselves in abject poverty and misery. Poverty is largely concentrated in the rural areas, which include the Tonga area. Women and children are the most vulnerable in such a context.

The research indicated that the Tonga people are now influenced by the modern education and health services system. Information technology's impact on the Tonga community can be witnessed through the increase of gadgets such as radio, cell phones. Television is slowly but surely restructuring the way people live (Ndegwah 2004:83, Giddens 2000:22). The Kariba dam development project generates electricity and the tourism industry reflects the impact of the Global Age even among the Tonga community.

The research proved that science and technology are involved in attempts to counter risks, but it is true that they have also contributed to creating them in the first place. A better life was promised to the Tonga community by the developers of the Kariba dam. The researcher argues that the Kariba development project was noble and for the benefit of all the people of Zimbabwe and Zambia. The research proved that the project failed seriously, and insensitively, to take into consideration the social concerns of the Tonga people. The Tonga people are not enjoying much of the fruit

of this development project in their area. The development was planned and implemented without any contribution by the Tonga people. The river which was their main source of living was removed from them. The research argues that it is important for the RCZ to look critically at how to address the issue of poverty among the Tonga. In the intercultural mission advocated by this research, the RCZ must learn to plan and implement programmes together with the Tonga people.

The Tonga people knew how to utilize the Zambezi alluvial river margin for their crops as well as every edible fruit and animal from their environment (Baron 1978:43). The river valley provided them with meat from the wild animals as well as wild fruit. The research proved that the displacement and lack of social concern resulted in the Tonga people experiencing abject poverty and misery. The Tonga community is not benefiting from the electricity of Kariba power station. There are very few areas that have electricity in the Binga district. They are also not able to survive on fishing because most of them are far from the dam. The fishing industry is now being controlled by private companies and the Tonga community does not have fishing licenses. The research argues that the poverty of the Tonga community occurred because the development was not communal and contextual. The local people should be empowered through participatory action. Empowering the local people will enable them to transform the dysfunctional systems in their context (Hendriks 2004:216).

The research has proved that Zimbabwe as a country is in a socio-economic and political crisis. Unemployment reached an unprecedented 80%. The lives of the people of Zimbabwe continue to deteriorate. The nation is faced by key challenges which include poverty, corruption and greed, centralisation of decision making power, the polarisation of society, political intolerance and immaturity characterised by incompatible divergent views. The country experienced a brain drain as skilled persons migrated all over the globe seeking survival. This socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe impacted all the people including the Tonga people. The research argues that the Tonga community like any other in Zimbabwe is faced with the problem of high unemployment. The few skilled Tonga people are also migrating to countries such as South Africa, Zambia and Botswana.

The research proved that the challenges in facing the response to HIV and AIDS are exacerbated by the current global and economic crisis. AIDS is now the leading cause of death in Zimbabwe. HIV impacts across diverse population groups. The research has proved that the restructuring of patriarchy by the processes of globalisation has brought down the traditional extended family in Africa. Children are the main victims of this development for they are made to fend for themselves. The research argues that these issues have a direct influence on the life of the Tonga people.



The RCZ must prepare today for an effective response to the challenges facing the global village. The Church cannot ignore all of this if it is to operate meaningfully and relevantly in its context. The RCZ's responses to the challenges faced by the Tonga people need to be adapted to the unique economic, social and geographical context of that particular community. The responses must be integrated with the national development processes of the country. The programmes that are mostly likely to be effective to produce changes in attitudes and behaviours in Zimbabwe are those that expressly aim at transforming people through critical reflection, role play and other interactions.

The RCZ should by means of the HIV and AIDS activities; look for ways to include the Tonga in addressing the challenges of HIV and AIDS among the Tonga community. The RCZ needs to redouble her efforts to make a difference in the lives of orphaned and vulnerable children. Caring for them must be an integral part of her core activity as a missional church. The HIV and AIDS pandemic issue requires responses that are sensitive to local cultural contexts (UNAIDS 2009:11-12). The research argues that the RCZ responses should not only be contextual but also communal, which calls for the participation of all people. The RCZ must work together with youth, women, men, and people living with HIV, civil societies, faith-based organisations, the business community, the government and others.

The research argues that the RCZ members should bear in mind that the Tonga culture and traditions are never inferior to their own culture and traditions. The RCZ is to be sensitive and approach Tonga culture with the Biblical concept of love. The Tonga people's culture is to be respected. God speaks through human culture. Culture provides the context for reflecting on God and applying his intentions (Shaw and Van Engen 2003:7, Kraft 1996:19). The research argues that the RCZ should take into cognisance that the Tonga culture, like any other culture is not static but dynamic. A missional church should not hold to a static view of cultures but one that is transformable. This aspect permits people to embrace new things and reject old irrelevant ones.

The next chapter shall evaluate the RCZ's present way of thinking and doing mission, focusing on her cross-cultural work among the Tonga people in Binga.

## CHAPTER 5

# THE BINGA OUTREACH: A CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter three dealt with the issue of the identity of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and with the Dutch Reformed Church. The discussion proved that the former was profoundly influenced by, and uncritically upholds the traditional missionary model of the latter. The preceding chapter discussed the Tonga people. The chapter began by outlining the global and local context of the world in which the Tonga people live. It also outlined the historical and socio-cultural background of the Tonga people in order to understand them.

The focal point of this chapter shall describe the Binga outreach as an extended case study, illustrating and affirming the assumptions of the research or the problem the research has with the cross-cultural ministry as a missionary model of the RCZ. The research shall critique the RCZ strategies of her outreach among the Tonga people. The critical question is: **How did the RCZ participate in the mission of God in the Binga outreach?**

According to the methodology of the metaphor of the cross used in the study, this chapter focuses on the movement from the bottom to the top of the cross. It focuses on what we do and is the eighth dimension. The movement from the Alpha to the Omega describes the doing of transformative theology. It involves obedience and developing **a strategy** which should be **implemented** and **evaluated**. The research believes that what we do, does not determine what we are, but reflects who we are (identity). In the process of implementing and of being involved in missional praxis, the discernment continues. The correlation between the dimensions of the cross continues, they inform the process, one adjusts and develops. It is a praxis (reflective engagement) methodology.

The research believes that what we do should manifest who we are in Christ. Our identification means imitating the character and mission of Jesus Christ. It is a life of discipleship. This identity, found in grace, in the creation of God and redemption in Christ, has to be realised in our lives and witness. It is the process where the Holy Spirit guides and empowers the faith community.

Once we have discerned something we should start doing what we have discerned. This implies participating in transformative action. The RCZ needs to be obedient

and develop a plan and strategies for fulfilling the *missio Dei*. In this process of involvement, the discernment continues, the correlation between the points of the cross continues. They inform the process, one adjusts and develops. It is an active reflective engagement and is referred to as theological praxis. The communal and contextualising missional framework is not static, but dynamic. One is to hermeneutically discern present and past contextual realities in order to participate in the Mission of God (Hendriks 2001:82).

In the process of the faith community participating in the Mission of God, structures develop that are contextual. Hendriks (2001:79) explains that as the faith community responds to God's missional praxis the communal church structures constantly develop in a contextual way.

The RCZ embarked on a cross-cultural ministry to the Tonga people who live along the Zambezi River and speak a language which is not related to the Chishona dialect. Generally the RCZ is a Chishona speaking denomination with the Karanga people being dominant. This cross-cultural ministry is called the Binga outreach because of the focus of the church on the Tonga people who live in the Binga district.

## **5.2 Background**

The youth fellowship of the RCZ at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) was involved in evangelism programmes. They visited the RCZ mission stations to share the Gospel basically with secondary school pupils. This youth fellowship is still participating in this ministry. During the 1990s the RCZ work among the UZ students was led by Miss Cecile Perold. She was a white missionary from the DRC Cape Synod working as a youth counsellor for colleges in Harare. The RCZ youth fellowship of the University of Zimbabwe wrote a letter to the then General Secretary of the RCZ, Rev Jude Zingoni, sharing their vision and desire of contributing towards an evangelism fund. This idea was accepted at the Synod of 1994 and at this Synod it was decided to have an Evangelism Committee (Synod minutes 1994:1047/40, 1050/88). In this case the initiative did not come from the top, but from the bottom, at student level.

Before the Binga outreach the RCZ was involved in evangelistic ministry in other areas in Masvingo province. As observed in section 3.3 of chapter three, it was during the 1960s that members and ministers of the RCZ were led by the Holy Spirit to participate fully in the evangelisation of their own people. The RCZ having outreach meetings and a mission project in Dzoro<sup>42</sup> revived a missionary spirit. The RCZ followed the same way as those of the evangelistic campaigns held at Dzoro. An Evangelism fund was started and the evangelistic meetings conducted during school holidays were resumed. The research notes that the Binga evangelism outreach was not new in the RCZ, but the research also argues that this was a unique phenomenon because it was a ministry among a non-Shona group. The

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<sup>42</sup> Dzoro is a place in the district of Zaka in Masvingo province. The people are Karanga.

research argues that the church of Jesus Christ should reject the planting and development of racially or ethnically separate churches (Saayman 2007:14).

In August 1995 during the Zimbabwe school holidays the RCZ arranged for her first outreach in Hurungwe among the Korekore people. Hurungwe district is in the northern part of Zimbabwe in Mashonaland West province. The Korekore people are different from the Tonga people but are one of the Shona ethnicities. Chikorekore is one of the Shona dialects. The Tonga people are not one of the Shona ethnic groups. The research argues that it was this work among the Korekore people which led to the Binga outreach. The vision and desire of the RCZ was now to reach the non-Karanga ethnicities in Zimbabwe.

The RCZ by 1995 was present in the whole country but the truth is that her work concentrated among the Karanga people. In other provinces, the RCZ focused her ministry on the Karanga people who were migrating in search of agricultural land. In some cases like mines and farms the work extended to the Chichewa speaking people. The Chichewa speaking people migrated from Zambia and Malawi. The inclusion of Christians from a different language group must give the RCZ a better understanding of the universality of the church of Christ as the Korekore, Tonga, Ndebele people become part of this church. The research agrees with Van der Merwe (1982:7) who says that the church of Jesus Christ transcends all cultural, racial, linguistic, ethnic or social boundaries. If there is discrimination within the church with regard to any of these groups, it is an indication of disloyalty to the Christ of all nations.

The August 1995 outreach was important for the RCZ. It was the beginning of a new era. The researcher, who at that time was a minister of Chinhoyi congregation, had a discussion with the then General Secretary, Rev JJ Zingoni about the possibility of the outreach. Chinhoyi congregation volunteered to start the outreach. Rev JJ Zingoni agreed and the church had a very encouraging and successful outreach in Hurungwe. Hurungwe was one of the areas under Chinhoyi congregation. The outreach among the Korekore people is not in the scope of this research but I shall give a brief account of the outreach.

The outreach team was based at Dete Primary School under chief Kazangarare near the town of Karoi. Through this evangelising ministry the RCZ planted churches at Chikova and Chibara. At Dete a church building and a house, were built in 1996 with the help of a DRC Karoi congregation member, Mr. P Nel, a commercial farmer. After two years of catechism classes the researcher was privileged to baptise and confirm 26 new members in this new church building.

It was from that outreach in Hurungwe that the RCZ through her Evangelism Committee decided to reach out to the Tonga people. The church budgeted for the outreach in Binga and some members in the RCZ contributed towards the

Evangelism fund. From the experience of the Hurungwe outreach the Evangelism Committee planned orientation training for all the prospective outreach team members. The team members were taught during the orientation days about the basic ways to communicate the Gospel. Many other relevant topics were addressed to equip the team for this evangelising ministry. The team members were able to minister to groups as they moved from one homestead to the other. The research argues that this proved to be effective. An in-depth study on preparing team members for an outreach is a necessity for the RCZ.

The team consisted of volunteers from all the congregations in Zimbabwe, young and old, men and women. Since 1995 the average number of members in an outreach team was 100. As of now all the congregations are contributing towards the evangelism fund and the volunteers are not expected to contribute much. This has encouraged many volunteers to participate in the evangelism work. The encouragement was essential as the RCZ was moving to minister among the Tonga people.

In 1996 the outreach team went to the Binga district among the Tonga people. The team members were stationed at Tinde School near Kamative mine in Binga. The team received some orientation on Gospel presentation and Tonga culture. The content of the orientation included discussion on the way of life of the Tonga people. One of the Tonga taught the team their cultural systems. This was done to help the outreach team members appreciate the Tonga people's culture and understand that their Shona culture was not superior to that of the Tonga people. During the orientation the researcher's observation was that we did not have any RCZ written training literature to give to team members.

After the training the outreach team walked from homestead to homestead. The team was divided into small teams of about ten people. The small teams included the Tonga people who had joined as interpreters. The team members needed people able to interpret because the Tonga language is not of the same dialect as Chishona. The outreach team were calling this process hut-to-hut evangelism. The team had 64 members from 19 congregations, including 5 ministers, one minister's wife, one evangelist and one youth counsellor.

The outreach team shared the Gospel with 662 people. Those who wanted to be Christians were 301. The team left the work to Mr Banda to disciple the people on spiritual growth. Mr Banda was later trained at MThC as Lay-preacher. On cultural issues the team taught the new believers to live according to the teaching of the Bible. This meant that if anything was contradicting the Bible like consulting of n'angas, one was to change. As noted before, the researcher believes that consulting n'angas is not Biblical. Through this outreach the RCZ was able to

establish two new posts. The leadership of Hwange congregation<sup>43</sup> were to disciple the new faith community. This is according to the RCZ Evangelism Committee report dated 9 October 1996. The cross-cultural ministry among the Tonga people continued to grow.

### **5.3 The growth of the Binga outreach**

In 1997, the RCZ through her Evangelism Committee, planned for another outreach among the Tonga community. The people of Binga chose Siachilaba School to be the outreach team base. The team ministered the Gospel of Jesus Christ for a week. The Gospel was presented to 1619 people and those who accepted the word were 395. The team had 88 members divided into 8 groups (Evangelism committee report 1997:1). This outreach resulted in the planting of two preaching posts at Binga Business centre and Siachilaba. In 1998, the outreach team went to Pashu area. The Gospel was presented to 1107 people and 292 came to Christ. The team members were 92, divided into 10 groups (Evangelism committee report 1998:9-11). This led to the establishment of preaching posts at Pashu and Manyanda.

In 1999, there were many volunteers now including many RCZ Tonga members. Thus the outreach team was divided into two teams, one at Sianzundu School and the other at Manjolo School. The team at Sianzundu presented the Gospel to 1350 people and 306 came to Christ. The team members were 65 divided into 10 groups. The team at Manjolo presented the Gospel to 1556 people and 318 came to Christ. Team members were 70 divided into 12 groups (Evangelism Committee report 1999:1-2). During these four outreaches preaching posts were established. In 2000 the outreach team could not travel because of a fuel crisis in Zimbabwe. The research argues that this shows the level in which the socio-economic situation of a nation can negatively impact the evangelising ministry.

In 2001, the Evangelism Committee decided to move to the other district of the Tonga people, that is, Nyaminyami. This area is under Nembudziya RCZ congregation. Many people made commitments to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives. Those who were members of other churches were told to continue fellowshiping in their churches. The team was proclaiming the one Jesus and Lord of all and not trying to establish a church. The outreach team members came from 24 RCZ congregations. The team was based at Musampakaruma School consisting of 138 members divided into 19 groups. The Gospel was presented to 3768 people and 753 came to Christ (Evangelism Committee report 2001:1-2). The church sent Evangelist Manhongo to Musampakaruma to disciple the new members. He later went to train as a minister at MThC.

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<sup>43</sup> Hwange was the nearest RCZ congregation. It is about 100km from Tinde School where the RCZ started her evangelising ministry among the Tonga people.

The reports of the outreach team shows the positive work the RCZ is doing in Binga. The research argues that the reports indicated that the members were trained to respect the Tonga people's culture. The critical question that the church is to respond to is how the RCZ should help the Tonga people in addressing their social challenges and realities? The research shall discuss some of the challenges of the cross-cultural ministry among the Tonga people in the next section.

#### **5.4 Challenges of the Binga outreach**

The process of ministering to people of other cultures will always have challenges. It was not different for the RCZ either, for she encountered challenges in the outreach to the Binga community.

The first challenge has to do with the how the outreach team members relate with people of another culture. The research argues that mutual acceptance of human dignity and respect is at the very heart of any healthy human relationship. When approaching a person in any way whether to help, teach, or learn from him, it is of crucial importance how that person is viewed (Bruwer 1994:32). The research argues that the RCZ members should bear in mind that the Tonga culture and traditions are never inferior to their culture and traditions. The RCZ is to be sensitive and approach Tonga culture with the Biblical concept of love. Pobee (1992:10) perceived that the employment of '*tabula rasa*' as a missionary practice meant that there was nothing of any significance in the non-Christian culture upon which the Christian missionary could build. This should at all cost be avoided.

The other challenges are socio-economic-political issues in the Tonga culture and life. The research argues that it is important to look critically at how the RCZ is to address the issue of poverty within the Tonga community. Binga is one of the rich districts in terms of resources and yet the whole area of the Tonga people is the least developed and poorest area in Zimbabwe. Thirty years after liberation from the colonial government there is not a single tarred road that directly connects the district to Harare the capital of the country. One has to travel through Bulawayo.<sup>44</sup>

The issue of poverty is closely related to the issue of land and water. The Tonga people were displaced from fertile land and the abundant water supply of the Zambezi River, depriving them of their livelihood. A better life was promised to them by the colonialist government after the Kariba Dam was built. This never materialised. Now they are bitter. Their land is rich in natural resources like wildlife but it is the outsiders who benefit from it. Electricity is generated on their doorstep. It

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<sup>44</sup> The direct distance from the Binga business centre to Harare is very short and will be less expensive than travelling through Bulawayo. The direct distance could be approximately 500 km whilst the one through Bulawayo is about 800 km. It is sad to note that there is only one tarred road in the Binga district made by the colonial government. There is no tarred road that connects the two districts where the Tonga people live (Nyaminyami and Binga).

is carried to other parts of Zimbabwe over their heads by huge electricity pylons upholding the electrical cables to which they have no access.

The area of the Tonga community has the least medical and educational services in the country. In an area of about 250 km they have two hospitals and a few clinics, which are very far from most people. Since the country received its independence, it is sad to note that the area only have two “A” level high school. “A” levels are required to have access to the university. In this vast area they do not have a single college. To educate one is to empower the person. As stated before the two districts have very poor road networks. The RCZ in her outreach is to address the social concerns of the Tonga people.

In her attempt to empower the newly planted church the RCZ saw the need to train leaders. Three Christians among the first converts have been trained. Two women were trained as youth counsellors (Esinath Moyo and Miriam Moyo), one man as evangelist (Reuben Ncube). The church appointed Mr Banda as lay-preacher to serve the Tonga people at Tinde. A few years latter Mr Ndhlovu was also trained as an evangelist. The committee’s prayer and desire was to have Tonga people trained as ministers. For effective community building, the people and their leaders have to be empowered.

