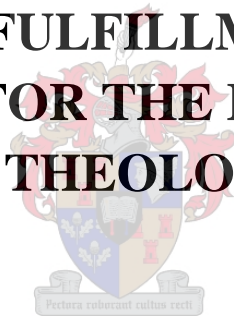


**A CHURCH HISTORICAL ENQUIRY  
REGARDING GROWTH OF MEMBERSHIP IN  
THE CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA,  
PRESBYTERIAN – HARARE SYNOD  
(1912 – 2012)**

**BY**

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26, Mutare 18, Highfield 60, Kuwadzana 33, Harare 31, Mufakose 60 and Norton 21. In total, there were 320 members of the Men's Guild in Harare Presbytery as for the year 2006. In 2007 the membership remained 320. In 2008, the membership boosted up to three hundred and eighty-385. It went up by 65.

According to the Gweru Presbytery minutes (2011:5), there were 280 members of the Men's Guild in the entire Presbytery in 2011. Of these members, 211 were active while 69 needed encouragement. In the previous year there were 279 members, of which 255 were active while 24 were regarded as weak.

As far as Harare Presbytery is concerned, there were 299 members of the Men's Guild in the entire Presbytery in 2011. Of these members, 172 were active while 138 were weak. In the previous year there were 360 members and the membership therefore dwindled by 61 in the year 2010 (Harare Presbytery Minutes, 2011:8).

### **3.4 Youth Groups in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod**

According to the Harare Presbytery minutes (1996:7) there were 39 groups of youth in the entire presbytery. The total number of youths in the Presbytery was 1, 071 as compared to 1,013 the previous year. Thus, the membership increased by 58. Among these youths, 36 had an opportunity to attend the leadership courses at Synod level. (Harare Presbytery minutes, 1996:7; the original reads: *Chinyamata: Chaka chino magulu achinyamata alipo 39. Achinyamata onse alipo 1, 071 chaka chino, chaka chatha analipo 1, 013. Werengo lakwera ndi 58. Amene anapita ku msonkhano wa utsogoleri 36. Chaka chatha analipo 57 ndipo werengo latsika ndi 21.*)

According to the Harare Presbytery Minutes (1997:5), the youth groups in Harare Presbytery in 1997 were 37 as compared to 39 the previous year. The total number of the youths in the Presbytery was 835 in the year 1997 as compared to 1, 071 the previous year. The membership dwindled by 236, raising concern to the Presbytery (Harare Presbytery Minutes, 1997:5; the original read: *Gulu la Chinyamata: Chaka chino magulu achinyamata alipo 37, chaka chatha analipo 39. Werengo latsika ndi 2. Achinyamata onse alipo 835, chaka chatha analipo 1, 071 ndipo werengo latsika ndi 236. Presbyterio ikumva chisoni chifukwa cha kutsika kwa werengo motere, ndipo ifulumiza achinyamata achite ntchito yamakopedwe.*)

In 1999, the total number of youths in Gweru Presbytery was 514 as compared to 613 in the previous year. The membership declined by 99 (Gweru Presbytery Minutes 1999:6; the original reads: *Lipoti la Bungwe la Chinyamata: Presbyterio ikondwera kuti ku mipingo kuli magulu a chinyamata koma idandaulira Mpingo wa Lobengula, Sizinda ndi Chegutu kuti magulu achinyamata aonjezedwe. Chaka chino achinyamata onse mumpingo alipo 514, chaka chatha analipo 613, werengo latsika ndi 99. Presbyterio imva chisoni chifukwa cha kutsika kwa werengoli. Presbyterio ipangira mipingo kuti ionetsetse kuti magulu achinyamata alipo ndiponso kuti oyang'anira azipezeka pa zochita zawo.*)

The following year, saw the total number of youth standing at 635 in comparison with 514 the previous year. The total number of youth in the year 2000, therefore, increased by 121.

According to the Harare Presbytery minutes (1999:11) the total number of youth groups in Harare Presbytery in the year 1999 was 42 compared to 35 from the previous year. The number of groups therefore increased by seven. The total number of youths in the same year was 702 as compared to 697 the previous year. The membership therefore, increased by five (Harare Presbytery Minutes, 1999:11; the original reads: *Magulu aChinyamata: Magulu achinyamata alipo 42 chaka chino. Chaka chatha analipo 35. Werengo lakwera ndi 7.*

*Presbyterio iyamikira chifukwa cha kukwera kwa werengoli ndipo ntchito ya kuyendera achinyamata ipitirize. Achinyamata alipo 702 chaka chino, chaka chatha analipo 697, werengo lakwera ndi 5. Presbyterio iyamikira chifukwa achinyamata akuchita zosiyanasiyana ku mipingo monga mapemphero ndipo amadziwitsidwa malamulo a Sinodi okhudza chinyamata).*

In 2000, the total number of youth groups in Harare Presbytery was 44 whereas in the previous year there were 42 groups. The number of groups therefore, increased by two. The minute did not further indicate how many youths were there in the Presbytery. According to Gweru Presbytery Minute (2000:5), there were 27 youth groups in the Presbytery and the total number of membership was 635. In the previous year, they were 514. There was thus quite an increase in membership (Gweru Presbytery Minutes, 2000:5; the original reads: *Mu Presbyterio ino muli maguru 27 chaka chino. Achinyamata onse chaka chino alipo 635. Chaka chatha analipo 514 ndipo werengo lakwera ndi 121. Presbyterio iyamikira chifukwa cha kukwera kwa werengoli*).