The Evangelism Committee saw the need to have literature for the Chitonga-speaking people. According to the research the Bible is the primary literature for any believer and should be in one’s language. Tonga Bibles are available but it is difficult to obtain them from Zambia. However, the RCZ challenged them to make sure that the Tonga people have enough Bibles at their disposal. The Evangelism Committee proposed to the Synodical Committee that the RCZ hymn book and liturgy should be translated into Chitonga. It was approved. One of the evangelists, Mr Ndlovu, from Binga was given the responsibility to lead this process. Mr Ndlovu, together with other Tonga-speaking members in Binga helped with the translation of literature.

The research argues that the RCZ should not just translate the liturgy, songs and hymns into Chitonga. The research argues that the RCZ should allow the new Tonga members to develop a liturgy that is relevant and appropriate to their cultural context. It should be a liturgy that allows them to express themselves as Tonga people, not as Shona people. According to the research this proves that the RCZ is using the model used by the DRC missionaries in planting churches in Zimbabwe.

The research argues that the Tonga people are to be involved in their own evangelisation. The research agrees with Hedlund (1990:274) who says that mission is not the monopoly of any one person, group, or structure; it is the obligation of every church and believer in the West as well as those in Africa.



The RCZ has not only preached the Gospel in word but also in deed. The church, in partnership with the GZB, has built a clinic at Tinde near Kamativi Mine. A church building and a house for the minister, as requested by the Tonga community, were also erected. The plans (design) of both the church building and house was provided by the RCZ Synod office without a contribution by the Tonga members. The research argues that the new Tonga church should have been allowed the opportunity to participate in preparing the plans. The RCZ is doing everything for the Tonga people just as the DRC missionaries were doing.

In an attempt to address the educational needs of the Tonga people the RCZ established two primary schools. The names of the schools are Mabobolo and Manyanda. The two schools are still under construction but were nevertheless opened so that pupils could start making use of them. The RCZ is also in the process of developing the community's own leadership. One hopes that the RCZ will see to it that the relationship between the Tonga people and the RCZ Synod is not a paternalistic one.

This literary research on the Binga outreach has proved that the RCZ has the vision and desire to participate in the Mission of God. According to the research this is commendable. But the RCZ should move away from the model inherited from the DRC missionaries. The RCZ is to build on the cross-cultural ministry among the Tonga people to develop a communal-contextual missional framework relevant to and appropriate for her present and future evangelising ministry to people of other cultures. The research proposes that the RCZ develop an intercultural mission, meaning shifting from the cross-cultural mission perspective. This shall be discussed in chapter six. The next section shall summarise the discussion in this chapter.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter critically described the cross-cultural work of the RCZ. It discussed the Binga outreach as an extended case study. The research evaluated the present thinking and doing of mission by the RCZ, focusing on the mission within the Tonga people. This, the research argues, shall help to address the nature of the problem. The research's problem is that, in her mission work, the RCZ is failing to develop appropriate approaches that are meaningful and relevant to being a catalyst of transformation. The goal of this research is to see how the RCZ can move towards communal contextualisation of her God mandated work.

The research proved that the Binga outreach is a unique phenomenon in the RCZ because it is a ministry among a non-Shona group. The research believes that the church of Jesus Christ should reject the planting and development of racially or ethnically separate churches (Saayman 2007:14). The inclusion of Christians from a different language group should give the RCZ a better understanding of the

universality of the church of Christ as the Korekore, Tonga, Ndebele people become a part of this church.

The research agrees with Van der Merwe (1982:7) who says that the church of Jesus Christ transcends all cultural, racial, linguistic, ethnic or social boundaries. If there is discrimination within the church with regard to any of these groups, it is an indication of disloyalty to the Christ of all nations. The research argues that mutual acceptance of human dignity and respect is at the very heart of any healthy human relationship. The RCZ is to be sensitive and approach Tonga culture with the Biblical concept of love.

The story of the students of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) has shown the importance of giving space to people of all ages in the church to participate in God's mission. It was the RCZ youth fellowship at the UZ that initiated a refocusing of the RCZ on how to deal with evangelism. The students were able to share their vision and their desire of contributing towards an evangelism fund. The research argues that the RCZ needs to redouble her ministry among college and university students. With good and effective leadership they will help the church to cross traditional boundaries.

The other issues relate to the developing of the new Tonga church structure and worship. How does the new church, planted as a result of the Binga outreach, relate to the RCZ? The research argues that the RCZ should give the Tonga church space to develop. The RCZ is to allow the outreach to Tonga people to grow in line with their cultural context. The research argues that the RCZ should not just translate its own liturgy, songs and hymns into Chitonga. The RCZ should allow the Tonga members to develop a liturgy and rhythms that are relevant and appropriate to their cultural context. The research argues that the new Tonga church should have been given the opportunity to participate in preparing the buildings plans. The RCZ should not be doing everything for the Tonga people just as the DRC missionaries were doing.

In the process of developing the community's own leadership, the research argues that the RCZ should be careful not to create a paternalistic relationship between the Tonga people and the RCZ Synod. The research acknowledges that there is evident tension between the two principles proposed. On one hand, the research outlined that the RCZ should avoid planting ethnically separated churches. On the other hand, one should give the Tonga people space to grow and develop in line with their cultural context. It will have an influence on their liturgy, leadership etc. The research believes such tension will be solved through critical communal dialogue between the RCZ and the Tonga believers.

The research has proved that the RCZ is still defaulting to the missionary model of the DRC. According to the research the RCZ should revisit her thinking and doing of

mission. She is to develop a communal-contextual missional framework. Our present identity is challenged to be renewed in a process of deep listening to both the Word and the world. We are challenged to cross boundaries and reach out to “the other” – as “others” reached out to us long ago. The Bible and the Holy Spirit must guide us on this journey in a context that has changed dramatically. The Gospel is relevant to all ages, times, cultures and peoples but its ministry must be communally contextualised in order for it to be experienced as the living word of God.

The communal-contextual missional framework has multi-faceted dimensions or ministries. The missional praxis is fulfilled by the body of Christ in a communal way (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). There are many members of the body with different functions in unity (communal) and in a specific situation, time and place (context) for one ultimate purpose (mission). The body of Christ is the faith community. The body functions well when all the organs (members) are present and participating. The body is only a genuine body because of every member. Every member is important and should be given space to function.

The research argues that a discussion on intercultural mission will provide the guidelines the RCZ can follow in the process of the communal contextualisation of mission. The next chapter focuses on Christian intercultural mission. It will look at the Biblical basis for intercultural mission. It is an invitation to the RCZ to discern the next stages of her missional journey by once again listening to the Bible in a hermeneutically sensitive way in the light of the contextual realities confronting her.

# CHAPTER SIX

## INTERCULTURAL MISSION

### **6.1 Introduction**

The first chapter introduced the problem statement and methodology. It described and defined the key concepts of this research. The second chapter discussed how the Reformation and the Enlightenment profoundly impacted on the identity of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and her missionary model. The third chapter discussed the RCZ which was planted through the DRC missionary enterprise. The research proved that the RCZ accepted and uncritically holds on to the thinking and practice of mission of the DRC. In the fourth chapter the discussion was about the history and socio-cultural aspects of the life of the Tonga people. The chapter indicated how the life of the Tonga people is impacted on by the local and global context. The preceding chapter critically looked at the outreach work of the RCZ within the Tonga community. It also revealed that the DRC traditional missionary model is embedded in the RCZ's thinking and doing of mission.

In this chapter of the historical-critical descriptive research the focus shall be on Christian mission from an intercultural perspective. This research's premise is to look at intercultural encounter as one aspect of the Christian mission. The intercultural encounter enables people from different cultures to recognise Jesus Christ more clearly and accept him as Good News from the Creator (Saayman 1990:316). The Biblical foundations for Christian intercultural mission and the nature of intercultural mission shall be discussed in section 5.2 and 5.3 respectively. This chapter shall deal with principles, skills, dynamics and strategies of the intercultural mission in section 5.4 to 5.9.

The main point of this chapter shall be a comparison. The story, identity and mission model of the DRC and the RCZ has been depicted in chapters 2 and 3. This chapter shall also discuss other intercultural mission models and learn from it without rejecting the positive aspects of the DRC and RCZ missionary model. This will help in coming to a conclusion in chapter seven by suggesting an intercultural framework for the RCZ in her outreach to the Tonga people.

The study's problem is that the RCZ uncritically adopted and is still holding on to aspects of a mission model that is not culturally appropriate and meaningful. This model was used by the DRC missionaries during the nineteenth century. The RCZ's challenge is not to repeat the negative aspects of the previous model. The hypothesis of the research is that **a contextual and communal approach in intercultural mission will transform all parties involved towards becoming a missional church.**

The danger is that the RCZ will default to the DRC model and that she will refrain from the discernment process that a new time and context requires. A hermeneutically sensitive dialogue – metaphorically speaking – of all the sides of the cross is required. The task of the RCZ is to listen properly and analyse wisely in order to articulate an appropriate framework for her context. This is to be done through, in and with the local community (Saayman 1990:318). If she fails to do this, a superficial Christianity will characterise the life of the Tonga people.

The research argues that failure to express the Gospel in a compatible way with the local people's culture may lead to an outward conformity to the message. A genuine acceptance of the Gospel message only takes place within the Tonga people when the message is compatible with their socio-cultural context (Saayman 1990:311). Thus the call for the RCZ is to work towards developing a relevant and appropriate mission approach. The research argues that neither the traditional charity model nor the model of the comprehensive approach is adequate (Bosch 1991:433).

The research argues that the RCZ must move quickly to evaluate her thinking and way of doing mission in order to develop a communal-contextual missional framework. A communal-contextual missional framework is holistic or integral. In terms of the methodology of the study the chapter shall focus on the centre, right, left and the vertical sides of the cross. The RCZ needs to apply the eight dimensions in doing theology and evaluate current mission, thereby moving from a European traditional missionary model to a missional framework. These sides deal with the community, Word, world and the movement from bottom to the top. The RCZ as the faith community (centre of the cross) discerning the will of God should look at the world, the left side of the cross. As we look at the world (context), we should also look at the Word and keep them in dialogue in the discernment process.

The RCZ should analyse both the wider and local contextual situation. The discernment process calls one to hold the four tension sides of the cross active in a hermeneutical and correlational dialogue (sixth dimension) that is focused on discerning God's guidance on the way forward. It is at the centre of the cross where one finds a faith community in prayer, listening and discerning. The theologising of the RCZ must be developed within a personal communal framework not an individualistic rational framework. The communal framework is contextual because it is a worldview of the societies in Zimbabwe.

In our present world and context, there is no room for cultural and contextual blindness. The particular mission context must define and determine the shape, form and practice of the church. The research argues that the RCZ must not uncritically reproduce the thinking and practises of the DRC that planted her. She should work towards developing a framework of mission that is communal and contextual. God always takes the initiative in communicating to human beings in their context (Kraft

1991:173). God interacts with human beings within their context using their culture (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:4).

The research contends that the church is to imitate God by presenting the Gospel message with sensitivity to its human cultural context. In her intercultural mission the RCZ must be prepared to allow the church, planted within the Tonga people, to find a structure and form in line with their cultural context. The Gospel message only exists as a result of active interaction between a people and the Word of God. The people should read the Word of God and interpret it within the context of their culture and their worldview (Ndegwah 2004:87).

In struggling to discern the will of God the faith community should focus on the Word, the right side of the cross that is the Scripture and tradition. In doing theology the bottom up movement of the cross describes what the church does. It is about becoming what the church already is in Jesus Christ. The faith community identity should not simply be determined by what the church is doing. The research believes that what we do should manifest who we are in Christ Jesus. The communal-contextual missional framework advocated in the study should bring the Christian message to the daily lives of the Tonga people and transform them through its impact.

The RCZ's theologising must emphasise the need for a contextual-inculturating of the Gospel message, which in essence means that the Christian faith has to initiate a continuous and transparent dialogue with the Tonga culture, if it is to find permanence in the identity of the people. Ndegwah (2004:86) explains,

*The durability of the Christian faith in Africa will not depend on its network of schools, hospitals, churches and other institutions, economic strength or political support but on the question whether African people have made Christian faith part of their own life.*

This means that the RCZ must be able to communally contextualise and inculturate the Gospel message if she wants to be culturally appropriate and relevant for the Tonga people. The Christian faith calls for authentic communal contextualisation and inculturation of the Gospel (Bevans and Schroeder 2004:271). The research argues that once the faith community has discerned something they should start practising it. As such it participates in transformative action. The RCZ should be obedient and faithful to develop strategies in fulfilling the *missio Dei* and start implementing and evaluating them. In this process of the RCZ's involvement, the discernment continues, and the correlation between the sides of the cross continues. They inform the process, one adjusts and develops. It is reflective engagement, a praxis style of doing theology (Hendriks 2004).

Lamin Sanneh in his foreword in the work of Shaw and Van Engen (2003: xi) states,

*The matter of Gospel and culture is the fountain of faith which requires uncommon sensitivity not to fall into the trap, on the one hand, of easy cultural surrender of the Gospel, and on the other hand, of stubborn cultural alienation.*

He (2003: xii) continues to contend that the faithful communication of the Gospel occurs when the culture has been penetrated in ways that challenge and transform the community on the basis of the response that is sincere and honest without imposition. Goheen (2000:145) stresses that the people of God find themselves at the crossroads between two stories, the Gospel story and the cultural story. The unbearable tension emerges because of “two embodiments” in the life of God’s people. On the one hand the faith communities are shaped by the story of Jesus Christ as they participate faithfully in the mission of God. The research believes that the Gospel of Jesus Christ renews and transforms any culture it encounters. On the other hand the missional church is shaped by the cultural story of the people grouping she is living in and ministering to.

This shows that the presentation of the Gospel message in our complex context is a great challenge to the faith community. As discussed in chapter four the context we are living in is informational, globalised and ever-changing. The research argues that the faith community must faithfully participate in the Mission of God. Informational-globalisation is restructuring the way people live and has an impact on even the most remote rural communities, including the Tonga society (Hendriks 2004:15, Giddens 2000:22). The research argues that the impact of informational-global postmodernity is experienced differently in each particular context, but it is a reality. How must we communicate the Gospel message to make a breakthrough in a postmodernity influenced culture? God does not change, but he created a world that constantly evolves (Shaw & Van Engen 2003: xiv).

The RCZ is participating in the *missio Dei* in this complex context. As a faith community the RCZ is involved in a cross-cultural ministry within the Tonga people’s contextual realities. In the discussion on the RCZ cross-cultural ministry the research believes that it is important to look at Christian mission. In the following section the research explores the issue of Christian mission because intercultural ministry is part and parcel of mission.

## **6.2 Biblical basis for intercultural mission**

In chapter one, section 1.6.6, the research conceptualised the term ‘mission’. The research argues that the Bible is very important in the life of the faith community if it is to be missional. This research is advocating for a Biblical oriented framework in the RCZ’s thinking and doing mission. In our reflection we must free the Bible to ask us its own questions and even those that critique us (Bowen 1996:179). The church can drift away from God’s intention and what He has revealed, which then calls for her to be continuously transforming by becoming more like Jesus Christ (Bowen 1996:220).

Thus it is appropriate to explore further the Biblical foundation for mission. Bosch (1991:5) states,

*An inadequate foundation for mission and ambiguous motives and aims are bound to lead to an unsatisfactory missionary practice.*

According to the research, mission is an important aspect of our faith. The research agrees with Bosch (Bosch 1991: xv) when he expressed that mission remains an indispensable dimension of the Christian faith and that its purpose is to transform reality around it. Mission, he continues, is that dimension of our faith that refuses to accept reality as it is and aims at changing it.

The research argues that mission cannot be adequately defined. Bosch (1991:9) said,

*Ultimately, mission remains indefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our predilections. The most we can hope for is to formulate some approximations of what mission is all about.*

The word mission comes from the Latin word “*mitto*” meaning “to send.” In the New Testament the Greek word is “*apostello*” meaning “to send.” An apostle is one sent from God, such as John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. They both had an apostolic ministry from God in the world. Hebrews 3:1 refers to Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest of God, whom we acknowledge. Apostle means “one who is sent.” The research argues that Jesus is the chief Apostle, the one from whom all other apostleship flows. Jesus said, “I have a testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me” (John 5:36). As Guder (1998:4) puts it, mission means “sending”. It is the central Biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history.

The disciples of Jesus Christ were apostles with an apostolic ministry. This means the church has an apostolic ministry which stems from Jesus’ apostolic ministry. The basis of Christian mission is in God’s revelation in the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. Christian mission means proclamation and manifestation of Jesus’ all-embracing rule, which is not yet but already, in itself an eschatological event. **The research views Christian mission as the witness in faith by the Faith community of the love of God to the world revealed in the salvific work of Jesus Christ within the dynamic-specific cultural contexts of human beings through the work of the Holy Spirit.**

The mission movement, of which we are part, has its source in the Triune God himself (Verkuyl 1978:3), not in an ecclesiology context. It was the Swiss theologian Karl Barth who, at a conference in 1932, became one of the first theologians to define mission as the activity of God Himself and not men. The research argues that this means that mission does not originate from human beings or the church but from God. Barth’s influence on missionary thinking reached a peak at the Willingen



Conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in July 1952 (Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman 1994:41).

The research argues that the mission of the church is based on the activity of God. Guder (1998:5) points out that Bishop Newbigin and others have helped us to see that God's mission is calling and sending us, the church, to be missional in our own societies, in the cultures in which we find ourselves. Christian mission is to be understood as being derived from the very nature of God. The research contends that God is a missional God and is the origin and author of Christian mission (Bosch 1991:390). Christian mission is rooted in the very being and character of the Triune God.

In creation God was already the God of mission (Genesis 1:2-3). The word mission is all about sending and being sent (Bowen 1996:1). God sent the Son, Jesus Christ, God the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit, and the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit sent the church into the world (Bosch 1991:390). Jesus was sent by the Father on a threefold mission: to reveal the Father (John 1:14, 18), to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8); and to save the world (John 3:17). Jesus Christ became human in his involvement in the Mission of God. What God meant for his people was incarnated in the life of Jesus Christ (Saayman 2007:138).

The research argues that the Christian mission is not proclaiming the church but Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures say, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). The church is to be understood as a "sent people." Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). This means that God's mission defines the church, that is, she is missional by her very nature (Bosch 1991:372, Bowen 1996:1). The Church of Jesus Christ must be on the move and reaching out beyond herself if she is to be missional (Bowen 1996:1). Bosch (1991:10) explained that the church participates in the Mission of God, the *missio Dei*. The missional church is a local church (Bosch 1991:378).

The *missio Dei* in Latin means God's love to the world and his church. It is explained by Bosch (1991:391) in a similar way, that the *missio Dei* is God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. The mission is not only obedience to a word of the Lord, it is not only the commitment to the gathering of the congregation, but it is participation in the sending of the Son, in the *missio Dei*, with the inclusive aim of establishing the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the whole redeemed creation. *Missio Dei* describes the relationship of God and his creation. Bowen (1996:11) contends that if we are to understand the mission of God, the focal point in our thinking must be the idea of relationship.

Christian mission has a broad reference to the being of the church, to her participation in the *missio Dei*. It is God's "yes" to the world (Bosch 1991:10). It refers to the involvement of the church in God's outreach to the world, that is, the present contextual realities. The church exists because God has a mission for her. Thus, mission is the purpose of the Christian church's existence. The church has a universalistic nature if she is understood from the perspective of God's purpose for her. God's purpose, his revealed mystery, which is, his revealed hidden plan is that all nations will be his people (Ephesians 3:6).

We are to learn about God's mission as we study his Word. The Christian faith is Bible based, "For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). As we read and study the Bible we see how Jesus Christ understood and practiced mission. The Scriptures are the normative and authoritative witness to the mission of God and its unfolding in human history. Shaw and Van Engen (2003:12) say that Gospel presentation originates from the Word of God, which is the divine word in human words. God revealed himself to human beings because of his love for his creation.

God's self-revelation is communally contextualised because it always occurs in specific cultural circumstances. Shaw and Van Engen (2003:48) contend that,

*Revelation does not happen in a vacuum. The Bible comes wrapped in culture, and the communication of God's intent is always a cultural event. Naked, unwrapped revelation is impossibility!*

Jesus was communally contextualising and inculturating the Kingdom message. The disciple of Jesus must not separate Gospel and culture because theology is impacted on by cultural dynamics. The research agrees with Shaw and Van Engen (2003:47-48) that it is a myth to think that theology can be separated from culture. Such thinking is a direct reflection of a modernist, dichotomist worldview that creates a split between what people think and how they act in a given cultural context.

In Jesus' entire earthly ministry, the Kingdom of God was undoubtedly central, and likewise central to his understanding and carrying out of his own mission (Mark 1:34-35). The Kingdom of God is to be central to the mission of the Faith community (Acts 28:31). The Kingdom of God refers to the rule and realm of God. God's Kingdom has already come and will come, that is, present and future is a feature of Jesus' preaching ministry (Bosch 1991:32). In terms of the Scripture the exaltation of Jesus is the sign of the victory. Jesus has already won over the evil one.

The purpose of mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, that all nations may in Jesus Christ's name be led to faith and obedience to God (Romans 1:1, 5). The faith community is not the ultimate purpose of mission, although important, but God's

salvation of humankind. God's salvific work precedes both church and her mission (Bosch 1991:370). In 1 Peter 2:9 the Christian Faith community is not the sender but the one sent. The Christian church is blessed to bless, for God's plan is to bless all nations through her (Genesis 12:1-3). The Mission of God as the foundation for the mission of the church reveals the emphasis in mission understanding today. It is a theocentric approach. Guder (1998:82) says that mission is not something the church does as part of her total programme. No, the church's essence is missional, for the calling and sending action of God forms her identity. The church is to live her identity as a faith community that experiences and expresses the *missio Dei*. The church must be faithful to her missional identity.

The Christian Faith community is not the Kingdom of God, but is to be the best example of what the Kingdom of God is about. Tillich, who is quoted by Jay (1978:168), strongly holds that there can be no identification of the church with the Kingdom of God, but she does represent the Kingdom of God. The Christian church's business is the Kingdom of God. Thus the members of the faith community are not proclaiming, "Come to us," but, "Let us follow him" (Bosch1991:376). The research agrees with Callahan (1990:19) when he argues that the church is called to mission for the integrity of Christian mission and not for the sake of church growth. The research believes that the Christian mission should not be thought of as equal to church growth, it is wider than that. But it will be futile for the church to think of mission without hoping and planning for church growth. When a local congregation becomes a missional church, she will experience both spiritual and numerical growth.

The *missio Dei* is the ongoing love affair of God with the world. The existence of the Church is connected to her movement beyond herself that is the process of crossing the socio-cultural boundaries (Walls 1996:22). The church has a centrifugal characteristic. The purpose of God's calling a people together to be a holy (separated) nation, is so that they may proclaim the mighty works of the one who has called them out of the darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). Bevans and Schroeder (2004:8) contend that mission takes the church beyond herself into the world that is, into history, culture and people's lives, beckoning her to constantly cross frontiers witnessing the reign of God.

The research argues that God called the RCZ to be an outgoing faith community. The RCZ is to rediscover an apostolic identity by being a missional church. To be a missional church is the DNA of the Christian Faith community, for the church exists because there is a missional God. Mission must be the heart of the life of the RCZ as a faith community. In their analysis of the Book of Acts, Bevans and Schroeder (2004:13) point out two main issues that emerge. Firstly the church is missional by her very nature; therefore mission is prior to the church and constitutive of her very existence. Secondly, the church's missional nature only emerges when the community engages with particular contexts under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The church is the fruit and agent of the *missio Dei*.

The scope of God's work is the whole world, all ethnicities and nations for the whole world is a mission field. Guder (1998:82) states that mission is founded on the mission of God in the whole world, rather than the church's effort to extend itself. The Bible says that God loved the world and he gave his only Son Jesus, that whoever believes in him will have eternal life (John 3:16). God's involvement in and with the world embraces both the Christian church and the world (Bosch 1980:189).

In this section the research has argued that God is missional in his very nature thus mission is the Mission of God. This means mission is not an initiative of human beings, but is rooted in the very being and character of the Triune God. God sent the Son and the Holy Spirit and the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit sent the church to demonstrate His love to the world. It is not the church that sent, but God. God's mission defines the church, thus the church is missional by her very nature. The research argued that Christian mission is guided by the Holy Scriptures under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The research also argued that the Gospel is to be expressed in a human cultural context. The Mission of God is to be expressed in a communal and not in an individualistic way, and mission must be the heart of the RCZ as a faith community. The love of God is to embrace all ethnicities and nations and not to discriminate. Mission is founded on the Mission of God and must target the whole world.

After attempting to describe and define mission, the research shall discuss the nature of mission in the next section.

### **6.3 The Nature of intercultural mission**

The question to deal with in this section is about what mission looks like. In this research Christian mission is viewed from a communality perspective. The research argues that the *missio Dei* is communal. God carried out his mission as a communal God and continued with the holistic approach in his mission through Jesus Christ, for Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom addressing the physical and social needs of the people in their context. He acted in unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit and to the glory of the Father.

#### **6.3.1 Communality of mission**

In Africa the identity and worthiness of a person lies in the context of the community (Bowen 1996:156). One is only a complete person through and for others. As stated in chapter one (1.6.4), the African way of life is described as *ubuntu/unhu*. Zulu (2001:6, 7) states that life is recognised by most African societies as life in the community, thus to "be" or to "belong" is to participate in one's community. This means every person is responsible to work for the harmony of the community (Hendriks 2004:147). The communal perspective of life must be treasured and

affirmed as the only basis on which constructive human relationships can be built in Christian faith.

The researcher argues that Christian mission is the responsibility of the whole people of God, the faith community. Both ordained as well as non-ordained members should faithfully participate in the Mission of God. It is a communal ministry and its basis is the Triune God. In their wisdom our ancestors said, *Rume rimwe harikombi churu*, which means that one man cannot surround an anthill. The African way of life is collective responsibility and solidarity (Hendriks 2004:147). A person should work with others. Miroslav Volf (1998:33) points out that God is a community God, meaning he is in essence communal. The missional God is to be understood from a communal and relational perspective.

The research is in agreement with Tillich's analyses that the functions of faith communities are to be communal and personal (quoted by Jay 1978:165, 166). Volf (1998:32) states that becoming a Christian must be communal if Christian life is to be communal. When one enters into communion with God by faith in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, we shall also enter into communion with others.

Jesus was filled and sent by the Holy Spirit to express the Mission of God in the world. He knew the mission was to be fulfilled within a communal framework. He obediently and faithfully participated in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God through the disciples he called (Mark 16:20). According to Bosch (1991:467), Jesus chose his disciples not from among the priestly class, but from the fishermen, tax collectors and the like. Jesus' message was communal, "The Kingdom of God is at hand," and personal, "Repent and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). The researcher believes that the Mission of God is to be done in the context of the priesthood of all believers.

There should be mission in unity and unity in mission as the faith community participates in *missio Dei*. Communality is not a passive and semi-reluctant coming together but an active and deliberate living and working together. It is important for the Christian church today to note that repeated splitting of churches is contrary to the unity that is to be expressed by the church in God's mission (Bosch 1991:466). The churches need to unite if they are to respond to today's challenges and opportunities for the evangelisation and social transformation of all nations. Christ is unity and unity is in Christ. It is a given and it is a command. We are called to be one as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one so that the world may believe (John 17:23). The Mission of God, which is our mission indeed, is to be one mission of the one church of Jesus Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

The research believes that a missional church is to seek an interdependent perspective, and not an independent one. The argument is based on the communal nature of the Triune God and the communal understanding of our community in

general. Our society will do well to refrain from assimilating the individualism of Europe. The research contends that individualism is destructive to the community (Volf 1998:75). The RCZ should retain the communal view of Africans in our thinking and practices of intercultural mission.

### 6.3.2 Multi-dimensionality of mission

The Christian mission is to be perceived as multi-dimensional. All these dimensions or ministries belong together and if one of them is lacking then it is not done holistically. All the ministries of Christian mission are equally important. The dimensions can be distinguished, but never separated; because the approach is holistic (Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman 1994:36). The holistic mission starts from the *missio Dei* and is experienced and expressed through the mission of the faith community. According to Bosch (1991:227-228), the most adequate formulation subsumes the total mission of the church under the Biblical concept of *martyria* (witness), which can be subdivided into *kerygma* (proclamation), *koinonia* (fellowship) and *diakonia* (service).

The research argues that these ministries are not three separated mission activities, but the three colours cast in the spectrum by a single prism. To take them in isolation from one another is to distort the Gospel. These ministries are to make people to experience and express the Gospel in each particular context in an appropriate and meaningful way. The Gospel encounters a people grouping in their cultural settings, never in a vacuum. The mission of Jesus Christ in each particular context led people to experience transformation. Every culture needs the transforming challenge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Cary 2004:90).

The Lord Jesus Christ on his earthly ministry expressed the mission through preaching the Gospel (Mark 1:14, 38-39). It was an evangelistic ministry. As noted in chapter one, Christian mission is wider than evangelism. Bosch (1991:411) says that mission and evangelism are not synonyms but nevertheless, indissolubly linked together and inextricably interwoven in theology and praxis. The research believes that **an evangelistic ministry is the proclamation of the salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him and call them to conversion and inviting them to become living and responsible members of the body of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.** The task of the faith community of proclaiming the Kingdom of God will mean moving beyond the four walls of the church building, out of the safe group of people who know and love each other, and into the complex world.

Jesus expressed the mission of God through His teaching ministry and people were amazed at his bold teaching (Mark 1:21-22, 27). People, who hear, receive and accept the Gospel message and want to become citizens of the Kingdom of God will need teaching, to know how they are to live under the Kingship of the Lord Jesus. Guder (1998) expresses this by saying that the new people need to become

“naturalised” citizens of God’s Kingdom. Teaching is part of the naturalisation process. The Bible says, “Go you therefore and teach all nations .....

 (Matthew 28:19).

Jesus Christ also demonstrated the coming of the Kingdom of God through His healing and exorcising ministry (Mark 1:23-26, 30-34, 39, 40-42). Christian mission also has a societal dimension. Christian mission without deeds of mercy is not Mission of God at all. Verkuyl (1978:3, 395) says that the *missio Dei* also leads to *diakonia*, that is, to participate in the development, to proclaim and show the totality of God’s Gospel and law to all mankind and to share in the whole plurality of services which we are called to perform in his name as we carry out the *missio Dei*.

The missionary task is the whole church bringing the whole gospel to the whole person, thus we cannot divorce the spiritual from the material sphere, that is, evangelism from its social realities. Bosch (1991:405) explains that the relationship is not that of two different mandates, because the moment one regards mission as consisting of two separate components one has, in principle, conceded that each of the two has a life of its own.

The *missio Dei* is in its essence about God’s mercy, his full involvement in the everyday needs of people. There are numerous opportunities for the missional church to be involved with the needs of others. The homeless, orphans, abused, the helpless, the starving, childless and the hopeless, and the unemployed are in all societies. In most cases poverty is caused by an unjust system. The missional church should be in solidarity with the poor and helpless, because God takes on their case (Proverbs 22:22).

In her mission the church is not to become completely identified with the social and political movements. Bosch (1991:11) mentions that neither a secularized church (a church which concerns itself only with this-worldly activities and interests) nor a separatist church (a church which involves itself only in soul-saving and preparation of converts for the hereafter) can faithfully articulate the *missio Dei*. The Christian mission that faithfully expresses the *missio Dei* must be multi-dimensional in nature through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This means mission is to be holistic mission, for failure to work for a full integration of all the dimensions of mission or to neglect any of them is a total distortion of the Christian faith.

The Bible says, “For there is no difference between Jew and Greek - the same Lord is the Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Romans 10:12-14). The disciples of Jesus should allow people of all cultures to hear the Gospel message. The people are to make a choice to receive the message and enter the Kingdom of

God by faith. The Bible says, “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard from the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

We therefore are to participate in Christian intercultural mission for the sake of the Kingdom of God, not for the church. We are to communicate the Gospel message to people in all contexts in ways that impact on them so that they can comprehend and apply God’s intention using their language within their particular time and place. This will lead us to look at contextualising and inculturating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **6.3.3 Contextualising and inculturating the Gospel**

Contextualisation and inculturation are concepts that have been described and defined from many viewpoints. Some scholars have differentiated between contextualisation and inculturation whilst others argue that they mean the same. Scholars have argued that there are types of contextual theology such as liberation theology, black theology and feminist theology (Schreiter 1985:6-15, Ukpong 1987:163-165, Bosch 1991:421).

Contextual theology is the refusal to see theology as an exact reproduction of European models of theology. It is an attempt to develop frameworks that are appropriate and relevant in a particular situation (Bosch 1991:450). The critical question is how the faith community can communicate and embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that will be meaningful and relevant in the people’s culture (Hiebert 1999:381). The Gospel is about becoming human, visible in culture and remaining in culture, yet remaining above culture (Moyo 1996:34). The research shall briefly discuss the two terms.

The term contextualisation was coined in the 1970s (Bosch 1991:420). Bosch (1991:423) explains that all theology worldwide is by its very nature, contextual. In contextualisation, theology is critical reflection on the praxis and experience of the faith community. The understanding is that there should be a dialectic relationship between theory and practice. The research believes that this relationship must be interdependent. Another aspect of contextual theology is that it is a theology from below, and not only for the elite people of the society. This means the RCZ should create space for the participation of the local Tonga people in the process of doing theology. They are to be involved in the critical reflection on their experiences, in the light of the Bible. Contextualisation refuses to believe in one universal theology, but argues for the faith communities to do theology locally (Schreiter 1985, Bosch 1991:427).

Robert Schreiter (1985:1) states that the contextual aspect points to the need for and responsibility of Christians to make their response to the Gospel as concrete and lively as possible. A contextual model starts its reflection within the social and cultural



context (Schreiter 1985:12). It is an attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of particular contextual realities. Alan Neely (1995:8) explains,

*Contextualisation attempts to see a particular culture not as a static system, but rather as a system that is always in the process of change because of the stimuli from within and from without.*

Contextualisation is to permit the Gospel to transform a culture from within. The researcher argues that contextualising the Gospel is a process that puts the effort of reflecting and living and experiencing the Christian faith in such a way that it is relevant to the cultural context of the specific people in terms of conceptualisation, expression and application; and yet maintaining Biblical integrity and theological coherence.

Lingenfelter (1998:12) explains that the concept of contextualisation of the Gospel message is to frame it in language and communication forms appropriate and meaningful to the local culture and to focus the message upon daily realities affecting people. Guder (1998:19) says that to be faithful to her calling the church must be contextual, that is, she must be culturally relevant within a specific situational setting.

What is inculturation? The term came from the concept of 'inculturated Catholicism' which was phrased in 1962 by J Masson and was given universal currency in 1977 by the Jesuit superior-general, Pedro Arrupe (Bosch 1991:447). The recognition of plurality of cultures presupposes a plurality of theologies. Thus the Church in Africa was challenged to rethink and relive the Christian faith in the culture of its people. Bosch (1991:453-455) explains that in inculturation the Holy Spirit and the local community are the agents who controls the process, not the ordained ministers. Inculturation involves the entire context: social, economic, political, religious, and so forth. It consciously follows the incarnation model, Christian faith being flesh. There is an inculturation of Christianity and Christianisation of culture.

Justin S Ukpong (1999:100) defines inculturation as,

*A way of doing theology that seeks to interpret the Christian faith from the perspectives of the socio-cultural contexts and historical life experiences of different people and to challenge society with the Gospel message.*

He (1999:100) continues to state that inculturation is a hermeneutic process that cuts across all theological disciplines and is concerned with how to understand, express and live out the Christian faith in particular historical socio-cultural contexts. Inculturation deals with how to be disciples of Jesus Christ in specific socio-cultural contexts. The disciples of Jesus Christ should comprehend, express and experience the Kingdom of God in the daily realities of people.

Martha Fredriks (2004:116) explains that the term inculturation emphasises the incarnation of the Gospel into a particular culture, whereas the term 'contextualisation' highlights the questions the various contexts poses to the Gospel message. The Gospel message must be made a reality in the culture of a people.

Ndegwah (2004:76) contends that the process today is being referred to in various ways, such as contextualisation, inculturation and interculturalisation. Chitando (2007:4) contends that concepts such as indigenisation, adaptation, inculturation, contextualisation and Africanisation have been used to describe the process of integrating the Christian faith and African cultures. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:271) argue that the Christian faith calls for authentic contextualisation and inculturation. In this study inculturation is viewed as a form of contextualisation. As discussed in chapter one, this research shall use contextual-inculturation to refer to this continuing process of mission.

Bosch's (1991:421) basic argument in his book '*Transforming mission*' is that, from the very beginning, the Gospel message of the Christian church became flesh in the life and world of those who embraced it. It is, however, fairly recently that the essentially contextual nature of the faith has been recognised. According to the research this means that as the faith communities participate in the Mission of God, they should acknowledge and understand that context influences and even determines our doing of theology.

The church should therefore engage to resolve the tension between the Gospel and culture faithfully. Hiebert (1999:381) points out that failure to understand the relationship between the Gospel and culture will put us in danger of making our own culture the faith message. The research believes that the Gospel is not culture and culture is not the Gospel, but that the two relate. The research agrees with Goheen (2000:145) when he contends that contextualisation is the encounter between the Gospel and culture which happens in the life of the faith community called to live the story of the Bible.