According to the Harare Presbytery Minutes (2003:5) there were no tangible reports on the statistics of youth groups and this was not received well with the Presbytery. As a result, the Presbytery strongly urged all congregations to show seriousness on this and that as from the following year onwards, the reports should be heard whenever the Presbytery meets (Harare Presbytery Minutes, 2003:5; the original reads: *Lipoti la Chinyamata: Presbyterio ipangira kuti mulipoti la chaka cha mawa mukhale chiwerengero “statistics” za achinyamata ndi maphunziro ophunzitsidwa. Likhale lakuya*).

According to the Harare Presbytery Minutes (2005:5), the total number of youth groups in Harare Presbytery in 2005 was 36. All the youths totalled 716 in number (Harare Presbytery Minutes, 2005: 5; the original reads: *Magulu a Chinyamata mumipingo yonse alipo 36*).

*Presbyterio iyamikira kuti maguluwo alipo ndithu ndipo yaona kuti achinyamatawo onse alipo 716 mumipingo yonse).*

From the above records, the statistics on youths in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian- Harare Synod stands around 2000. Both Presbyteries (Harare and Gweru) express concern whenever the membership on youths declined.

As mentioned earlier in the Introduction to this study, chapters three and four form the heart of the thesis. Chapter three offers an analysis of the growth of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare **Synod**. The chapter dwells much on the statistics of the full communicants as well as the catechumen members of the denomination in question. As such, it aims to reveal whether the membership of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is growing, stable or declining.

In summary, this chapter reveals that the membership of the full communicants had hardly reached 9, 000 since the establishment of the Church. The highest statistics on membership so far were recorded and achieved in the year 1977 (8, 555 members). The lowest were in 1995 whereby 1, 981 **confessing members of the church** were recorded.

In this chapter I referred to the church records indicating some statistics regarding membership and participation. This information indicates, among other things, generally speaking, that there was over the years a movement of slight but not drastic growth. Moreover, at certain stages there was also a decline in membership which raised concerns within the church. How are we to interpret these developments? To this I turn in the next chapter. The following chapter is related to Chapter Three in that it seeks to identify possible causes as to why the statistics on membership in this chapter indicate growth, stability or decline as the case might be, also in conversation with reasons put forward at official

meetings of the church. Indeed, there are various factors affecting the growth of membership in the C.C.A.P –Harare Synod and to these I now turn.

## **CHAPTER 4: FACTORS AFFECTING GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP IN THE C.C.A.P HARARE SYNOD?**

One may ask: what are the reasons for the Church to grow slightly in membership, but not drastically? According to the Harare Synod minutes (1999:13), several factors contributed to the decrease in membership and these include (as already mentioned): retrenchments of workers in industries, factories, companies, mines and farms; deaths among members due to the deadly HIV and AIDS epidemic; unreliable statistics; lack of the revival meetings; shortages of evangelists as well as lack of vision by the synod (Harare Synod Minutes, 1999:13; the original reads: *Nkhawa Ya Sinodi Chifukwa Cha Kuchepa Kwa Akristu: Sinodi ili ndi nkhawa chifukwa cha kuchepa kwa akristu, ndipo yaona kuti gwelo lake ndi ili:*

(a) *Chigumula pa ntchito*

(b) *Imfa*

(c) *Kusakhulupirika kwa mipingo*

(d) *Kuchepa kwa zitsitsimutso*

(e) *Kuchepa kwa antchito*

(f) *Kusoweka kwa masomphenya a Sinodi).*

In addition to these reasons identified by the Synod, the researcher would also like to include as possible factors affecting the growth of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod the Synod's confinement to towns, mines and farms, the language barrier and inter-racial marriages as contributing. Before these factors are discussed in detail, it should first be mentioned that the 1999 Harare Synod in light of this deterioration of membership resolved that congregations should always give true and accurate records on membership; congregations should be obliged to reaching out to members in rural areas;



congregations should make use of all the local languages in Zimbabwe; evangelist programmes should be put on the Church calendar once per month and must be strictly adhered to and more evangelists should be recruited to increase the workforce (Harare Synod Minutes, 1999:13; the original minutes read:

*Upangiri: Sinodi inapangira kuti:*

*(a) Mipingo ipereke welengo lenileni la akristu*

*(b) Mipingo ilondole akristu amene anapita ku midzi*

*(c) Mipingo igwiritse ntchito zilankhulidwe zonse za m'dziko lino la Zimbabwe.*

*(d) Pokonza Kalendala wa 2000, papatulidwe masiku akufalitsa (outreach) kamodzi pa mwezi kuti ziwalo zampingo zizituluka kukafalitsa uthenga wabwino.*

*(e) Pawonjezedwe antchito komanso amene ali pa contract apitirire kutumikira).*

#### **4.1 Retrenchments (*Zigumula pa ntchito*)**

According to the Harare Synod minutes (1999:13), retrenchments (*Zigumula mu ntchito*) greatly contributed to the decline of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod. It is indeed the case that during the 1990s, many of the organizations in Zimbabwe went through restructuring processes to ensure they remain afloat in the economically difficult environment in the country. Company restructuring had become a favourable option in order to cut down on costs and improve efficiency.