The research argues that in intercultural mission, the relationship between faith and culture is a symbiotic one. This means that faith and culture benefit from each other. It is an interdependent relationship; one cannot exist without the other. This relationship, contends Ndegwah (2004:84), can only flourish in dialogue. The two need to engage in a continuous meaningful discussion. Hiebert (1999:381) explains that the Gospel must be put into cultural forms to be understood and effectively communicated to the people. The research argues that dialogue with the Tonga culture will enable the intercultural member to see what Christian faith and culture have in common, and what not. The Gospel should be given a chance to continue challenging culture, even as it too gets transformed by the same culture for the glory of God and dignity of human beings (Ndegwah 2004:95 Hiebert 1999:381, 382).

The human culture is not to be simply affirmed and the Gospel domesticated into the idolatrous structure of the culture. At the same time, culture is not to be rejected because it will lead the church into irrelevance in the socio-cultural context she finds herself in. Hiebert (1999:382) argues that the uncritical rejection of cultural systems creates a vacuum and people end up importing alien customs.

The wholesale condemnation of a people's culture will create superficial Christianity, because the new converts will live dual lives. The Gospel becomes alien. On the other hand, the uncritical acceptance of culture overlooks the fact that there is no perfect human culture and as such it opens the doors to all kinds of syncretism. Shaw and Van Engen (2003:6) explain,

*As we interact in an increasingly complex world, we need to appreciate the issues that impact on people, thereby bringing God's Word to their contexts in ways as unaffected by our own assumptions as possible.*

In the Tonga context the RCZ intercultural disciples must work with models, words, forms, customs and institutions the Tonga people are accustomed to use, but must challenge those cultural systems with the fact of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Goheen 2000:146). The research argues that contextual-inculturating must mean expressing the Gospel in ways the people comprehend and in ways that challenge them personally and communally (Hiebert 1999:382). Jesus Christ is to be presented in the personal lives and community of the Tonga people. The Gospel that the RCZ communicates should not be culturally foreign to the Tonga. Hiebert (1999:381) points out that the foreignness of the Gospel message is one of the primary hindrances to communication. The research argues that the Gospel must become human.

The church only becomes the church as she responds to God's call to mission. To be in mission means to change continually as the Gospel encounters new and diverse contexts (Bevans and Schroeder 2004:72). Intercultural mission has the potential to challenge and change the church that participates obediently and faithfully in the *missio Dei*. In her mission, the church should expect to be shaped by her context, because the Gospel reshapes the context (Guder 1998:14). The church is to be relevant in response to the challenges of the societies she serves.

The Gospel becomes good news to the lost and broken humanity; because it is incarnated in the world through God's sent people. Guder (1998:19) says that to be faithful to her calling the church must be contextual, that is, she must be culturally relevant within a specific situation setting. It is vital for the church of Jesus Christ to study her context carefully and to understand it, and that is contextualisation. This enables the church to translate the truth of the Gospel as good news for the society to which she is sent. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:73) illustrate that as a river twist and turns in its journey toward the sea, both shaping and being shaped by the contour of the land, the geological composition of society and the enterprises of humanity, so the church, as community-in-mission, both forms and is shaped by the historical-cultural context and the theological thought of particular times and places.

The intercultural member is to know that incarnation and acceptance of the Gospel will take another shape when Jesus takes root in another cultural framework. In the

intercultural mission of the RCZ, the people who respond and receive the Gospel message are to have the opportunity to shape it into their own cultural concepts. They are to contextualise and inculturate the Christian faith. The RCZ should not bring the Gospel as a potted plant, but the seed of the Gospel must be planted in the Tonga people's soil (Hiebert 1999:381). The Tonga culture is the soil. The people who receive the Gospel message should play a crucial and leading role in the process of contextual-inculturation.

The research argues that the Gospel of Jesus Christ transcends cultural contexts of people but it is to be communicated appropriately and culturally in different contexts. The relationship between the Gospel and culture must be one of critical reflection. It is to be perceived as an opportunity rather than opposition or limitation. The Bible says, "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). People will not understand and accept the Gospel message unless there is a transportation of it (Neely 1995:3). If there is no contextualisation and inculturation of the Gospel message when presented from one culture to another, then it will be meaningless and irrelevant. The research contends that contextualisation must happen if the Gospel message is to be rightly understood in a new context. When God speaks to people he contextualises his message to be meaningful and applicable.

Shaw & Van Engen (2003:12) state that contextualising the Gospel presentation is most fundamentally a matter of knowing God within the limitations of culturally specific human contexts. God wants people to know him in context for he is a God of context. Neely (1995:9) continues to state that,

*Contextualisation is an attempt to communicate the Gospel message in a way that is faithful to its essence, understandable by those to whom it is presented, and relevant to their lives.*

The Gospel message will have minimal impact on the Tonga people if the RCZ is not contextualising and inculturating it.

The research argues that integration of the Gospel and culture is needed in the intercultural mission within the Tonga community. In integration the question that arises is that of syncretism. The challenge of syncretism is present in contextualisation and inculturation and is a challenge in intercultural mission. Newbigin (1997:7) points out that one may fall into syncretism in the attempt to be relevant and in the effort to avoid syncretism one may become irrelevant. Syncretism is a process in which elements of different religions, philosophies or ideas are mixed, resulting in a change in the basic nature of the said religions, philosophies or ideas.

Syncretism comes from the Greek word *synkretismos*. Neely (1995:44) explains that syncretism is usually defined as the blending, mingling, or fusing of different beliefs and practices. Syncretism is a process whereby people are connecting the Gospel

message with religious ideas that are anti-Christian (Bowen 1996:105). The Oxford dictionary (7<sup>th</sup> edition) defines syncretism as the mixing of different religions, philosophies or ideas. As the intercultural disciples engage with new cultures they must not be afraid of syncretism. Some syncretism is inevitable when the Gospel message is presented in a different cultural system.

After introducing the understanding of Christian intercultural mission, the research shall now discuss the ministry of the faith community to the people of other cultures. In Christian mission the disciples of Jesus Christ are called by God to witness the Gospel to people of other cultures that are different from their own. Intercultural mission is a dimension of Christian mission, as mentioned before.

#### **6.4 *Defining intercultural mission***

The defining of concepts is always influenced by one's place, time and worldview. The researcher agrees with Hiebert (1999:383) who states that intercultural mission is a very complex process and if we fail to understand it, we will fail to express the Gospel effectively. Christian intercultural mission has been viewed, defined and understood differently in the history of the church. Some scholars viewed it as cross-cultural ministry. Others look at intercultural mission as being the same as contextualisation and inculturation. The research shall not attempt to analyse the historical understanding but will focus on what the research believes is Christian intercultural mission. The desire is not to reinvent the wheel on intercultural mission, but to contribute to what have been articulated by others.

The research argues that intercultural mission is an important aspect of Christian mission. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (2002:16) says that an intercultural perspective advocates a body of Christ in which the members remain committed to their function whilst contributing to the whole without assuming a sense of superiority over others. It is witnessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in love, and with boldness and humility, to the people who are culturally different. The nature and character of God is the foundation for intercultural mission. An intercultural mission is an apostolic ministry. It is the faith community participating in expressing the Mission of God within other different cultures. The Gospel is enriched through intercultural active dialogue and reciprocity within the faith community (Saayman 1990:318).

The intercultural process that the research is focusing on is a Christian mission. This aspect is important because it implies that the ministry is centred on God's reconciliation of the world in Christ Jesus. The research acknowledges that there are other religions that may and are involved in intercultural dialogue. The intercultural perspective alluded to in this study is seen in the light of the Christian faith message of Jesus Christ. Paul says, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Intercultural mission's focus must be on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christian faith is not about knowing, it is about appropriate living, about being, about people's relationship with God who has spoken in Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:4). What is the Gospel? The research believes that the Gospel is God's redeeming and reconciling love to the world through the transforming power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:17-18). It proclaims the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ to all cultures through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The art of communicating must be related to the message that is to be communicated. Intercultural mission requires inspiration from within the social context if it is to become possible and a reality. It is to be rooted in culture and in the way in which religion is interpreted and experienced in the daily life of the Tonga people. One has to be careful not to impose on the people (Acts 17:3, 18:4). Mando Sevillano (1997: xii) who was involved in the evangelising of the Hopi, a Native American people group, contends that we need to develop a conscious awareness of what God is doing worldwide in cultures.

An intercultural perspective rejects conventional interpretations that consider what happened in the course of European Christendom as universally normative for Christian history. Interculturality values cultural locality and ethnic diversity. Cultural identification with the community in the church is seen as a necessary aspect of Christian intercultural mission. Paul became what people were in order for them to experience the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 9:19ff). In each new context the church must die in order for her to live, that is, sacrifice herself and her cultural form, to be re-formed (Cary 2004:89).

The purpose is to faithfully and effectively communicate the Gospel message in a way that makes sense to the Tonga people. The fundamental questions are: What is to be communicated and appropriated? How is the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be presented to the people of different cultures? The research argues that these questions are essential in developing faithful, appropriate and meaningful strategies for the faith community that desires to be involved in Christian intercultural mission in a communal and contextual way.

## **6.5 *Participation in intercultural mission***

It is God who calls people to participate in his mission. He calls us to go with the Gospel message and also to people of other cultures. The Bible says, "How shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of the good things" (Romans 10:15). God calls his church to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. It is worthy to note that not all are called to be directly involved in Christian intercultural mission, for some members of the body of Christ are prophets, teachers, pastors and some evangelists.

These are God-given gifts of the Holy Spirit. The study views believers involved in Christian intercultural mission as intercultural disciples.

The responsibility in presenting the Gospel of Christ must not be defined by who we are or where we come from, but by what we are in Jesus Christ. The intercultural disciple is defined by his/her identity in Jesus Christ. It has to do much more with the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus, and less with what we do. Sevillano (1997:3) argues that an evangelist's role is to be defined by willingness to share God's love with all peoples, regardless of national origin or religious background. The intercultural disciples must not allow their prejudice to cloud the presentation of the Gospel. We are to distinguish between the majors and minors in our witness to the culturally different.

If the RCZ is to be faithfully obedient and to effectively participate in Christian mission, she must also be involved in intercultural mission. In the book of Acts (1:8), witnessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ involves the local context (Jerusalem context) and the global context (Samaria's end-of-the-earth context). The missional church must participate in the Mission of God and should have an impact worldwide for the sake of Jesus Christ. Every believer must become an active and relevant participant in the local and intercultural mission of the church of Jesus Christ. The church is not the sender but the one who is sent by the missional God.

In the RCZ more attention is given to the pastoral care of members than to the missional nature of the church. Because the church's emphasis is upon care for members only, it makes her focus on ministering only. The local congregation that minister according to spiritual gifts, move away from only being a caring unit and reveals and demonstrates a missional perspective. The role of pastoral leaders is to empower the faith communities to fulfil their missional calling and duty in this world. Callahan (1990:3) said,

*The day of the professional minister is over. The day of a missional pastor has come.*

The RCZ has a tradition in which the ordained ministers do almost everything. We need to give the ministry to all the members of the body of Christ by equipping them through a caring ministry. Christian intercultural mission is not only the duty of the pastoral leaders but the responsibility of the whole body of Jesus Christ. The minister's responsibility is to care and equip the members of the body of Christ for ministry. The people, who feel cared for, who experience compassion and a sincere sense of community, normally commit themselves to a caring ministry for the sake of Christ. The modelling of a caring ministry by the minister is crucial in motivating the believers into participating in intercultural mission.

The research argues that the RCZ should avoid imposing her theology on the Tonga people. She should allow the new believers to do theology that is meaningful and

relevant to their reality. The RCZ should learn from the mistakes made by the DRC missionaries who assumed that their European theology was universal. Bosch (1991:427) pointed out that the sixteenth century theologies and traditions of the Reformed churches were treated as universals, valid and right at all times and in all contexts. The European missionaries wholesomely exported their theology and traditions to the RCZ. The Gospel was not contextualised and inculturated in the people of Zimbabwe. Thus, research argues, the RCZ should work towards developing a communal-contextual missional framework in intercultural mission. This shall empower the Tonga people to participate in the process of the contextual-inculturating of the Gospel in their own realities. The Tonga people must be able to construct their local theologies (Schreiter 1985).

God is working and concerned with people. Jesus commissioned the church to go and make disciples among all nations (Matthew 28:19). God's love is not confined to any race, nation or cultural people because he loves all peoples. His love goes beyond socio-cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Whilst it is true that people exist in cultural settings, God's redemptive and reconciling work goes beyond a particular cultural people.

We are to recognise and acknowledge that we are living in a fast-changing world. Whilst the Gospel message of Jesus Christ we have to testify about is the same, the context of the world we find ourselves in has changed immensely and will continue to change. Thus the church's thinking and strategies of intercultural mission must consider the changing world in which we live and work. Shaw & Van Engen (2003: xv) state that we are to present an appropriate and relevant Gospel message in the multiplicity of perspectives that proliferate in our contemporary complex world. The next section thus shall discuss other models of intercultural mission. The research argues that it will help in coming up with suggestions as the RCZ works towards an intercultural framework.

## **6.6 *Strategising intercultural mission***

The world's cultural diversity is becoming more pronounced and complex. The minority ethnicities are rightly demanding recognition of the validity and respect of their cultures. The situation in Zimbabwe is not an exception. It is within such a context that the RCZ is taking part in the Mission of God. The research argues that the RCZ must develop creative and appropriate strategies to minister to people of other cultures. The RCZ should have coherent, efficient and effective strategies for intercultural mission. The strategies are to reflect the social reality of society and mission opportunity. The research argues that one needs to look at intercultural models to come up with guidelines for intercultural frameworks in the RCZ.



### **6.6.1 The Acts 15 Agenda and the Ephesians model**

The research shall look at the Acts 15 Agenda and the Ephesians model as the basis to work towards an intercultural framework in the RCZ outreach within the Tonga community. Jurgens Hendriks, in a keynote address at the 2002 Gospel and Our Culture in Chicago, USA discussed what he calls the Acts 15 Agenda. Hendriks (2002:1) argues that in Acts 15 the guidelines that lead the process of the movement and growth of the Christian faith from one place to another are more prominent than in any other Bible story. The research argues that the Christian faith has always encountered human cultural systems and engages with them. Walls (2002:29, 32) states that the Christian faith must always be translated into human culture to remain alive. Crossing cultural boundaries has been the life blood of Christianity.

The research argues that God loved the world and sent his Son Jesus Christ who became flesh. Jesus entered into and interacted with Jewish culture to transform the people. Bosch (1991:21) argues that the Word must become flesh in every new context. The church which is sent by Jesus Christ is to express the Gospel. She cannot afford not to be human if she is to impact the God-loved world. The Christian faith was planted in Israel among the Jewish people and culture. When the Christian faith first encountered the Gentile culture, the questioning of the relevance and meaningfulness of a Jewish Christian faith in a Gentile cultural context was inevitable. Ukpong (1999:105) explains that this questioning caused misunderstandings, confrontation and conflicts in the early New Testament church (Galatians 1:6-9, 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15). The questioning was the reason that led to the Jerusalem assembly of Acts 15.

The story of Acts 15 indicates the importance of making the Gospel relevant and appropriate to believers. The question of circumcision and observance of Jewish dietary laws raised by the believers of Antioch was about the relationship between the Gospel and a culture (Hendriks 2002:1, Ukpong 1999:104). The question was whether the Gospel could be expressed within the Greek culture. The Gospel was to be expressed in ways that was known by the people in their contextual realities.

The Acts 15 story resulted in the Christian faith being rooted in the lives of Greek believers. Hendriks (2002:2) points out that the new believers could identify with Christianity because it was translated into their own cultural world. The story did not produce two versions of the Christian faith but two standards of living representing two cultural settings. This indicates how two communities express Jesus Christ in their different cultures but should still remain united in faith. Everyone should be able to live the Gospel in their own culture and not in an imposed alien culture. The faith communities should work together and not try to establish their model of expressing the Gospel as the standard and normative one.

Cultural domination should be avoided at all cost. This is what Paul was addressing in the letter to the Ephesians (2:11-13), namely that the uncircumcised and the circumcised are now one in Jesus Christ through the blood of Christ. The result of the Acts 15 story was a multiracial and multicultural faith community. The research argues that the Acts 15 story indicates that the Gospel should not call for uniformity but flexibility to allow the faith communities to construct their own local theologies. Hendriks (2002:4) explains that the Acts 15 Agenda may well lead to a diversity and pluralism of unprecedented scale, but that it is balanced by the Ephesian call to unity.

Christianity that emerged from the time of Constantine was territorial in form. When the European missionaries came to Africa, they planted churches that were the same as the denominations of their territory. Ukpong (1999:105) points out that the Christianity that came to Africa was a highly spiritualised and transcendent religion, based on the European worldview. This secularist worldview emphasised the separation of religion from the secular sphere of life. The African worldview is that religious life cannot be separated from political, social and economic issues. The early NT church questions were mainly religious. As Christianity encountered Africa, Africans began to question the meaning of Christianity within the cultural, social, economic, political and religious context of Africa, and this led to the beginning and growth of the AIC (Ukpong 1999:104, 105).

The research argues that the model of the DRC missionaries did not encourage flexibility, as was proved in chapter 2 and 3 of this research. The model was shaped by the circumstances through which the DRC received the Gospel message. The DRC planted the church in Zimbabwe with the same DNA structure as their denomination in the Netherlands. The RCZ was formed in the confines of the Christendom paradigm of the DRC missionaries. As the research has proved, the RCZ is still uncritically holding on to the church model that was handed over by the DRC. The model did not seriously put into consideration the cultural settings of the people she was ministering to. The DRC missionaries did not allow the Shona people to inculturate the Gospel contextually.

The danger is that the RCZ, in turn, is transplanting the same model onto the Tonga people in her cross-cultural mission. As we may be quick to criticise the thinking and practice of the DRC missionaries, it is very easy for the Karanga dominated RCZ to adopt an attitude that communicates the feeling that the way we do things is the right and proper way for the Tonga people to follow. The Tonga people do not have to be Karangas to become true Christians. The RCZ should be flexible and create space for the Tonga people to inculturate the Gospel. Hendriks (2002:4) points out that the Biblical challenge is not to continue making proselytes of our own denominational traditions, but to give the new believers the freedom to use the Gospel to address their cultures.

The church is not called into the business of making proselytes, but of making disciples of Jesus. The new believers should be given space to be like Jesus Christ in ways that are appropriate and meaningful to their contextual realities. The new believers should be given freedom to contextually inculturate the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Hendriks 2002:1). As it was with the early NT church, the African Christians need to continue asking questions of what it means to be an African and Christian. The Christians in Africa should continuously come together, as in Acts 15, to address the questions they are raising in their context. Ukpong (1999:107) contends that to have adequate answers, the answers given need to come from the perspective from which the questions arise.

How is the RCZ to contextually inculturate the Gospel? The research believes that we are to understand and do theology from an African perspective. The research (as mentioned in chapter 1) agrees with Hendriks and others that our theology should seek a methodology that leads to transformation and a faith-praxis. The summary is that theology is about discerning the will of God in faith communities, that leads to their active participation in church and society as their response to the call of the Missional Triune God who speaks in our context through the Bible (Hendriks 2002:8). The research argues that theology should be personal and communal.

In the intercultural mission the RCZ must develop strategies the Tonga community know and can identify with and that are appealing to them. The strategies that the RCZ are to use should be based on the fact that God is already at work in the lives of the Tonga people through the Holy Spirit (Hiebert 1999:383). She must keep reminding herself that it is God's mission. The RCZ should listen to the cultural context of the people she is ministering to and to the Bible as the Word of God. The context shapes the church and a connection with the Biblical teachings and faith validates the church (Cary 2004:105). The missional faith community must have open ears and a sensitive heart. There must be creative and reflective engagement with the cultural context where members are involved in critical and constructive interpretation of their present reality. The faith communities must continuously and faithfully struggle to discern the will of God for and in their present situation. The strategies that the RCZ shall develop within the Tonga community will be fundamental in her ministry to people of other ethnic cultures such as the Ndebele, Venda and Shangani.

The research believes that the church is to minister the Gospel message in ways that will allow the Tonga people to experience and express reality in their socio-cultural context. In Christian intercultural mission we will always encounter the dilemma of cultural differences because people view and interpret life in different ways. When God calls you to the ministry of evangelising, he calls you to take the Gospel into the historical context of a person, ethnicity or nation (Sevillano 1997:11). The researcher argues that the members of the RCZ who are involved in intercultural mission should remain faithful to the Word of God and the principles of Acts 15.

### 6.6.2 Faithfulness to God's message

The fundamental issue the missional church is to acknowledge and appreciate is the importance of the Holy Scripture. The research is in agreement with Shaw & Van Engen (2003: xvi) who argue that in intercultural mission we are to seek to communicate the Word of God effectively by remaining faithful to the intent of Scripture. The Gospel conflicts some aspects of culture that contradicts with the Word of God and sustains good aspects of culture. God uses weaknesses and strengths of culture to glorify himself. In the beginning of the chapter the research noted that we participate in the Mission of God, not in a human mission.

In intercultural mission Gospel presentation must be faithful to what God intended human beings to understand about God and apply to their lives (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:9). God wants to have a relationship with his creation. God disclosed himself in human culture. Culture is a lens, a worldview that impacts on Biblical understanding (Kraft 1996:19). Shaw and Van Engen (2003:13) state,

*God wants to interact intimately with human beings who always live in a social context of their own making.*

Because of the way humans were created, they live in an ever-changing cultural context, but God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews). In each dynamic-specific and different context God reveals something new about himself and his relationship with human beings. It is important for the members in intercultural mission that they do not to assume that the meaning or truths established in one context must apply to all contexts (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:16).

The Bible reveals the self-disclosure of God to humanity. The intercultural members proclaim the Gospel message because they believe that the Triune God spoke in Jesus Christ. The research agrees with Shaw & Van Engen (2003:12) who state that the presentation of the Gospel originates from God's Word, the divine word and not human words. God is the final source, not the Bible. (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:31) says,

*As people read and understand the Holy Scriptures, they get to know the source better. As they get to know the source, the better they communicate.*

The research believes that the RCZ and the Tonga people should journey together in this process. Communally they should critically evaluate their cultural systems in the light of the Biblical teachings of Jesus Christ. This will lead the Tonga to keep many of their customs that do not distort the Gospel and reject others that are incongruent with the Bible. Lastly they will reinterpret other customs to convey the faith message (Hiebert 1999:382). Hiebert (1999:382) continues to argue that this process will create beliefs and practises that are both Biblical and contextual.

The research argues that the RCZ members involved in intercultural mission should develop skills in communicating the Gospel message.

### **6.6.3 Equipping intercultural disciples**

The need for reassessment of the RCZ's intercultural communication strategies is a reality before us. The members involved in intercultural mission should be trained in how to minister to other ethnicities. The research believes that the RCZ leadership needs to receive training in intercultural mission. They should also responsibly train or facilitate the training of the members participating in intercultural mission to be relevant and meaningful in their service. The church should develop leaders with a passion for a missional church, congregations where every member is empowered to think and do theology and take it upon themselves to make a difference in Zimbabwe and all its crises and challenges (Hendriks 2002:7). The RCZ has to develop cultural and appropriate approaches in Christian intercultural mission that empowers the members involved.

Reed (1985:1) rightly contends that the intercultural disciples must be trained and equipped for their work in order to serve in an effective and relevant way. Preparation of the RCZ members is an important component of building a missional church. It is necessary for the RCZ to prepare the intercultural mission members adequately because the Holy Scriptures say that the leaders are to prepare the disciples of Jesus Christ for the works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).

A related set of assumptions and values that are elaborated in a society's worldview are adapted from the social cultural system (Lingenfelter 1998:35). It is vital to understand yourself before you begin to examine the social order and relationships of the people you live with and minister to as an intercultural disciple (Lingenfelter 1998:38). Once an intercultural member comprehends his or her own preferred assumptions and values, it will be possible and easier to identify the social roots of situations of conflicts and tension between the Gospel communicator and the local people and apply Scriptures in an appropriate and meaningful way to help both to live transforming lives.

The members should have a multi-cultural perspective to be able to present the Gospel effectively as intercultural communicators. An intercultural disciple has no imperative to present his culture to any person. The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not belong to one particular culture but to all cultures (Sevillano (1997: xii). It is important for the intercultural disciples to distinguish and separate their own culture from the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Hiebert 1999:381). The research believes that our responsibility as members is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus appropriately and

culturally, but according to God's Word. There is need for a missional church to develop a multi-cultural approach in thinking and action.

The research argues that the preparation for Christian intercultural mission is not an easy assignment, but a complex endeavour. But the spiritual and Biblical preparation of intercultural disciples is of paramount importance. We are to engage with the Bible from and within our contextual situations and express reality in our context. The members involved in intercultural mission should look at the many points of contact that exist in the cultural system of the people they find themselves ministering the Gospel message to. Cultural differences are to become opportunities for sharing, not points of separation (Sevillano 1997: xix).

The people in the society are profoundly affected by the intercultural communicator's way of life and attitudes to life; it may be in a positive or negative way. The intercultural members have to be trained to understand the world around them (Reed 1985:6). The research argues that the training in intercultural mission should enable the members to be communal and contextual. The RCZ has got a responsibility to equip the intercultural members to minimize the cultural and methodological mistakes, which can be barriers to the Mission of God in our context and time. In preparing members for intercultural mission, it is important that they are to acknowledge and understand the relevant issues of the people they are going to live and minister to. The members are to be trained in community understanding, culture and language learning, social structures, the danger of cultural ethnocentrism and cultural transformation.

### **6.6.3.1 Understanding the community**

Intercultural members must be sensitive and knowledgeable of the culture of the people they are going to live with and minister to if they are to be effective. Transformation of societies involves people who have socio-cultural systems. In transformation we are to work with the totality of the existence of man, that is, his religious, social, economic and political life. Christian mission has the aim of transforming societies to conform to the Kingdom of God through the salvific work of Jesus Christ in a holistic way. The Kingdom of God is where people can be truly human in the image of God. Kingdom of God refers to one rule and realm of God. This is possible in local communities through the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The research argues that the RCZ should train members to attempt to understand the community they will live in and minister to.

Every custom, institution, and practice of culture is corrupted by sin, yet the goodness of the creational structure remains because of God's faithfulness to creation. Goheen (2000:150) explains that this means culture is redeemable; it also provides a strategy for cultural involvement. Culture is good, but it was distorted by sin and thus has to be transformed by Jesus Christ. Culture is to be perceived in the

light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Bevans 1993:6, 14). The research agrees with Sevillano (1997:2) who states that the disciples of Jesus Christ are called to share the Gospel message, not adjust someone's cultural attitude. God alone changes the hearts and lives of those who call upon his Name. If the RCZ is to embody the Gospel, it means she has to stand in opposition to the powers of idolatry that shape the social system which is contradictory to the demands of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

An effective and meaningful missional action in a specific context requires adequate social knowledge of that contextual situation. This means our Christian intercultural mission's responsibility; analysis and theological reflections should be rooted in the lives of the people. The members need to understand the history and learn and respect the cultural system of the people they are ministering to (Sevillano 1997:35). A person can best learn a new culture in an experiential situation. Involvement with people of other cultures can impact on the intercultural members' perception. It is a life-changing experience. There are many rich lessons one can learn during the engagement with people of other cultural frameworks. It is important to know that everyone knows a great deal about something. One has to be aware of and watch out for an inherent tendency to look down on people who are less privileged.

Social analysis will be of great assistance in this endeavour, as stated in chapter one of this research. The study of social anthropology is vital and has insights that are helpful for Christian mission (Spijker 2004:52). The study of social anthropology is characterised by methodological relativism and aims at describing and interpreting a particular culture, living it as it is without interference or even trying to influence or change it. Christian mission studies a culture in terms of the message it brings, which may find itself in opposition to that culture and seek to transform it (Spijker 2004:53).

Social analysis is needed in an attempt to enable people for transformation. Social anthropology may serve as an appropriate tool to interpret traditional behaviour and to explain why many people in Zimbabwe feel obliged to observe traditional customs even if they embrace Christianity (Spijker 2004:56). In dealing with culture and religion, social anthropology is not interested in the religious aspect of rituals but first and foremost in the social relationships and the power structures in society that are expressed by means of rituals (Van't Spijker 2004:56). Social analysis's aim is to gain knowledge and understanding of a specific context so as to take appropriate and effective action based on that knowledge and comprehension.

Social analysis is a tool for dealing with needs, challenges and opportunities and is not the final answer. Social analysis does not provide solutions or a blueprint for actions. It helps to discover the causes so as to avoid dealing with the symptoms. The missional church as an instrument of transformation is not to treat only the visible effects but also the causes of the problems and needs of the people. It unfolds the context within which a ministry for change can be outlined. It helps to

comprehend reality. Holland (1983:15-16) explains that social analysis helps us to know and understand reality and not to fit reality into our preconceived knowledge and understanding of reality. Our analysis is to be shaped by the richness of the reality. Social analysis seeks explanations of why things are happening the way they are.

Social analysis unmask the underlying values that shape the perspectives and decisions of those acting in a given situation (Holland 1983:15-16). A socio-cultural system is dynamic, very complex and constantly changing. This means our social analysis will be an ongoing process and not an event that can be completed and shelved. We should always contextualise our analysis holistically according to new situations and should always be open to critical evaluation. We are to be flexible and adaptable in this process.

The research argues that the RCZ should not belittle the fact that cultural anthropology and social analysis are not the final answer, but are vital tools in Christian intercultural mission. The RCZ should use the insights from the experts in all disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, information technology, economics, political sciences, management and human resources. Reed (1985:10) quoted Arthur F Glasser who said that truth is truth wherever it is found, regardless of who discovers it.

A disciple involved in intercultural mission needs to acknowledge and know the nature of culture, in order to avoid misunderstandings and ethnocentrism. In order to formulate an attitude of mutual respect, we have to recognise the role of cultural anthropology in building bridges for intercultural mission (Reed 1985:13). The success of the church's intercultural mission may hinge upon the intercultural members' understanding of culture of the people they minister to. Culture provides the context for thinking about God. The members should be equipped to know and understand that culture and language learning is important for an effective intercultural mission in the Binga outreach.

### **6.6.3.2 Understanding culture**

In any society in the world there is a cultural system. In intercultural mission the members should be aware of the dynamic nature of the local cultures (Van't Spijker 2004:56). In developing strategies for an intercultural mission in the RCZ, we need to relate the Christian faith to the realities of the Tonga people. They are to look at the questions that have an impact on the daily lives of the Tonga people. Cultural ways are wrapped up together in an integrated system (Reed 1985:16). The basic building blocks of culture are composed of words, actions and artefacts which are related and function like a system.



It is vital for the Christian intercultural disciples to know and understand the nature of the cultural systems of the people they are living with and ministering to. The members must learn to make connections with the culture and religious concepts of the Tonga people. Living with people is the first step to understanding their concrete realities (Bediako 2004:21). The members should develop a positive attitude towards the people and their culture to enable them to minister with relevance and meaning. The members must develop an attitude of receptiveness for open critical exchange of viewpoints. Ignorance of the cultural ways of people is an obstacle to intercultural communication. At first the intercultural disciples are ignorant of the important aspects of the new cultural context, but they must be prepared to learn the nature of culture.

The word 'culture' means to cultivate, care or tend and comes from the Latin word *cultura*. Culture is the meanings which people create, and which create people, as members of society (Ndegwah 2004:72). Shorter (1998:22) states that culture is a dynamic, not a static phenomenon. It is also complex and will never be fully studied and comprehended. Culture exists in concrete realities of people, not in a vacuum, and is related to social relations.

There is no person who can live without culture or above it. Ndegwah (2004:81) perceives culture as a meeting point where persons and people are negotiated, formed and transformed; instead of solely looking at it as a lifeless entity of language, territory, traditions, customs and mannerisms. A person can only have one culture, which can be influenced by many other cultural orientations. Culture derives from our environment and the extent in which it influences action and behaviour depends on how long a person has lived within a given culture or how much the one has been exposed to other cultures (Ndegwah 2004:82). Culture constitutes a dynamic process rather than a well-defined static entity (Van't Spijker 2004:56). Culture is not fully intact.

The research argues that failure to prepare the members who participate in the intercultural mission adequately will subject them to immense culture shock. In Christian intercultural mission, adequate culture learning preparation about the people one has to live and work with will help to minimize culture shock. The adjustment to culture shock will determine how well or poorly the Christian intercultural members will perform. What is culture shock? Reed (1985:79) defines culture shock as a person's reaction to the new cultural environment. Some reactions may be positive and pleasing, but others will be negative and appalling. Entering into a new culture where one experiences the absence of the familiar cues of social intercourse causes anxiety and fear. It is often the little things that cause culture shock.

The research argues that in dealing with culture shock the first aspect for the disciples of Jesus Christ is to be aware that cultures are different. They should have

an attitude of being able to accept others as they are. A person has to be willing to adapt and adjust to the new cultural setting. The second aspect is being able to be involved with the local people because human beings learn better and faster by doing things together. The members should be prepared to learn from the local Tonga people because they are the owners of their culture. It is an important and efficient tool for building a bridge of understanding and acceptance. The last aspect is that the members participating in intercultural mission need to give themselves time to understand and adjust to the new community where they will live and to whom they will minister to. There should be time for making mistakes and learning from these mistakes and that will help them to adjust to the new cultural context. Reed (1985:84) says that an intercultural disciple who has a good sense of humour (the ability to laugh at oneself) will help to release tension while the adjustment process continues.

In Christian intercultural mission, some aspects of the new cultural context are very difficult for the members of Jesus Christ to comprehend, accept and appreciate fully. This leads to culture stress. Culture shock is usually of temporary duration while culture stress may be for a longer period and, if not managed properly, can result in permanent injury (Reed 1985:84).

The other aspect of dealing with obstacles is that the intercultural members need to understand in order to be communally and contextually relevant in the people's orientation towards time and events. The European culture is time-oriented whilst that of Africa and Asia is fundamentally event-oriented. The most important thing for most Africans is the event of attending church service. The time of arrival is relatively trivial. In the RCZ intercultural mission, the concept of event orientation shall not be difficult because the members do hold to the same orientation as the Tonga people. An intercultural disciple who enters any cultural context be it Asian, European or African, must be flexible Reed (1985:89). A willingness to adapt to the time frame of the local culture will be a positive move in Christian intercultural mission.

The research argues that the intercultural member needs to learn how to relate acceptably with the people to whom one is ministering to. The members must try to learn the cultural norms of the Tonga people, so that they can adapt to the new society without losing their identity as persons and as members of their own society. As a servant of the missional God, the intercultural member has the responsibility to share the Christian message. If understood by the local people they will appropriate it in their contextual situation. The intercultural disciple who is aware and prepared in culture learning will be in a stronger position to participate more meaningfully and relevantly in intercultural mission.

### **6.6.3.3 Learning the language**

The research argues that culture learning cannot be divorced from the learning of the language of the people one is to live with and minister to. Language is the vehicle of

communication and an integral aspect of culture. Language is the most important communication medium in any human society. Sanneh (1989:5) says,

*Language is the intimate, articulate expression of culture.*

The Christian intercultural members need to be prepared to know the language of the people they are living with and ministering to. God used a particular language bound in a particular time and place when he interacted with human beings throughout history (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:4). Language learning is a process that one should approach positively. Thinking positively and having a positive attitude in language will be practical and beneficial. If we have a negative attitude towards learning a language we are impoverished. The main resources in language learning are the local people who speak the language.

The best and quickest way to learn a language is to live with the people. The intercultural disciple is to become intimately identified with the local people with whom one desires to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Reed 1985:63). There must be a willingness to identify with the people by living with and among them. One can live with a local family for a period that enables a person to learn the language. When the disciple stays with a local family, one should also learn to read the people's literature.

The intercultural members should have a genuine motivation to learn the language. Motivation is a determination which results in a decision of the will. Reed (1985:66) rightly contends that language learning is a social activity and that it must be learned through relationships with people. The Christian intercultural disciples should commit themselves to socialise with the local people. Reading books and grammar rules are not a substitute for learning to speak by speaking.

The disciple has to work and play and share social activities with the locals. In Christian intercultural mission one has to create friendship with the people and friendship takes time. We have to ensure that we do not tread on the graveyards of their past with disrespect (Sevillano 1997:32). In our culture we say, "*Hukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya*" meaning that relationship is half-full (incomplete) until you are able to eat together.

In Zimbabwe, some of the European missionaries are so concerned about the "work" they are doing, that they do not allow and plan to have sufficient time for social activities with the local people. They perceive the social activities negatively. They are not willing to adjust to and identify with the local people. They are trapped in the cross-cultural missionary model. The research believes there is a great need to have a balance between work and the people's world. This happens by building solid relationships. When it comes to relationships, everything begins with respect, with an honest desire to place value on other people (Maxwell 2004:18).

In learning a people's language one has to have knowledge of both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication. John Maxwell (2004:19) said,

*People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.*

Understanding the people's silent and body language is very important for communication. This will enable the members to communicate effectively in intercultural mission. Reed (1985:73) quoted Hesselgrave who statistically points out that in the average conversation between two persons less than 35 percent of the communication is verbal and more than 65 percent is non-verbal. The patterns of verbal and non-verbal behaviour are culturally defined. It is the culture of that particular people that influences one's behaviour and body language. Reed (1985:74) says,

*In thinking of non-verbal communication and mission we must realise that one form of communication in our culture does not necessarily communicate the same message cross-culturally.*

If culture is dynamic and complex then contextualising the Gospel communication must not and cannot be a monolithic and rigid process (Ndegwah 2004:83). Intercultural mission takes a variety of appropriate and culturally oriented strategies as it deals with different people in different locations of the global world. In the intercultural mission of the RCZ the Karanga people of Southern Zimbabwe must be careful that they do not cause frustration and embarrassment to the Tonga people of North-Western Zimbabwe. This might happen if they do not understand their non-verbal communication. In non-verbal communication there is a danger of the intercultural members being ethnocentric.