The process is accomplished through downsizing, re-engineering, retrenchments, mergers and acquisitions. It often includes mass lay-offs as was the case with the situation in Zimbabwe.

Thousands of workers in industries, factories, the mining and farming sectors thus, lost jobs in this way. As a result, the Church was affected, leading to the decline of the membership.

#### **4.2 Deaths (*Imfa pakati pa akristu ndi aklasi*)**

Deaths (*Imfa pakati pa akristu ndi aklasi mu mpingo*) was also identified by the Synod of 1999 as one of the factors affecting the growth of membership in the denomination. The impact of HIV and AIDS epidemic in Zimbabwe has been severe since the 1990s. With around 14% of the population living with HIV, Zimbabwe is one of the countries in the world affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemics.

In a country that has had a tense political and social climate over the last few decades, it has been difficult to respond to the crisis. The country has had to confront a number of severe crises in the past few years, including an unprecedented rise in inflation (in January 2008 it reached 100,000 %), a severe cholera epidemic, high rates of unemployment, political violence and a near –total collapse of the public health system. However, regarding the HIV and AIDS, the country is currently seeing some progress and improvements. Zimbabwe is one of the few countries where incidence has declined by more than 25 % between 2001 and 2009. This is partially due to efforts among the population to prevent the spread of HIV, some of which have been remarkable in the context of such immense challenges: Between 2002 and 2006, the population is estimated to have decreased by four million people. The country is now seeing an annual growth rate of 2.2 %. In 2006, it was reported that infant mortality had doubled since 1990. Deaths have since fallen from 50 per 1000 births in 2006 to under 30 in July 2011. By 2009, there were one million children living in Zimbabwe who had been orphaned as a result of parents dying from AIDS. In this way, the Church has been greatly affected.

### 4.3 Unreliable statistics

In the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod, submitting Central Funds to the Synod on monthly basis is one of the greatest obligations of the Congregations. These congregational quotas are determined by the membership of the Congregation. In other words, the quota of a congregation is calculated in accordance with the number of **confessing members of the church**. This research noted the Synod's suspicion that there is sometimes insincerity and deceit on the part of the congregations with regard to the issue of membership (1999 Synod Minutes: 13).

In an attempt to reduce the amount they have to pay to the Central Fund, congregations gave false figures on membership. In this way, the actual growth in membership in the Church has been greatly affected as smaller, false figures are given about congregations' membership.

Congregations which do not meet this obligation of submitting Central Funds to the Synod risk having no authority (*"kusowa ulamuliro"*) either at Presbytery or Synod meetings. The Congregations may also risk losing the privileges to make visits either locally or abroad as well as to host visitors. If this becomes severe, the congregation might risk losing her status as congregation and return to a branch or prayer house of another congregation. Rusape is a good example. Stewardship campaigns must be carried out by the Synod, Presbytery or congregations to raise awareness on the need and importance of giving among **confessing members of the church**. Unless **confessing members of the church** realize the importance of giving, this problem will persist.

The Central Fund is very vital to the well-being of the Synod. It is through this fund that the Synod workers who do not have Congregations are paid their salaries. These employees include the General Secretary of the Synod, the evangelist, the youth evangelist, the Synod book-keeper and the Synod **messenger**. Pension schemes, the National Social Security

Authority (NSSA) and the medical aid schemes are all paid from the Central Fund. Above all, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) bills as well as the telephone bills and the City Council rates are all paid from these congregational quotas.

The executive and synod meetings are run by the Central Fund as well as the monthly responsibility allowances for the Moderamen and their travel expenses local and abroad. The Central Fund also plays an important role in meeting the travelling costs for the Presbytery committee meetings as well as when the committee is visiting and auditing Congregations. The local travels of the evangelists who have no Congregations are also paid by these quotas. The Synod is obliged to make some regular contributions/subscriptions to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (Z.C.C.), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (E.F.Z.), and Bible Society in Zimbabwe (B.S.Z.), the Head of Denominations (H.O.D.) and the General Assembly in Malawi. She is affiliated to all these organizations.

Currently, most Congregations in the Synod are struggling financially. A few Congregations are fulfilling their obligations and these include Harare, Chinhoyi, Zengeza, Mufakose and Hwange. The rest of the Congregations are really struggling.

For the sake of transparency, congregations should give true statistics so as to avoid speculation and guessing. In addition, insincere and false statistics on membership consequently give negative or wrong results on the trends in growth of membership. In other words, it defeats the whole purpose of the inquiry. In assessing church growth in the C.C.A.P – Harare Synod, this aspect should be taken into account as well. Nevertheless amidst the vulnerability of the process of interpreting the church records they still provide important information to consider and reflect upon.