Developing awareness that societies have customs and a way of life that differ from one place to the other is essential in Christian intercultural mission. The intercultural disciple must be trained to learn to appreciate a variance of cultures. We must learn to see through the eyes of the culture itself every time that we encounter a new culture (Sevillano 1997:4).

Culture comprises behaviour which is learned. The patterns of behaviour a person learns come from parental upbringing and interaction within a particular socio-cultural setting (Reed 1985:14). This learned behaviour is shared and transmitted within and by a particular people through their cultural system. Culture is constantly changing as old ways are discarded and new ways are adopted and added to the familiar patterns already learned (Reed 1985:16). Culture is not static but is essentially dynamic.

#### **6.6.3.4 Understanding the worldview and symbols**

Cultural systems consist of important components. A worldview is an important key to be understood in order to open the doors for communication of the Gospel message in Christian intercultural mission. A worldview simply speaks of the perception of a specific people of life and the environment around it. A worldview

forms and influences the way people see reality (Hesselgrave 1978:125). The worldview of a society lies at the heart of a culture (Kraft 1979:56). A worldview has immense influence on every aspect of a people's life, that is, on its time, space, and status, spiritual and interpersonal relationships.

Human beings mostly respond to issues and challenges from deep feelings and emotional values rooted in a particular worldview (Lingenfelter 1998:59). People are products of their complex and diverse social contexts and worldviews. This means it is a must for the members involved in Christian intercultural mission to have a better knowledge of the worldview of the people they will live with and minister to. The researcher believes that if careful study of a specific people's worldview is done, the members participating in intercultural mission shall be enriched with insights pertaining to their socio-cultural system.

The intercultural disciples must be willing to acknowledge and respect the mindsets of other cultures. It is essential therefore for a disciple to identify with the people one is living with and ministering to. To study and be conversant enough with their worldview will help one's desire and ability to identify with the people and to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Reed 1985:100, 101).

The comprehension of a worldview affects communication by means of a language, because language reflects the people's perception of the world around them. Reed (1985:102) noted that the relationship between language and a worldview are closely intertwined. A positive and good knowledge of the local people's worldview will assist the intercultural disciple in becoming an effective, holistic and contextual minister of Jesus Christ because one shares the Christian faith message in a new cultural context.

In an attempt to comprehend the local people's worldview, the intercultural members need to look at the functions of a worldview. They have to learn what the local Tonga people know. Charles Kraft in his book, *Christianity in culture*, sets some functions of a worldview (1979:54-56). For the purpose of this study we will just briefly look at them. The first is the explanation function, which deals with how and why things got to be as they are. It also helps to explain how and why things continue to change. Reeds (1985:108) states that the mythology of a people is revealed in their proverbs, riddles, songs and stories. They embody this explanatory idea. They provide the guide-line which people are to follow obediently. Some societies now have science, religion and philosophy to reveal their perceptions of the world.

The second is the evaluation function. All important and valued behaviour is judged according to a culture, worldview, assumptions, beliefs, values, meanings and sanctions. Most societies view their own worldview as the best and other people's customs and values are evaluated as being of lesser importance. Reinforcement is the third function of a people's worldview, the way in which it provides psychological

reinforcement for its members. It gives security and support to members of the society and helps them to face the reality of life.

The fourth is the interpretive function which aims at putting things together in a systematic way so that they all make sense. A people grouping develop a system that enables them to conceptualise what reality is, to understand and interpret all that happens day by day within this framework (Reed 1985:109). The adaptation function is the fifth one. It helps people to adapt to occasional shifts in their perceptions of reality. People sometimes are forced by changing situations to view issues differently from their normal pattern. They are to adjust to new ideas and behaviour patterns. This ability to adapt is an essential function of a worldview.

The research argues that in intercultural mission the diversity of a people's culture is to be recognised. We live in a pluralistic context, and in this new contextual environment people want to be respected and accepted just as they are. People want their identity to be respected. The model that this study advocates is one that will affirm the validity of other cultural systems and will provide a platform of mutual respect. The communal-contextual framework will enable the intercultural members to know, comprehend, respect and identify with the Tonga people.

In every culture symbols play a significant role. The research argues that the RCZ training should make members involved in intercultural mission aware of the importance of cultural symbols. They should be familiar with symbols used by the cultural systems of the people. Reed (1985:112) noted that every people have devised symbolic reference as a tool and an aid for giving meaning and purpose to life. Symbols relate to a worldview in that they reflect the ideas and values of the system of which they are a part. Religion is a part of culture and both culture and religion has symbols. In many societies, such as the Tonga in Zimbabwe, religious symbolism permeates every aspect of life. Symbols are labels that people use to identify concepts.

Symbols are very useful vehicles for passing on meaning within a cultural system. But symbols have limitations also. Nida who is quoted by Reed (1985:113) observes that symbols never mean one thing but several things, meaning they reveal and obscure. Misunderstandings and conflicts may arise easily if a person does not carefully interpret symbols. The research argues that to minimize misunderstandings and conflicts, the Christian intercultural members are to have a better knowledge of the symbols of the Tonga people they will be ministering to.

The presuppositions of a people are an essential component of the worldview. In communication, these presuppositions will immensely affect the interpretation and comprehension and practice of the Christian faith message. People fail to communicate effectively mainly because they start the process with different presuppositions and from a different standpoint. At least the fundamental

assumptions of a people must be known by a Christian intercultural disciple. The way a particular people will interpret, comprehend and practice the Gospel of Jesus Christ is affected by the way they perceive the world around them. A good comprehension of the worldview of people will enable the RCZ members to deal with obstacles and communicate more effectively with contextual relevance. According to the researcher the training of members is very important. It should help them to appreciate the social structure of the Tonga people (described in chapter four).

### **6.6.3.5 Social structures**

The research argues that the disciples of Jesus Christ participating in intercultural mission should have a knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of working within the social structure of a particular people. How the intercultural members are perceived by the local people one is ministering to will immensely impact on the way in which the Christian faith message will be received and accepted. Understanding people certainly impacts on your ability to communicate with others (Maxwell 2004:19). A basic knowledge of social structure is valuable when formulating and building strategies for intercultural mission (Reed 1985:57). It will also help, for example, to know which strategies work in an urban area and also how they will differ from those in a rural setting. This means that intercultural mission strategies should be communal and contextual to be relevant and meaningful to the Tonga community.

The numerous communities in the world represent a unique variety of cultural heritages and identities. People possess dynamic social structures and organisations. The research is in agreement when Reed (1985:33) explains that the Christian intercultural disciples need to be familiar with the importance of social relationships, decision-making, rural-urban factors, and in recognising social structure as a bridge for sharing the Gospel. There are no people who live in social vacuums. Every culture possesses a social structure.

The intercultural disciple should know that societies differ in the way they respond to the Christian faith. Two ethnicities will respond in quite different ways. For example: a society experiencing political and economic crisis will not respond in the same way as one which is experiencing economic prosperity. The research argues that the way the Tonga people will respond to the Gospel message shall not be similar to the response of the people in Harare. This calls for the RCZ to train the members to understand the dynamics of the Tonga people's social structures.

What are the dynamics of social structure? A social structure has got basic aspects which the intercultural members need to be acquainted with. The research argues that the church can only grow effectively and develop within the context of a social structure. This reason makes it a must for the disciples participating in a Christian intercultural mission to understand the social structure and organisation of the people they will be living with and ministering to.

The research argues that intercultural mission is a relational ministry. One of the important components of social structure that needs to be understood is status and functions (Reed 1985:37). This will assist the members in their personal interrelationships with the people and equip them to be able to share the Gospel within that cultural system in a better and more effective way. The members involved in intercultural mission should understand that the cultural systems of the Tonga people have interrelationships which are to be seen holistically and contextually.

The persons involved in intercultural mission need to be sensitive and careful in understanding the various social roles in the society they live in and minister to, because roles differ from one cultural context to another cultural context. If the disciples of Jesus Christ try to play a role in the context they find themselves in without understanding how the social system works, confusion can arise.

The research argues that the members should be trained to know and understand the kinship system of a particular people. Reed (1985:40) aptly states that kinship systems provide a sense of cohesion and people awareness which is vital to the functioning of any society. One cannot understand how a society works without knowing its approach to kinship relationships.

In some societies, especially in Africa and Asia, families are more complex than others in the European world. European societies focus mostly on the nuclear family whilst in Africa they focus on the larger (extended) family. The research believes it is the individualistic and communal perception of the European and African world respectively that has a bearing on their kinship relationships. European people have a mindset that has a passion for individual rights and self-aggrandisement, thus they focus on and encourage individual uniqueness (Sevillano 1997:4).

As in most parts of Africa, it is vital for the RCZ to have an understanding of kinship relationships within the Tonga people. The Tonga people prefer to make important decisions as a community. Example: if a father makes a decision for Christ he is most likely to influence the whole family or village.

The decision-making process is another aspect of social structure with which an intercultural disciple has to be familiar with. In the European perspective the emphasis on the decision-making processes is individualistic whilst the African perspective is communal. Reed (1985:41) argues that the European perspective is a typical ethnocentric way of thinking. In some societies, for an example, religious commitment is not an individual matter, but a community decision-making process. The research believes that the members' understanding of the social structures of the Tonga people will enable them to work with the system rather than against it. The approach of allowing a communal society to make a group decision, namely to believe and have faith in Jesus Christ, is to explain that Jesus binds the families



together. He does not destroy families. This is a vital advantage and has the capacity to produce social solidarity. It is a multi-personal approach which has many people participating.

The research believes that the place where people live has an effect on the social structure. The Christian intercultural disciple should be acquainted with the dynamics of the geographical factors in any social system. These factors do have an immense influence on people's reception of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rural communities are small and have a very close culture, where persons are bound together basically by means of kinship relationships. They have a strong sense of cohesiveness. They are also very conservative, which results in new ideas being accepted cautiously. The urban communities on the other hand are quite different in relation to their social-cultural situation. Urban settings are large, growing very fast and much more complex. People living in urban areas are not bound by kinship ties and they are liberal. They are more open to change than rural communities. Many of the rural people in Zimbabwe move into urban settings in large numbers looking for employment and a better life.

The understanding of the Tonga people's social structure will enable the members to develop effective and appropriate strategies for the RCZ intercultural mission. The strategies in Christian intercultural mission advocated by this researcher are to allow the participation of all kinds of people culturally, ethnically, socially, politically and economically. The fear of a stronger group dominating in such a situation is real but should not be allowed to distract the disciples of Jesus Christ from developing an all inclusive missional church. An environment in the RCZ that is conducive for the Tonga, Manyika, Ndebele, Korekore, Chewa, Karanga and others must be created to enable all people to experience the Kingdom of God together. The true church in worship and fellowship should be wide open to receive and accept all who believe in Jesus Christ. As stated before the research argues that ethnocentrism has no place in an intercultural mission within the Tonga people if the RCZ is to be a missional church.

#### **6.6.3.6 The danger of cultural ethnocentrism**

There is always a great potential of misunderstanding and distortion in ministering to the communities who are culturally different. The research argues that one aspect that brings misunderstanding is ethnocentrism. As noted before in chapter two and three of this study, most of the European missionaries in their zeal to serve the Lord Jesus often made mistakes. They were ethnocentric in their relationships with African people. It is important that the missional congregation should train the members who are to participate in Christian intercultural mission to have knowledge of ethnocentrism and the challenges it poses. Ethnocentrism is the experience of viewing one's own culture as central to reality.

Ethnocentrism is judging other peoples' ways of life in terms of the self through one's own cultural lens (Reed 1985:21). The greatest danger of ethnocentrism is that people develop a superior attitude and pride. People naturally think that their behavioural patterns are the right and proper way and that others should live exactly in the same way. There is a polarisation of culture differences where one's own culture is seen as superior and other cultures as inferior. Reed (1985:21) argues that this attitude is dangerous because it destroys personal relationships and sometimes other people too.

The research argues that ethnocentrism is an obstacle to an intercultural mission. An attitude of love and humility is of paramount importance for one to overcome ethnocentrism. A typical mono-cultural upbringing will normally result in a denial of cultural difference. Intercultural sensitivity is not acquired naturally; it requires stepping outside our established ways of experiencing the world. The research states that people should be able to understand and critique their own world view and know who they are. Reed (1985:88) states that as the intercultural disciples learn to overcome ethnocentrism and begin to practice acceptance, empathy and identification, the barriers of communication will come down. The lines of communication will be open for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our ethnocentricity negatively affects our relationships with others and hinders the reception and acceptance of the Christian faith message (Reed 1985:87). The question is how one can overcome ethnocentrism? It is no easy undertaking; it is a very painful exercise at times. The researcher argues that recognising and accepting the cultural ways of the local Tonga people and allowing them to do things in their own way will definitely assist in overcoming ethnocentrism. The members should gain an understanding of another culture in terms of its own values and assumptions, and then will begin to be able to see its members as valid human beings (Reed 1985:23). The RCZ should train the members to master the ability to develop an attitude of mutual respect toward the community and culture one is living in and serving. This will make them communal and contextually relevant and effective as people sent by Jesus Christ.

How does one develop an attitude of mutual respect? First, the disciple of Jesus Christ should learn the skills of building relationships of trust. We tend as human beings to respect what we like or learn to like. The second element is to learn to accept and create friendship with others who are quite different. One will then be able to be sensitive and culturally aware of other people and their needs. In Christian intercultural mission your attitude and actions will be tools used by the people you are serving to discern whether or not you accept them as persons. Once the people detect a resentment spirit in the intercultural disciple's life they will not identify with you. This will create a barrier between you and the people. There should be genuine association and fellowship.

Thirdly, one has to practice mutual respect. It is a relation that is to be practiced by people standing on equal ground in terms of validity. The members should cultivate a good interpersonal relationship with the culturally different. They must be trained to respect others as persons, just as they are, even if they are different ethnically, socially, politically and economically. God created them in His own image, thus they are not inferior. It is to be a reciprocating relationship.

The research argues that the members participating faithfully and obediently in Christian intercultural mission must have a communal-contextual perspective on the Tonga people and culture. Appropriate and effective strategies for evangelistic work and social services should be developed when a clear understanding of and sensitivity to the people and their socio-cultural values have been obtained. The culturally appropriate strategies have the potential to connect with people and to give meaning to the Gospel message in a particular context.

In concluding this section, it is important to give a word of caution. The training given by the RCZ to the members will not guarantee that the Gospel message of Jesus Christ communicated to the Tonga community will be accepted as per our expectations (Reed 1985:31). It only helps to guarantee that when the Gospel message is communicated, the people are more likely to understand it. The research argues that this intercultural mission is God's work. The fruit of the work will be according to the intention of God, and not that of the RCZ. It is not about us but about God and it is He who brings true transformation in the life of a community. The RCZ members are only instruments of God.

### **6.6.3.7 Cultural transformation**

The research argues that the RCZ's training of members participating in intercultural mission should enable them to understand and commit to community transformation. Cultures all over the world are always in the process of transformation. As noted before, culture is dynamic, not static. At the same time, anthropologists have discovered that all cultures resist instant and quick change. Change is not always welcome, but is inevitable.

The research believes that the members involved in intercultural mission are representatives of transformation who are to promote positive Christian change. Sevillano (1997:28) puts it this way:

*It is only God who is unchangeable, but people and cultures change.*

Reed (1985:119) argues that it is imperative that the Christian intercultural disciples understand the dynamics of culture change, because they will be involved in the process of culture change. The research argues that the members are to be prepared to guide the Tonga people in socio-cultural transformation, for the Bible says that people are to be transformed by the renewal of their minds (Romans 12:1).

Naturally people worldwide are comfortable with what they know and possess and generally have fear of the unknown. There is a tendency in world societies to make every effort to maintain their well-known familiar ways. An element of conservatism is in all people of the world. The world around us is always changing and will continue to do so. The research argues that change is a worldwide cultural phenomenon and as such is to be accepted.

Although culture change is a fact of life it is not easy to embrace, especially to the older generation of a people. They view new ideas and ways with suspicious eyes. Sevillano speaks of the progressives as advocates of change and traditionalists who oppose change. Reed (1985:120) explains that it is only natural to expect a measure of resistance to culture change from elders and leaders of any societal people, because they are the ones who feel that it is their prerogative to protect and preserve the cultural ways of the particular community. The positive point the researcher believes worth mentioned is that conservatism brings a measure of stability in most cases.

It is worth noting that transformation may be disturbed or slowed down by elders and leaders, but it will nonetheless happen. Change may come as a slow process or a rapid one but the basic point is that it will happen. This calls for patience and humility in Christian intercultural mission. Change has two sides, the negative and the positive side (Sevillano 1997:14). The members must also know that changes in a people's culture affect everything.

Bevans and Schroeder (2004:349) assert that Christian mission is participation in the dialogical life and Mission of God. We are to make use of persuasion not imposition. The Christian community must give herself in service to the world and to the peoples in their cultural settings and learn from her involvement and expand her imagination of the depths of God's unfathomable riches (Bevans and Schroeder 2004:348). The research argues that in our expression of the *missio Dei*, dialogue is an important feature.

There must be dialogue between the faith community and the world. The dialogue is to be exercised in love and humility. The Tonga community are not to be pressurised into accepting the Gospel for this will lead to an outward conformity, as mentioned before. The people themselves, working together with those involved in intercultural mission are to indicate how their culture might have to change in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Saayman 1990:315). As we exercise dialogue in mission with appreciation and critique of culture, we remain resolute in the conviction that Jesus Christ is the answer to the question posed by the people. The Holy Scriptures say that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

In order for transformation to be welcomed, creativity is needed. Creativity plays an important role in stimulating and affecting culture transformation in any people. So it is vital for the members to be innovative if they are to be instruments of transformation and meet the needs of each unique context. The Bible says that a disciple of Jesus Christ is an instrument of righteousness. We are to have a faithful and creative intercultural mission to the culturally different (Sevillano 1997:23).

The disciples in Christian intercultural mission are to be willing to be innovative in their approach to redefine the map of doing theology and to be unafraid of painful service (Sevillano 1997:33). It is of great significance to understand that in the ever changing cultural contexts new contextual questions shall be and are raised by the new context. The situation will lead to the emerging of new frameworks of mission that are to address the new contextual questions in that time and place. In Christian mission there is continuity and discontinuity (Cary 2004:102). In the process some old strategies fail to address the new context. It calls for new strategies to be developed.

The RCZ should participate in an intercultural mission in obedience and in faithfulness to God through the Holy Spirit. Christian mission must be mission inspired by the Holy Spirit.

## **6.7 *Worship***

In intercultural mission the RCZ should seek to make her corporate worship relevant and meaningful to the Tonga people. Worship should meet the deeper needs of the people. There is need for a balance between our liturgical traditions and their appropriateness to the new cultural context in an attempt to address the diversities of people. The RCZ needs to allow the Tonga believers to develop their own liturgies that are culturally appropriate. Worship of the RCZ is to be communal, dynamic and exciting, reflecting the African spirituality. African worship tends to put greater emphasis on the concreteness of expression than on intellect.