#### **4.4 Lack of the Revival meetings (*Kuchepa kwa zitsitsimutso mu Sinodi*)**

According to the Harare Synod minutes (1999:13), one of the factors affecting the growth of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is the lack of revival meetings in the Synod (*Kusoweka kwa zitsitsimutso mu Sinodi*). Revival meetings are the evangelization of the lost and the spiritual renewal for people who are already members in the Church. As such, revival meetings are vital in that it is through these meetings that Church members are inspired and renewed while the new converts are gained. The Harare Synod noted with deep concern lack of these revival meetings in congregations and presbyteries, leading to the deterioration of membership in the denomination.

#### **4.5 Shortages of evangelists**

In Reformed Christian ministry, ministers of the Word and Sacraments, evangelists, the ruling elders and deacons play a vital role to keep the Church active. The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is greatly affected by shortages of evangelists (1999 Synod Minutes: 13; *the original reads: **Kuchepa kwa antchito komanso kufunikira kwa kuwonjezedwa kwa antchito ndi kupitiriza ntchito kwa iwo amene ali pa contract.***

The root cause of the shortages of evangelists is greatly attributed to the cessation of the evangelists' intake and training in 1990's. As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, during 1970's there were more than one hundred and fifty evangelists serving in the Synod (Daneel, 1982:45). The intake and training of these evangelists took place at Dorothea Mission in Kambuzuma Township, Harare. Before Dorothea Mission opened doors to the training of the evangelists, the Harare Synod used to send her trainees to Chididi Bible School/Institution in

Malawi. Upon completion of training, the evangelists were deployed in various congregations of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod.

After 1962, Dorothea Mission opened its doors to the training of the evangelists. The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian –Harare Synod sent her first stream of trainees from 1966 to 1967. At first, the duration of training was six months as the evangelists were in great demand in the farming communities where most of these evangelists were deployed. After the Synod 1973, the duration was changed to one year. The local ministers of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Harare and Highfield congregations) assisted with the lectures and teaching sessions at Dorothea Mission (Daneel, 1982:43). In this way, Rev. M.S. Daneel, Rev A.J. Viljoen, Rev J.C. Juma and other local ministers were involved in the teaching and training of the evangelists at Dorothea Mission.

From 1963 to 1982 more than sixty evangelists attained their training at this institution. Rodrick Masache became one of the pioneer evangelists in the Synod. He served from 1925 to 1967. Johannes Liwonde served fifteen years from 1930 to 1945. Salatiel Gwazanga joined the ministry in 1932 and served until 1945 when he got retired. Richard Enesi started his ministry in 1933 and retired in 1966. The three evangelists who joined the Synod in 1934 were Joel Nkhani, Peter Chunda and Yobe Mpukuso. Joel Nkhani served for five years and resigned in 1939. Peter Chunda on the other hand, served for 23 years before his retirement in 1957. As for Yobe Mpukuso, having joined the Synod in 1934, he resigned in 1950 after serving for 16 years (Daneel, 1982:45).

Enos Makewana and Genesis Chiwambala started their ministry in 1935. Makewana left in 1952 to train as a minister and much about him has been already said in Chapter Two of this thesis. Chiwambala served for 37 years and resigned in 1972. In 1936, the three evangelists namely Laban Kwenda, Aaron Chilinda and Jeremiah Phiri joined the Synod. Laban

Kwenda served for 23 years, Aaron Chilinda for five years while Jeremiah Phiri served for four years. The list **is** long as the recruitment continued until late 80's when the Synod ceased training evangelists. According to Daneel (1982:45) from 1915 to 1982 the Synod was served by more than one hundred and fifty evangelists as mentioned earlier. After the closure of the Dorothea Mission as a training Institution for the evangelists, the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod started sending her trainees to Rusitu Bible Institution in Chimanimani (Manicaland). Some of the evangelists were also trained at the now defunct Chinhoyi Evangelical Bible College in Chinhoyi.

Towards 1990s, the Synod resolved to phase out the training program of evangelists. Since then, the number of the evangelists serving in the Synod started dwindling gradually. Currently, there are less than ten evangelists serving in the Synod. This has been attributed to the retirement, resignation, expulsion/dismissal and death of evangelists in the Synod. Above all, this acute shortage of evangelists has been caused by the cessation of the intake and training of evangelists.

The current evangelists are Lovemore John (the youth evangelist), Hosea Z. Ching'oma (the evangelism evangelist), Kaundani K.Phiri (the Karoi evangelist), Pascal Kholowa Banda (the Highfield evangelist), Sniff Windson Mbondo Phiri (the Zengeza evangelist), Gift Phiri (the Lobengula evangelist), F. Malemia (the Rusape evangelist) and F. Nota (the Bulawayo evangelist) and Mrs Mwale (the Zvishavane evangelist).

According to the Harare Synod minutes (1999:13) the shortages of evangelists contributed enormously to the decline of the membership. Most of the congregations which used to have more than seven evangelists have one or no evangelists at all. This renders a big hindrance to the growth in membership in the the Synod.

With the remaining few evangelists serving in the Synod, the workload becomes a burden to cope with, reflecting the biblical saying: The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few (Luke 10:2). The Synod is now feeling the pinch of the shortage of the evangelists and deeply regrets her decision to phase out the evangelists programme. A decision has been made to resume training, and as a result, she has embarked on a fast track evangelist's recruitment program on voluntary basis. It is a six months training comprising of theory, the first three months and basic skills acquiring, the second three months. Through this program, quite a considerable number of evangelists have been trained to increase the small number of the remaining evangelists in the Synod. So far, five evangelists have been deployed through this programme in Gweru Presbytery that is in Bulawayo, Lobengula, Zvishavane, Chegutu and Kadoma. Two are serving in Harare Presbytery (Highfield and Marondera Congregations). The ones who are serving in Kadoma are the Evangelists Katundu and Kungade. In Chegutu there is Evangelist Kamange while the Evangelist Phiri is in Lobengula. Evangelist Mwale is serving in Zvishavane, Gweru congregation whilst Evangelist Marupi is serving in Marondera. In Highfield there are two evangelists of this nature namely Kashoti and Kazamento. The program is still continuing.

In an effort to address this situation of evangelists shortages, the Synod meeting of 1999 unanimously agreed to retain the much needed services of the few remaining evangelists that they may lose through retirements or resignations **by** allowing them to be appointed on contract basis so as to prolong their services in the Synod (Harare Synod Minutes, 1999:13; the original read: *Pawonjezedwe antchito komanso amene ali pa contract apitirize kutumikira*).

Each of the congregations in the entire Synod used to have at least three or more evangelists to help the congregational minister carry out his ministry effectively and efficiently. The Chinhoyi Congregation for instance, used to have more than twelve evangelists as the











subsistence oriented way of life and either to market their produce or to take up paid employment.

The Land Apportionment act divided the land into what was defined as European (Crown) and African Land. The “Crown” land accounted for about 50% of the total land area and was granted to White farmers in the form of freeholds while the “Native Reserves” only represented 22% of the total area. Africans were prohibited to make any claims to “Crown” lands although the area which had been allocated them was recognized as being too small for the approximately one million strong populations given the extensive fallow farming systems traditionally used.

The Land Act in 1983 changed the Tribal Trust Lands into Communal Lands. Subsistence farming and small scale commercial farming is the principle economic activities in communal lands. Mangwende Tribal Trust Land in Mashonaland East Province and Omay Tribal Trust Land in Mashonaland West Province are examples of the native reserves. As most of the Church members are married to the indigenous (the Shonas and the Ndebeles), upon retirement from work, the families prefer living in Tribal Trust Lands (reserves) permanently rather than going back to Malawi, Mozambique or Zambia whatever the case may be. In this way, most of our Church members are now permanently based in the rural/communal areas where there is no Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (Daneel, 1982:10).

Most of these immigrants have no hope or thoughts whatsoever of returning to their mother land (Malawi, Mozambique or Zambia). Not only are those married to the natives who after retirement settle in the rural areas, the Chewa couples also choose to live in the settlements in the Tribal Trust Lands upon or before retirement. As a result therefore, there is great need for the Church to cross over to the communal lands, taking care of these scattered members (1999 Harare Synod Minutes: 13).

The Church is experiencing a shift as most of the members are now typically settled in the reserves. It is therefore, the task of the Church to carry out some outreach campaigns to reach everyone. In Highfield Congregation, **confessing members of the church** are scattered in Dzumbunu/Mhondoro Reserves in Beatrice District. In Darwendale, **confessing members of the church** are scattered in Zvimba communal areas.

According to the congregational minutes, most of the retired immigrants in Bindura are settled at Mpfurudzi in Madziwa communal area; Chiweshe in Glendale, Muzarabani and Guruve near Mvurwi; Mt Darwin, Kaitano, Dotito, Rushinga and Mukumbura; Besa and Chireka in Musana communal lands. In Kadoma **confessing members of the church** are scattered in Sanyati, Gokwe and Mhondoro.

Most of the **confessing members of the church** from Chinhoyi Congregation are now permanently settled in Chihwiti, Guruve and Dande. Karuru is a well famous reserve in Karoi where most of the **confessing members of the church** have moved to. Some of them are in Hurungwe where they are permanently established. In Marondera Congregation, a lot of **confessing members of the church** have gone to settle in Hwedza, Mahusekwa, Goromonzi, Bhora Growth Point in Chikwaka communal areas, Murehwa and Mutoko. In Mutare Congregation, most **confessing members of the church** found permanent settlements in Zimunya, Honde Valley, Watsomba Nyanga, Vumba and Marange. This has really become a challenge.

#### 4.8 Language barrier and inter-racial marriages

The general trend in membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod since establishment in 1912 is that the membership is not growing. From 1912 to 1915, the total number of **confessing members of the church** was 2, 961 as indicated in Chapter Three. In 1920 the membership rose to 5, 130 and in 1972 there were 6, 472 **confessing members of the church** in the entire Synod. The figure reached its **peak** in 1977 when it shot up to 8, 555. Since then the membership has started declining. The total number of member in 1980 stood at 7, 527 while in 2011 the membership was 5, 565. After almost a hundred years of existence, the membership has only increased by 3,504.