The research argues that the RCZ must seek to worship God in ways and forms that use the cultural resources of the time and location of people. Worship is to engage with people rather than being passively driven. The church must not impose uniformity but translate the Gospel into the specific cultural context. The European missionaries' process of mission was to impose from above. The communal-contextual framework is to be a holistic/integrated process from within the Tonga people. The truth of the Gospel message can be contextualised for each culture, thereby allowing each people to develop its own form of worship and lifestyle.

The research argues that the idea of changes and creativity in patterns of worship are always received negatively by the older generation in the RCZ. The discussions

that raise questions of changes of approach, in the means and methods of worship, are looked upon with misgiving. The research believes that worship should be contextualised and inculturated in the RCZ by allowing it to be influenced by the African spirituality. The research is in agreement with Nketia (1962:114) who points out that in African worship there is a greater freedom of movement, spontaneity and gaiety than one finds in most of the European faith communities, where the atmosphere is formal and movement is restricted. The research argues that appropriate liturgical forms and styles more suited to the emotional character of the African people should be sought and acquired in a missional church (Bavinck 1960:188). The formalism can also be seen in the way the building, pews and pulpits are structured.

Many Christians in Zimbabwe have been led to adopt a negative attitude towards our culture. Our culture has many aspects of worship that can and will enhance and enrich the character and patterns of worship in our church. An awareness and acceptance of the goodness of our culture will enable the church to permit the new Tonga faith community to develop patterns of worship that are not alien to them. The patterns of worship should make a Tonga person feel at home in a Tonga worship service. The research argues that the patterns should reflect that the Word has truly become flesh in this new context (Bosch 1991:21).

The worship in the newly planted faith community in Binga must have a Tonga cultural identity if it is to bring fulfilment to the people of God. We are to look at how best the patterns of worship in the church can be improving or transforming in the light of the ever changing socio-cultural contexts. The worship in the RCZ must be given space to take root in the soil of the cultural setting the faith communities is planted in, in order for them to grow and bear fruit that will remain (John 15:8, 16a).

Nketia (1962:113) notes that we must recognise that the character of worship is determined mainly by the believer's concept of the beings that are worshipped and by the response that believers made as a result of their awareness or knowledge of such beings. One's experience of God influences one's character and patterns of worship. The Tonga people's experience of God must determine the character and forms of worship in their congregations.

We might need to have worship services that will address the needs of different groups such as the youth, the conservatives and moderates in the RCZ. In the RCZ there are many members involved in overnight prayer meetings outside the church's jurisdictions, in informal prayer meetings that allow people to express themselves through personal testimonies, and in the expression of spiritual gifts such as casting out of demons, laying hands on the sick and others. During the meetings they also want to enjoy the use of modern musical instruments. These challenges occur basically in the urban areas. Although these challenges are concentrated in the urban areas, the RCZ is also faced with the danger of failing to connect with the

young people who are attracted by the Pentecostal churches. The Pentecostal churches are now targeting the rural communities, including Binga and are moving and growing rapidly using modern technologies. The RCZ is to ride on the wings of creative thinking. She is to find ways of co-existence of the variety of styles of the faith communities' life.

In worship the RCZ is to refrain from being ethnocentric; assuming that the patterns of worship they practice are the only correct ways. The Tonga people are to be allowed to worship God with joy and enthusiasm. The research believes this will be possible if the church have transformative leadership.

## **6.8 Leadership**

The RCZ should be in a position to mobilize the human and financial resources needed to initiate and sustain the intercultural mission. The RCZ should create a mission fund and encourage congregations to do likewise. The church should establish a coordinating office at national and presbytery level to build and encourage all congregations to be missional.

The RCZ should plant new churches that will have a multiplying character with sound administration. The research argues that the Bible says that God blessed human beings and commissioned them to be fruitful and increase (that is, multiplication) and to subdue and rule the world (that is, administration, Genesis 1:28). Human beings were created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). The church is to multiply as God did in creating human beings of his kind or likeness. Although God is Sovereign and Almighty he chose to have an interdependent relationship with human beings. He looks at human beings to administer and serve all creation.

The multiplication and administration process is to be developed in partnership and as a community in diversity, for he created them male and female. The male and female are different, but equal, and will express themselves differently. The difference is to be appreciated and understood. In fulfilling the mission of God, male and female were to relate interdependently and complement one another to the glory of God. Interdependence means networking with others. In the process of creation God evaluated his work. He saw that his work was good (Genesis 1:3, 9, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). He also saw the part that was not good and rectified it (Genesis 2:18).

The RCZ is to develop an understanding that the quality of leadership plays a significant role in a missional church. One of the strategies is to identify and develop leaders responsible for intercultural mission through capacity building. There is a need for leadership that appreciates and acknowledges the importance of contextual-inculturating the Gospel message in intercultural outreach. The ministry that grows needs good team leadership and transformative leaders.

The growth and sustainability of the intercultural mission need effective leaders. It is crucial for the RCZ to initiate a capacity-building programme for the team leaders. The leaders should be equipped to be able to encourage the members to grow in their particular spiritual gifting and ministries. The critical factor in the RCZ will be our ability to identify and train emerging leaders in the context of the people we are serving and working with. Mentoring and training skills should be developed. Leadership should not stifle creativity in Christian mission, but should give guidance and support.

The Murray Theological College, which is the RCZ theological training institution, should include intercultural mission in its programmes. The RCZ should develop training manuals in intercultural mission. The church should develop a policy and identify and train people who desire to minister in intercultural communication. The research argues that the RCZ should not work in isolation, but with others in the Mission of God.

## **6.9 Partnership**

Networking is a vital strategy in mission that focuses on equal partnership in mission. The strategies in intercultural outreach should include the goal, the resources and the partnership (Cray 2004:115). The research argues that in the RCZ an adequate preparation model needs to be developed for both local church members and strategic partners. Strategic partners are the churches and organisations who work with us in the Mission of God. The RCZ have strategic partners from Europe who are involved in mission, such as medical doctors, lecturers and ministers who many times have clashed with the local people because of cultural differences. The RCZ should orient them in intercultural mission. We have and must have more partners from Africa. The research believes partnership must be a mutually and contextually accountable relationship. What is the aim of this partnership? It is sharing, cooperating, networking with one another, and building and empowering one another.

## **6.10 Conclusion**

Building a missional local congregation is certainly no easy task and there are no quick fixes. It is a process. The local congregations will prove themselves to be no churches at all, or even false churches, if they do not grow in faithfulness to their missional nature and calling. We are not to confuse opposition to Christianity with a rejection of the Gospel, for they are not the same thing. It is our strategies, not the Gospel message, that most of the time leads to the resistance of the people of other cultures we try to minister to.

In this chapter the researcher introduced the research's understanding of Christian mission. The research contends that God is a missional God who is the origin and author of Christian mission (Bosch 1991:390). Christian intercultural mission is rooted



in the very being and character of the Triune God. The Christian mission, as argued by the research, is to be perceived as multi-dimensional. The RCZ should work towards a mission framework that is communal and contextual.

The research argued that the RCZ must develop creative and appropriate strategies to minister to people of other cultures. The research looked at the Acts 15 Agenda and the Ephesians model as the basis for working towards an intercultural mission framework in the RCZ outreach within the Tonga community. The story of Acts 15 indicates the importance of making the Gospel relevant and appropriate to the believers. The result of Acts 15 story was a multiracial and multicultural faith community. The research argued that the Acts 15 story indicates that the Gospel should not call for uniformity, but should be flexible to allow the faith communities to construct their own local theologies.

The research argued that the RCZ should avoid imposing her theology upon the Tonga people. It should be allowing new believers to develop theologies that are meaningful and relevant to their realities. The RCZ should learn from the mistakes made by the DRC missionaries who assumed that their European theology was universal. Hendriks (2002:4) points out that the Biblical challenge is not to continue making proselytes of our denomination, but to give the new believers the freedom to use the Gospel to address their cultures.

The research argued that the RCZ theology should seek a methodology that leads to transformation and a faith-praxis. The summary of the researcher's understanding is that theology is about discerning the will of God in faith-communities that could lead to their active participation in their church and society as their response to the call of the Missional God who speaks in our context through the Bible (Hendriks 2002:8). The research argued that once the faith community has discerned something they should start practising it, which is to participate in transformative action.

The research also argued that the members of the RCZ who are involved in intercultural mission should remain faithful to the Word of God. The research is in agreement with Shaw & Van Engen (2003: xvi) who argue that in intercultural mission we are to seek to communicate the Word of God effectively by remaining faithful to the intent of Scripture. The Gospel addresses aspects of culture that contradicts with God's Word but it also supports the good aspects of culture.

The research argued that the strategies of the RCZ should be communal and contextual if she is to be relevant and meaningful to the Tonga people. They should not be alien but known to the Tonga people for the Christian message to have lasting impact. The research contended that the church is to imitate God by presenting the Gospel message with sensitivity towards the human cultural context. God interacts with human beings within their context, using their culture (Shaw & Van Engen 2003:4). In an intercultural mission the RCZ must be prepared to allow the church

that have been planted within the Tonga people to have a structure and form according to their cultural context and social structure.

The research argues that contextual inculturating must mean expressing the Gospel in ways the people comprehend and in ways that challenge them personally and communally (Hiebert 1999:382). The human culture is not to be simply affirmed and the Gospel domesticated into the idolatrous aspects of the structure of the culture. At the same time culture is not to be rejected, because it will lead the church into irrelevance to the socio-cultural context she finds herself in.

The members involved in intercultural mission should be trained in how to minister to other groups. Reed (1985:1) contends that the intercultural disciples must be trained and equipped for their work in order to serve in an effective and relevant way. The members are to be trained in community understanding, culture and language learning, social structures, cultural ethnocentrism and cultural transformation.

These factors should assist the RCZ in developing strategies for intercultural mission that are effective, relevant and faithful. The RCZ will therefore need to analyse, the rural setup of Binga and its people, in order to develop together strategies within them that will be culturally appropriate and meaningful. The last chapter of this study provides suggestions and recommendations for the RCZ mission.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### TOWARDS A COMMUNAL-CONTEXTUAL MISSIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RCZ

#### 7.1 *Introduction*

This last chapter has two sections. The first one is a summary of chapters one to five. The second section shall present recommendations to the RCZ on how she should participate in the *missio Dei*, especially in ministering to people of other cultures. The key question of this chapter is: **What is the way forward for the RCZ in relation to the Mission of God?**

According to the methodological metaphor of the cross employed by the research, the focus is on the movement from the bottom to the top of the cross, in other words: of becoming a visible sign of the Kingdom of God. The movement from the Alpha to the Omega describes the doing of transformative theology. It involves obedience and developing a strategy which should be implemented and evaluated. The research believes that what we do, does not determine what we are but reflects who we are (identity). In the process of implementing, of being involved in a missional praxis, the discernment continues and the correlation between the points of the cross continues. They inform the process while people adjust and develop. It is a praxis (reflective engagement) methodology the research is proposing.

#### 7.2 *Research summary*

In chapter one the research argued that this research is, on the one hand, a historical-descriptive literary study of the traditional missionary model used by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa in planting what is now known as the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ). On the other hand, it is engaging these traditional missionary practices of the DRC critically in an attempt to develop a contextual and communal missional movement in the RCZ so that she can effectively reach out to other cultural groups in Zimbabwe. As such, the cross-cultural outreach towards the Tonga communities living in the Binga district is used as an extended case study in developing a new missional framework for the RCZ.

This research's problem is that **the RCZ is struggling to develop appropriate approaches in her mission work that are meaningful and relevant in order to be a catalyst of transformation within the contextual realities of the Tonga people.** The research argued that the major aspect of the problem is that the RCZ is still uncritically and conservatively adopting and clinging to the traditional missionary model of the European missionaries. The main question is thus: **How is the RCZ to**

**express the missional praxis of God within context of the Tonga people appropriately, meaningfully and relevantly?**

The hypothesis is that **a contextual and communal approach in intercultural mission will transform all parties involved towards becoming a missional church.** If the Gospel is to be proclaimed in the light of the *missio Dei*, then the research claims that the RCZ is faced with the challenge of thinking and doing mission in a faithful, appropriate and relevant way.

The RCZ should inductively develop a missional framework, which guides her outreach to be both communal and contextual. From such a theoretical and Biblically orientated framework, appropriate contextual strategies and actions may develop (Guder 1998:4, Ukpong 1999:101, Hendriks 2004:20). The research argues that if the calling of the RCZ is missional then her thinking and doing will be defined and shaped by God's mission in particular contextual realities (Ndhlovu 2008:49). The research shall argue that the RCZ should work towards the contextualisation of her mission work.

The theological methodology the research is employing is Biblical, communal and contextual missiological in perspective. This research methodology is indebted to Hendriks and the NetACT team. It uses eight dimensions and employs the metaphor of the cross. It is a theological methodology that will assist the faith communities in listening to the Gospel message and understanding it within and from their own contextual realities. The research agrees with Hendriks (2002:8) when, in summarising doing theology, he says:

*Theology is about discerning the will of God in faith-communities,  
That leads to their active involvement in the church and society,  
This being their reaction to the presence of the missional Triune God who  
speaks to us through Scripture and tradition in our context and beckons to us  
from the future.*

The research in chapter two reflected on the ways in which the earlier European Christians were thinking and doing mission. The discussion focused on the key question: **Which contextual systems influenced the traditional missionary model of the DRC?**

Primarily the reason was to obtain a deeper insight into what Christian mission might mean for us today. This will enable our contemporary church to learn from previous mistakes and to develop relevant perspectives and strategies for our own missional responsibility. It is important to have knowledge of the historical perspective of Christian mission in order to assess the present perspective and then to develop a framework that is meaningful and relevant for today. Bosch (1991:181) observed that it is necessary to write about the meaning of Christian mission for our own time, keeping in mind that the present era is fundamentally different from the past era. This

chapter proved that the DRC traditional missionary model was influenced by the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

In chapter three the research assessed the planting and growth of the RCZ and her expression of mission. This chapter argued that the main aspect of the problem is that the RCZ is still uncritically and conservatively holding on to the missionary model inherited from the European missionaries. The key question with which this chapter dealt was: **How did the DRC and the RCZ express Christian mission in Zimbabwe?** The chapter looks at the identity of the DRC and RCZ and their doing Christian mission. The research argued that in an attempt to develop a framework for doing intercultural mission in the RCZ, it is extremely important to understand our identity. The research has proved that the DRC traditional missionary model has profoundly influenced the RCZ's identity, which can be related to how the RCZ behaves in her effort to participate obediently and faithfully in God's mission.

This research has proved that many aspects of the identity of the RCZ are basically still the same as the DRC traditional missionary model. The RCZ faith tradition is reformed, finding its roots in the Calvinist tradition. The confessional basis for the RCZ is the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. The RCZ also maintains the institutional model (clerical paradigm) derived from the DRC.

Another characteristic of the RCZ's identity is that she is an ethnic Church, just like the DRC. The DRC's policy of separate development in mission work led to the formation of three churches in Zimbabwe. The research argues that the church of Jesus Christ should not accept and allow the planting and development of racially or ethnically separated churches.

In chapter four the research described the Tonga ethnic group in Binga district. It focused on describing the Binga outreach as a case study to be used when discussing the problem statement.

The discussion was about the history and socio-cultural analysis of the life of the Tonga people. The analysis is vital for one to have a better understanding of this cross-cultural mission. The chapter looked at the history and culture of the Tonga people to understand their identity. The key question was: **Who are the Tonga people?**

The research proved that the life of the Tonga people is impacted on by its local and global context. The discussion proved that the Tonga people are now being influenced by the modern education and health services system. Information technology's impact on the Tonga community can be seen through the increase of modern gadgets such as the radio, cell phones and television which are slowly but surely restructuring the way people live (Ndegwah 2004:83, Giddens 2000:22).

Chapter five critically looked at the outreach of the RCZ in Binga. It is a cross-cultural mission work of the RCZ within the Tonga community. The key question was: **How did the RCZ participate in the mission of God in the Binga outreach?** The goal is to see how the RCZ can move towards contextualisation of her mission work. The research proved that the Binga outreach is a unique phenomenon in the RCZ, because it is a ministry among a non-Shona ethnicity. The research also indicated that the DRC traditional missionary model is embedded in the RCZ's thinking and doing of mission.

The sixth chapter discussed Christian mission from an intercultural perspective. The research proposes that the RCZ mission need to be intercultural, and not cross-cultural. The RCZ should work towards a communal-contextual missional framework in intercultural mission. The research argued that this framework is Biblical, integral or holistic. The key question was: **How is the Gospel to be expressed to people of a different culture?** This chapter introduced the research's understanding of Christian intercultural mission. The research contends that God is a missional God and that He is the origin and author of Christian mission (Bosch 1991:390). Christian intercultural mission is rooted in the very being and character of the Triune God. The Christian intercultural mission, as argued by the research, is to be perceived as multi-dimensional.

The research looked at the Acts 15 Agenda and the Ephesians model as the basis for working towards an intercultural missional framework in the RCZ outreach within the Tonga community (and any other ethnicity). The story of Acts 15 indicates the importance of making the Gospel relevant and appropriate to the believers. The research argued that the Acts 15 story indicates that the Gospel should not call for uniformity, but should be flexible and allow the faith communities to construct their own local theologies.

The members involved in intercultural mission should be trained in how to minister to other ethnicities. Reed (1985:1) rightly contends that the intercultural disciples must be trained and equipped for their work in order to serve in an effective and relevant way.

In order to address the problem the RCZ is facing the research proposes that the church should work towards a new framework for ministering to people of other cultures. How the RCZ thus participate in God's missional praxis becomes very critical.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

The research acknowledges that developing a framework cannot be an event, but is a process. For this process to have an impact, the involvement of all members becomes critical.

The research proposes that the RCZ work towards a communal-contextual missional framework in intercultural mission for her to be a catalyst for transformation. The research argues that building a missional church is certainly not easy and that there are no quick fixes, it is a process. The RCZ will prove herself to be no church at all, or even a false church, if she does not grow in faithfulness to her missional nature and calling. The research contends that God is a missional God and that He is the origin and author of Christian mission (Bosch 1991:390). It implies that the faith community, His body, is to be missional. The church is missional by her very nature and therefore, as argued by Bevans and Schroeder (2004:13), mission is prior to the church and constitutive of her very existence. The research believes that Christian mission is rooted in the very being and character of the Triune God.

In developing a communal-contextual missional framework in intercultural mission, the research proposes that the RCZ uses the Acts 15 Agenda model as a basis. The story of Acts 15 indicates the importance of making the Gospel effective, relevant and appropriate to the believers. The research reflects on six aspects brought out from Acts 15.

#### **7.3.1 A self-critical evaluating faith community**

According to the research the early church did a self-critical evaluation in relation to the challenges they were encountering. In Acts 15 the church looked at how they were doing mission. The research proposes that the RCZ should first do a self-critical evaluation. How can the RCZ try to rediscover the essence of her missional nature and calling? Bosch (1991:366) states that repentance has to begin with a bold recognition of the fact that the church in mission is today facing a world fundamentally different from anything she has faced before. This in itself calls for a new understanding of mission.