One of the various factors affecting the growth of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod is language barrier. Despite the fact that the major vernacular languages in Zimbabwe are Shona and Ndebele, the official language of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is Chewa. As was illustrated previously, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian - Harare Synod originated from the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian Nkhoma Synod in Malawi. As such, the **confessing members of the church** of this denomination were originally Malawians hence the need to continue worshipping freely in their own culture, tradition and mother tongue while in a foreign land.

Thus, the liturgy of the Church is totally in Chewa language and the same is true of the Church Order (***“Malongosoledwe a Za Mu Mpingo”***). The Catechumen Lessons (***“Katekisisima”***) are also widely done in Chewa despite the fact that most of those involved in these lessons are typically Shona speaking people as well as the Ndebeles. In general, the Church literature such as ***“Bibles (Buku Lopatulika Ndilo Mawu A Mulungu)”***, Hymn Books (***“Nyimbo Za Mulungu”***), Catechism (***“Katekisisima”***), the Sunday school literature

(“*Machitidwe a Sukulu Sande*”) as well as the Scriptural memory verses (“*Mawu a pa Mtima*”) are all in Chewa as indicated in brackets.

The Daily Study Guide (“*Mlozo*”) which is very important for preaching guidance as the name suggests, is also strictly in Chewa. The copy is widely used by the Church leadership such as the Clergy, evangelists, elders and deacons. The laymen also greatly benefit from this essential booklet.

Similar to the Daily Study Guide (“*Mlozo*”) is the “*Mawu a Mwezi ndi Mwezi*”- a booklet widely used by women in the Women’s Fellowship (*Chigwirizano Cha Amayi*). As the name suggests, it is a monthly guidance in preaching services for women. In addition to these, there was also the Synod magazine called “*Kuunika*”. It was written in Chewa. The magazine used to be printed from Nkhoma, Malawi and distributed in Harare Synod as the official Church magazine. When “*Kuunika*” magazine ceased, it was replaced by “*Mverani*”, the local magazine. However, due to financial constrains, the magazine stopped operating since 1995 and up to now, there is no replacement yet.

Since Chewa is the official language of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod, the Synod, Presbytery as well as congregational minutes are all written in Chewa, as indicated earlier on. While it is quite indisputable that people from Malawi formed the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian in Zimbabwe, the denomination is now multi-racial. This is so because the Church of God knows no geographical boundaries, race, colour or gender. As the Church is in Zimbabwe, a number of people from the locality are joining the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod through inter-racial marriages. In this way, the Church is full of the indigenous people (the Shona and the Ndebele speaking people) alongside the Chewa. Preaching the Gospel to all nations (different people and different tribes), is the gist and heart of the Church and as such, the Gospel must be preached into the



language understood by those whom the gospel is being preached unto. This is the surest and most reliable way of preaching the Gospel effectively.

According to the Harare Synod minute (1999:13) as the Church in Zimbabwe is ministering among the Chewa, Shona and the Ndebele people, there is great need of language diversity as one way of accommodating all **confessing members of the church** in the Church. Shona and Ndebele languages must be used in the Church alongside Chewa. With the use of Chewa only, most of the locals (the indigenous people) strongly feel neglected and abandoned, and as a result, are left with no choice but to leave and join other local Churches where the preaching is done in their own mother tongue. In this way, the Church loses a lot of **confessing members of the church**, negatively affecting the growth on membership.

According to Kalu (2005:6,7) translation of de-stigmatized indigenous languages and cultures as proper vehicles for conveying the Gospel, opened the inwards of cultures, preserved them extinction and became an instrument of uplifting many people. Whenever the name of God was rendered in an indigenous tongue, the Almighty was brought into the centre of the people lives and woven into their pre- Christian past.

Churches are growing at a rapid pace in Zimbabwe, but it seems as though there are many denominations “competing” for members. Bearing this in mind, the Church ought to take seriously the issue of communicating effectively with her members. Language, when misused, becomes a hindrance to many members who might have turned to God in the Church. Missionaries won many souls to Christ and one reason for this is their striving in communicating in the language of the people they were ministering to. Bediako (1995:60) points out that the happenings on the day of Pentecost, as recounted in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, give an important Biblical and theological warrant for taking seriously the vernacular languages in which people everywhere hear the wonders of God. The

ability to hear in one's own language and to express in one's own language one's response to the message which one receives, must lie at the heart of all authentic religious encounters with the divine realm. Bediako (1995:60) further states that language itself becomes, then, not merely a social or psychological phenomenon, but a theological one as well. Though every human language has its limitations in this connection, yet it is through language, and for each person, through their mother tongue, that the Spirit speaks to convey divine communication at its deepest to the human community.