In this present period, the way of responding effectively to the challenges before the RCZ is to understand and undertake mission in a creative and imaginatively new manner (Bosch 1991:366). The research believes that discernment is the essence of doing theology (Hendriks 2002:8). The research argued that the RCZ theology should seek a methodology that leads to transformation and a faith-praxis.

The RCZ needs to start from where she is, and attempt to develop a holistic missional understanding in the light of the present realities. There should be a transformation in the RCZ. The research argues that she should be able to move with time. *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*; a reformed church is to keep on

reforming. The research agrees with Rutoro and Hendriks (2008:40) when they state that the implication of being reformed is that of a continuous process of reforming, of doing theology as a correlational hermeneutical activity in which the Bible is brought into dialogue with the phenomena of ever-changing contextual realities. A new thinking and practice of mission will lead to the renewal of the RCZ herself.

For the evaluation to be meaningful, the church in the story of Acts 15 had to listen to the Antioch people who were from a culturally different context.

### **7.3.2 An actively listening faith community**

Secondly the early NT church listened to the needs and challenges encountered by the new believers who were from a different culture. The church created space for the non-Jewish believers to ask questions and contribute to the agenda of the church. The church should train herself to be an active listener if relevance and effectiveness is to be a reality. Uma Agwu Onwunta (2006:266) contends that active listening opens the church up and empowers her to witness beyond her present experiences. If the RCZ is to be a missional church she should learn active listening. Onwunta (2006:266) argues that the church has to listen to God and for God. He continues to explain that without listening to God and without listening to people the RCZ may never discern what the intent of God is. It will be impossible to hear the cries and pains of the people. The research argues the RCZ to actively listen to God and people.

### **7.3.3 A Biblical faith community**

Thirdly, this church of the Acts 15 story critically evaluated herself in relation to God's intent for the new believers of other cultures. The Acts 15 discussion was reflecting on the Scriptures. The faith-communities are aware that God speaks to us through the Scriptures. In the discernment process the Bible plays a normative role (Hendriks 2004:29). The research proposes to the RCZ a framework that is Biblical in her intercultural mission within the Tonga people. The approach needed by the RCZ is one that takes seriously the Biblical intent of God and one that reflects on how the organisation might be designed to carry out that intent. The church should allow herself to be guided by the Scriptures under the Holy Spirit (Bavink 1960:199).

The Church should be willing to change and should not feel secure in preserving old traditions or be overzealously proud of conservative theology (Rutoro & Hendriks 2008:43, 47). The researcher argues that in intercultural mission we are to seek to communicate the Gospel effectively by remaining faithful to the intent of the Word of God (Shaw & Van Engen 2003: xvi). The research argues that the RCZ should embrace communal-contextual theology for members to experience transformation.



### **7.3.4 A communal faith community**

The framework should be communal. According to the research, the Acts 15 Agenda demonstrated how important the participation of the whole faith community is for an effectively addressing the needs and challenges the believers encounter. The believers from the new church in Antioch participated in the discussions of the church in the Acts 15 story. The research argues that the African way of life of *ubunthu/unhu* or communality should be reinstated in the RCZ's intercultural mission.

Edwin Zulu (2001:6, 7) states that life is recognised by most African societies as life in the community, thus to "be" or to "belong" is to participate in one's community. This means every person is responsible to work for the harmony of the community. The communal perspective of life must be treasured and affirmed as the only basis on which constructive human relationships can be built in Christian faith (Kritzinger 2002:149, 152, 156).

The research argues that the methodology the RCZ needed now is that of participatory action (De Vos 1998:406-10). It is the community of believers that is to be a primary bearer of mission; they are the operational basis from which the *missio Dei* proceeds (Bosch 1991:472). The research agrees with Hendriks (2004:29-30) who contends that faith-communities must be empowered to discern the will of God for their own contextual realities.

### **7.3.5 A contextual faith community**

The research argues that the framework should be contextual. As Guder puts it: Any effort to develop a missional church for her context needs to take seriously the church as it presently exists (1998:46). The RCZ should inductively develop a missional framework that guides her outreach to be both integral and contextual. From such a theoretical and Biblically orientated framework, appropriate contextual strategies and actions may develop (Guder 1998:4, Ukpong 1999:101, Hendriks 2004:20). The research argues that the Acts 15 story indicates that the Gospel does not call for uniformity, but allow faith communities to participate in answering their own questions.

The research argues that the question of the relationship between the Gospel and culture will always face the RCZ as she participates in the mission of God. In any culture worldwide, good and bad customs and practices are present. How is the RCZ to address the issue of retention and rejection of issues in the Tonga people's cultural systems? The research argues that through communal dialogue the RCZ and the Tonga believers should be guided by the Word of God in deciding which customs and practices to retain and which to leave. The newly planted church is usually better placed to judge in such issues. The Tonga believers are to seek to have its own form of a church in line with their context (Bavink 1960:177, 178). The RCZ should not be inflexible in working with the Tonga faith community.

Our theologising should not be fragmented but integrated to be relevant for the people among whom we live and minister to as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is important to understand that the African worldview sees all in this world from a holistic perspective (Moyo 1996:20). The Tonga people should be given space to participate in constructing their local theologies. In intercultural mission the RCZ must be prepared to allow the church planted within the Tonga people to be structured and formed according to their cultural context.

The research argues that contextual inculturating must mean expressing the Gospel in ways the people comprehend and in ways that challenge them personally and communally (Hiebert 1999:382). The research agrees with Hendriks (2002:4) who points out that the Biblical challenge is not to continue making proselytes of our own denominational traditions, but to give the new believers the freedom to use the Gospel to address their cultures.

### **7.3.6 A multi-dimensional mission**

The Christian intercultural mission, as argued by the research, is to be perceived as multi-dimensional. The RCZ is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to other ethnicities in a holistic way. She should offer herself to assist the entrance of the Tonga people who are invited into the Kingdom and to travel with them as co-pilgrims. Guder (1998:107) says that to preach the divine Kingdom is to add the signature of Jesus, to refrain from preaching leaves all else anonymous, ambiguous, and subject to misreading of the situation. The research suggests that the RCZ should work on coming up with mission policies that would encourage the local congregation to participate in an intercultural mission.

The RCZ as a faith community participating in the Mission of God needs to be multicultural, for God's people are formed in a distinctive way in each context, such as the context of the Tonga people. Through displacement, the former sense of identity enjoyed by the Tonga people was deeply shaken (Tremmel 1994:60). The Tonga people's marginalized plight is reflected in nearly every dimension of life. The RCZ can play an important role to help the Tonga to rediscover the important values they appear to have lost.

The research argues that the responses of the RCZ should bring wholeness and dignity to the Tonga community. The RCZ's evangelising messages should be contextual and integral, being relevant and appropriate to the needs of the Tonga people. One feature in Jesus' preaching is that His Kingdom ministry launched an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestation. Healing the sick, exorcism, restoring broken relationships and bringing forgiveness of sin were signs of God's Kingdom in Jesus ministry. This should be the same in the RCZ, as these signs will provide a taste for

the future in the Kingdom of God to the Tonga people, under the rule and authority of Christ.

### **7.3.7 Practical guidelines to keep in mind**

This evangelising ministry should have its strengths in the local congregation. The RCZ needs to rediscover the priesthood of all believers, moving away from ministry, as the monopoly of ordained men, to the ministry as the responsibility of every member of the church. The RCZ must transform from a situation where the minister does almost everything, to an understanding of mission, where the body of believers become involved in God's Kingdom.

The congregation area covered by one minister is too large and the church should have policies that encourage manageable areas with a radius of not more than 50km. Thus there is a need to provide more resources for the training of ministers, because currently only a small number is trained.

The elders and deacons leading most of preaching posts in Binga need to be empowered. They should be trained using programmes such as TEE. In the intercultural mission of the RCZ, the Tonga people are to be equipped. Those who want to become citizens of God's Kingdom will know how to live under the kingship of Christ through teaching. They are to be taught from the very beginning to be missional believers in the context of the priesthood of all believers. The members involved in intercultural mission should be trained in how to minister to other ethnicities. Reed (1985:1) rightly contends that the intercultural disciples must be trained and equipped for their work in order to serve in an effective and relevant way. The members are to be trained in community understanding, culture and language learning, social structures, cultural ethnocentrism and cultural transformation.

A dependency syndrome still exists in the RCZ. The church still requests for assistance from the DRC of South Africa and the Netherlands. The funds are used for her projects like church building, purchase of motorcycles and for training ministers. Whilst we need each other as the Body of Christ worldwide, we are not to see it as a 'must' for the European churches to do what we are able to do for ourselves. Thus the researcher argues that there is a need for a Biblical practice of stewardship to be taught in the RCZ. If she is not careful the RCZ might transfer this dependency spirit on to the Tonga people.

The RCZ has to be faithful to her calling to the Tonga people. She is to exhibit the signs of the Kingdom by her deeds of mercy, as was the heartbeat of Jesus' action. Jesus had a compassionate response to human needs (Mk 1:38-42). He was both God and man. The RCZ is to be both spiritual and physical, and is to understand the social forces in the Tonga people. The cultural context frames the organisational setting in which the missional church must function, but the context itself does not

define the mission and message of God's people (Guder 1998:76). In the midst of plenty, the Tonga people are tired and frustrated by the hardships of their impoverished lives. Though Christian values call for an ongoing response of compassion and charity to the Tonga community, years of relief and handouts, besides being inadequate, have encouraged dependence and even laziness.

### **7.3.7.1 Networking**

In the RCZ's effort to bring total transformation to the Tonga people, she must network with other organisations in the area, such as the Binga Development Association, Zimbabwe Farmers Union, Kulima Mbobumi Training Centre, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Methodists and others groups to sensitize the people to be responsible citizens. This can be done through training them in leadership, project management, civic education, resource management and better farming methods. She can also provide the community with farming implements and items such as fertilizers, seed maize or sorghum, and so forth.

The RCZ is to stand up with and for the Tonga people when calling on the government to provide drinking and irrigation water. Because of the low water table in many areas in Binga, sinking boreholes is not viable. To construct small dams and draw water from the Zambezi River is the only alternative. The Tonga people must not be overlooked in the planned massive Zambezi Water Project, which is intended to supply water to Bulawayo. The Tonga people need to play a role in solving problems in their community. According to Tremmel (1994:58) the Tonga people believe that local government leaders look down on them and assume that they know nothing, that they are not intelligent enough to solve problems. Thus the RCZ, in partnership with others, need to address and challenge the authorities about these matters.

The Tonga should benefit from the money generated by tourism. Tourism at present available to the Tonga can be best characterised as exploitative tourism. Their education (building of schools, furniture, books and scholarships) and health facilities must benefit from their rich wildlife and Lake Kariba fishing industries.

The RCZ can help to improve the education of their children by administering carefully monitored scholarship programmes. She can also help them to train as teachers at Morgenster Teachers College. The government also has a rural electrification programme, which is not benefitting the Tonga people. Thus the church is to speak out.

### **7.3.7.2 Prophetic witness and social responsibilities**

We are having a land problem in Zimbabwe. However, the RCZ does not comment on it. The RCZ is to come out of her silent position and advocate a non-violent, sustainable land distribution in Zimbabwe (Matthew 26:52). The church is to stand up

and condemn the political violence and killings without fear of the perpetrators, and encourage communal dialogue among Zimbabweans. The concept of equitable distribution of resources in Zimbabwe should be the position encouraged. Sharing is an important aspect of Christian faith (Acts 2: 44-45). The Biblical worldview of economic justice is built on each person receiving what he needs, so that the right relationships are restored or maintained (Guder 1998:121).

In prophetic witness the RCZ must take care for the creation and formulate a sound ecological policy. There are existing problems of deforestation, soil erosion, pollution and other ecological problems. There is need for the RCZ in partnership with others to teach people the importance of harmony between humankind and the environment. The RCZ is to teach the society to fish without exhausting the fish population. Even more important is to teach Zimbabweans not to pollute the rivers.

The socio-economic conditions within the Tonga area breed social ills such as alcoholism, jealousy, stealing, witchcraft practices, prostitution and a poor self-image. One of the problems the church needs to address is the issue of witchcraft practices and the fear of the dead. The practice is related to all kinds of sickness in the community. Some wrongly believe HIV/AIDS is caused by witchcraft and angry ancestors.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a national crisis. According to the government there are at least 2500 Aids-related deaths per week. In 2001 the country had a 0% population growth. The RCZ should be involved in a HIV/AIDS awareness campaign and home-based care programmes. The church's policy statement declares that sex should be within a marriage. Thus the use of condoms outside marriage promotes promiscuity. Witchcraft remains a very deep-seated and harmful practice within the Tonga community and should be addressed by confronting it with the Gospel.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ can serve as a valuable means to reflect on traditional practices such as witchcraft, fear of the dead and magic, which foster darkness and evil, rather than light and hope. The RCZ will be faithful to her missional calling in being and doing Jesus' mission. Jesus' healing ministry involves casting out of demons. Likewise, in our time, healing is one of the characteristics of the missional church (Guder 1998:134). The RCZ is sceptical of faith healing, a tradition she inherited from the DRC. Such healing is not always observable, repeatable, and verifiable by scientific methods (Guder 1998:134). The RCZ is to revisit this theology and tradition.

The research argues that one effective way to counter magical powers in the RCZ's context, is anointing with oil and laying on of hands (Mark 6:13, Jas 5:14). Because of tradition this viable Christian custom is put aside. This is one of the reasons why people leave the RCZ and join AIC and Pentecostal churches which are more relevant in their culture. People need to experience the demonstration of God's

power and be delivered from demons. The RCZ is to do mission acknowledging the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were bestowed upon the church of God (1 Corinthians 12:6-7, 27).

The Tonga people need to experience deliverance from witchcraft and of their fear of the spirits of the dead through teaching and exorcism. The research argues that although healing is good, it is not the ultimate goal in Christian faith. There is need for cultural sensitivity, which means we must listen to and be willing to learn from the Tonga culture's understanding of sickness and health (Saayman 1992:40). This is to reflect an active intercultural dialogue that transforms both the Tonga people and the RCZ. The research proposes the development of a communal-contextual missional framework in the healing ministry of the RCZ.

As a missional church, RCZ's mission should bring wholeness to humanity and all the dimensions of mission are to be present in our intercultural mission. Mission is to be spiritual and physical in unity.

### **7.3.7.3 On unity and ecumenism**

Oneness is important in the mission of the church. As the sent people, the church is a community of the covenant, living in love of God, which makes us one through the Holy Spirit. God is a community God, thus the RCZ must be ecumenical. The unity is to be in the local congregation, between all believers and leaders. The local congregation is to unite with other congregations to have a national perspective of unity, not a tribal or regionalistic unity.

The RCZ is to work in partnership not only with those of the Reformed family, but all denominations. The RCZ is also to work together with para-church organisations such as Scripture Union, Life Ministry, African Enterprise, Dorothea Mission, Bible League and others. They should be complementing each other and not compete, therefore need to do networking. The RCZ must also make an active and deliberate effort to unite with other churches that may be in favour of union, such as the DRC Zimbabwe and the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa (CCAP). The RCZ's attitude towards other languages and cultural differences has to change to accommodate others. The minority ethnicities should be given space, such as having two services, in Chewa and Shona.

The RCZ can be missional if her being in the world is at the same time being different from the world. As the churches stand now, we are like the world, being individualistic not communal, self-centred not theocentric. This has led to a split in the church of God, who is supposed to be a sign to the world of God's Kingdom. The RCZ is to teach togetherness, and not the individualism of Europe. The Tonga people's understanding of life was that of community commitment.

The RCZ is to assist the Tonga to restore the spirit of interdependence and oneness. There is a Tonga proverb; *Simwenda alike kakamulya kalonga* meaning: “The one who walks alone by the river gets eaten”. The Shona proverb with the same notion says; *Chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda*. The Tonga people appreciate the importance of walking with another for companionship and protection. The Bible says that two are better than one because they have a reward for their labour (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12). As the RCZ work together with the Tonga people, the donor and dependency syndrome must not be allowed to develop, but we are to work as equals and are to enrich each other mutually.

#### **7.3.7.4 On worshipping**

The other important aspect the RCZ is to revisit is the relevance of the European forms of worship, which are boring and dull to most Zimbabweans. The circumstances and challenges faced by churches in Africa are fundamentally different from those of the era in which confessions and structures were prepared in Europe. It is important for the RCZ to contextualise her liturgy to be flexible and allow the Zimbabweans to freely express themselves. The research argues that in Africa it is how one feels, therefore more emotional, and not in a more rational way. “We are, therefore I am,” is African, not “I think, therefore I am” which is European. In Africa religion is celebrated (emotional) and in Europe it is celebrated (reason). Parrinder (1954:143) says that religion is danced out rather than thought out. Thus in praying a person should be allowed to express the condition of heart.

A decision for Christ and his way of life does not imply the rejection of an African culture, but a culture in submission to Christ as King. The missionaries demonised continuous renewal and purification of any African instruments. The RCZ is to give space for the Tonga people to use their trumpets, drums and clapping of hands which they use in their festivals, with joy and dancing (Psalm 150:1-6). The Synod of 1975 allowed the use of instruments during worship services (Synod Minutes, 1975:99/28). But we still have a remnant of the traditional missionary era that makes it seem unreformed to use African instruments. The research argues that a transformative mission approach includes contextualisation of the liturgy in the RCZ.

### **7.4 Conclusion**

The RCZ is called by the missional God to be a witness of the Gospel in the world. This will only be the case if we submit ourselves to Christ as Lord and the Holy Spirit. The church’s mission by the grace of God should transcend the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It should unite us in seeking the Kingdom of God (Van der Merwe 1982: viii). In ministering to other ethnicities the RCZ should be intercultural. The church is always faced with new challenges.

Thus, the RCZ needs to translate the truth of the Gospel as good news for the society to which she is sent. It is to be contextual. There is a need to rethink our

thinking and doing of mission today. The beginning and foundation of the RCZ should be the Kingdom of God. She needs to be an eschatological community of God's Kingdom, which is to be her goal (Guder 1998:86). Thus the RCZ is to hear the Gospel afresh. An inadequate understanding of mission leads to an unsatisfactory missional practice.

The ecclesiocentric understanding of mission in the RCZ is to be transformed to become a theocentric reconceptualisation of Christian mission. She is to move away from being a church with a mission to become a missional church. The Mission of God in the RCZ calls for the participation of all believers. It is to be communal. It is the community of believers that is to be the primary bearers of mission; they are the operational basis from which the *missio Dei* proceeds (Bosch 1991:472).

“How then shall they call on him in who they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except if they are sent? So faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God” (Romans 10:14-15, 17). In our being the church, the world sees God's Kingdom and by our doing justice, the world tastes its gracious effect and by our call to all on the earth to receive and acknowledge, that rule begs to be expressed. Jesus who is our Saviour and Lord said, “As the Father sent me, I send you” (John 17:18, 20:28).



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