Despite inter-racial marriages in the Church, many **confessing members of the church** do not speak Chewa neither do they understand it. Even the children born of Chewa parents, most of them find it hard and difficult to communicate in Chewa or understand the language (Daneel, 1980:10). The language issue must be taken seriously as it can impact the Church quite severely. At present, the church is full of **confessing members of the church** from different tribes and cultures from all walks of life. There is diversity of language that the Church must take into account.

The Chewa, Shona and Ndebele speaking people are all now in the Church which used to be Chewa dominated. The Shona language embraces eight tribes namely Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika, Tonga, Korekore, Ndau, Kalanga and Venda. Zezuru is widely spoken in the Mashonaland Province as the name suggests while Karanga dominates in Masvingo and Midlands Provinces. Manyika is a branch of Shona spoken by the people in the eastern part of Zimbabwe (the Manicaland Province). Tonga is widely spoken in Mashonaland West Province, particularly Binga in the Zambezi Valley.

In Mt Darwin, Mashonaland Central Province, the type of Shona tribe is the Korekore. The whole province of Mashonaland Central is affected by this tribe (Korekore). Ndau is also one of the Shona branches, and is widely spoken in Chipinge and Mt Selinda in the far eastern

side of Zimbabwe (the Manicaland Province). Finally, Kalanga and Venda dominates in Beitbridge and Plumtre at the border of South Africa and Botswana respectively.

The Ndebeles originated from South Africa by Mzilikazi who was running away from Tshaka the Zulu Warrior during the *Mfecane*. They settled in Bulawayo and later spread throughout the entire province of Matebeleland in the south-eastern Zimbabwe. In Hwange there is Nambya- a mixture of Ndebele, Venda and Kalanga.

The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is found in all these tribes. It is vital, therefore, to make use of all these languages where it is applicable to win more souls to Christ. In this way, the membership of the Church will undoubtedly grow, increase and expand.

As the researcher mentioned earlier on, with this growth of various Churches from various denominations, there are newly established Churches in which all the above mentioned languages are being used to attract and keep converts in the Church. As a result, language can easily become either a barrier/hindrance or a source of attraction for many souls in the Church. This is high time the language is utilized wisely in the Church so as to keep the Church of God moving otherwise the Church would risk losing members to other creative denominations.

In the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod, the Chewa language has been used as the only official language of the Church for quite some time. The Synod of Harare minute (1999:13) identify the use of multi-linguality in the Church as one of the ways to increase membership. The Church must both grow numerically as well as spiritually. Growth in membership is one clear testimony of an outward, visible sign of a living Church of God. It must be of great concern therefore, if the membership is stagnant, or worse, dwindling.

Zimbabwe is a multi-cultural and multi-racial country. Black ethnic groups make up 98.5% of the population. The largest group, the Shona, comprise 50%. Included among the Shona are about two million (2, 000 000) descendants of the migrants workers from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Also incorrectly included are the Shangaan found in Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts. They originated from South Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were led by Soshangane. The Shangaan in Manicaland bear names like Mhlanga, Mlambo, Maphosa, Dhlamini, Hlathwayo, Sithole, Zabanyana, Mzilikazi, Makanza etc.

The Ndebele are approximately 10% of the population. The Ndebeles are descended from Zulu migrations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The balance comprises the Kalanga, Nambya, Tonga, Venda and Suthu. Other less populous Zimbabwean ethnic groups include white Zimbabweans, mostly of British origin (5%), but some of Afrikaans, Portuguese and Dutch origin make up approximately 0.5% of the total population.

The issue of inter-racial marriages affects the membership of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod. Very often members of our Church marry members from other denominations and as a result they leave the Church and join the denominations where their spouses are. In this way, the Church membership has been greatly affected. Of course, the issue of inter-marriages can work on the other way too, and a member could persuade his/her spouse to join this Church, which would have a positive impact on membership.

As there are more women than men in the Church, the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod loses many of the female members through these inter-marriages as the Bible says that women should submit to their husbands for they are the head of the house as Christ is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:22-23). A large number of women in our Church have been married to the Shona and Ndebele speaking people. As a result, they left the Church to

join the Churches of their husbands. [*Milandu ya kudzikwatitsa pakati pa akristu ndi a klasi mu mpingo*].

#### **4.9 Socio-economic hardships**

The Socio-Economic hardships in Zimbabwe greatly contributed towards the decline of the membership in the Church of central Africa, Presbyterian- Harare Synod. Zimbabwe is currently struggling socially, economically and politically. The problems seemed to have started soon after the Government introduced the so called “Fast Track Land Reform Programme” in 1999.

Through the Land Reform Programme also known as the “Agrarian Reform Programme”, most of the country’s four thousand white farmers –then the backbone of the country’s agricultural economy-were forced from their land, which was handed over to about a million of Black Zimbabweans. The programme was dubbed as “Black Empowerment” as the Government claimed was putting right the wrongs inherited from the pre- 1980 colonial era when Black Zimbabweans were forced from their homelands in favour of white settlers. Blacks were forced to settle in the Tribal Trust Lands (T.T.L) where the soil is rocky, sandy and infertile.

The “Fast Track” Land Reform Programme was associated with problems such as violence which included deadly attacks on White farmers and those accused of supporting the opposition as well as the corruption with regards to the allocation of some farms. It was termed “The Third Chimurenga” or a revolution in the Shona language. This rendered agriculture in complete ruins, creating serious chronic food insecurity leading to the collapse of the rural economy.

Most of the farm labourers lost their jobs as thousands of white farmers were forced from their farms which were handed over to about a million of Black Zimbabweans. Not only did the farm labourers lose their jobs, they were also displaced. In this way, the Church was seriously affected (*Zigumula pa ntchito*). Most of the members were affected morally, physically and spiritually.

After the year 2000, the economy of Zimbabwe has shrunk significantly, resulting in a desperate situation for the country and wide-spread poverty from among others 94% unemployment. The participation from 1998 to 2002 in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.) set the stage for this deterioration by draining the country for hundreds of millions of dollars. Hyper-Inflation has been a major problem from about 2003 to April 2009 when the country suspended its own currency (Zimbabwe dollar). The economy deteriorated from one of Africa's strongest economies to the world's worst. This brought a lot of suffering in Zimbabwe, and the Church was not spared.

Since 2000, the Government has taken most of the farmland previously used by the Commercial farmers (mostly Whites) and re-allocated it. Most of the people who were allocated land were usually inexperienced and uninterested in farming and could not maintain the intensive, industrialized farming of the previous owners. Short term gains were often made by selling the farm equipment. The loss of agricultural expertise also triggered a loss of agricultural financing and market confidence which made recovery almost impossible. A considerable amount of this has however gone to the local people who use it mainly for subsistence farming. Therefore, production exports of tobacco, cotton, soya and horticultural produce have consequently reduced dramatically and the income derived from them lost to the national economy.

Poverty and unemployment are both endemic in Zimbabwe, driven by the shrinking economy and hyper-Inflation. The situation therefore, forced thousands of people to leave the country and seek better living conditions from the region and the world over. The education and health sectors appeared to be the hardest hit although professionals in other sectors have also been leaving in huge numbers. In this way, the Church was terribly affected. Most of the Church members left the country to seek “greener pastures” from the neighboring countries and abroad. As for those (the **confessing members of the church**) who persevered staying in Zimbabwe, the shrinking, harsh economy seriously affected their status as **confessing members of the church** and some of them backslid~~ed~~.

The consequences of the social, economic and political hardships in Zimbabwe were far reaching. The shrinking economy was not only forcing productive Zimbabweans abroad, but was termed “internal brain drain”. The deteriorating economy in Zimbabwe had forced some professors, lecturers, medical doctors and scientists to abandon their workplaces and operate private businesses.

The country was hit by serious shortages of food supplies (the basic commodities) such as mealie meal, bread, sugar, cooking oil and baking flour. The shelves in chain stores and shops were completely empty. Queues of these commodities became common feature in Zimbabwe and black markets took advantage of the situation. The country also plunged into electricity load shedding by the Zimbabwe Electricity supply Authority (ZESA) as well as the water rationing by the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA). A rolling blackout also referred to as load shedding, is an internationally engineered electrical power outage where electricity delivery is stopped for non-overlapping periods of time over geographical regions. Rolling blackouts are a last resort measure used by an electric utility company in order to avoid a total blackout of the power system. They are usually in response to a situation where the demand for electricity exceeds the power supply capability of the network.

Thus, load shedding can also be referred to as “Demand Side Management” or simply “Load Management”.

The water rationing led to an outbreak of cholera in many parts of Zimbabwe especially Harare and other towns. A lot of people lost their lives through this deadly epidemic as hospitals were facing problems as well, and there were no drugs in hospitals. According to the World Health Organization, about 4, 293 people died of cholera in 2008 at the height of the economic melt- down which paralyzed the health delivery system.

**Cholera** is caused by consumption of unclean, impure and infected water, resulting in diarrhea, acute fever, vomiting and severe dehydration. The bursting of sewage drains and pipes in urban areas contributed to the rapid spread of the cholera outbreak. The Government of Zimbabwe declared the cholera outbreak a national emergency and requested international aid. There were also severe shortages of fuel, paralyzing the transport system throughout the country. Private and public vehicles as well as passenger and goods trains were completely grounded.

By the start of the year 2009, the situation in Zimbabwe had been catastrophic for some time. The three parliamentary parties (Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front, Movement for Democratic Change Tsvangirai and Movement for Democratic Change) agreed on a Government of National Unity. Despite serious internal differences, this Government made some important decisions that improved the general economic situation. The local currency was suspended in April 2009. The hyper-Inflation on the local currency was so serious and at one time could not be available on circulation. The currency also reached astronomic digits (thousands, millions, billions, trillions and quintillions!) The suspension of the local currency by the government helped stop hyper-inflation and made normal forms of business possible again, by using foreign currency such as the US Dollar, the



South African Rand, the EU's Euro and the Botswana Pula. In this way, the economy of the country has been greatly improved.

The Socio-Economic hardships in Zimbabwe adversely affected the growth of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian- Harare Synod.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod was established in 1912 as noted in the first chapter of this thesis, with reference to the church records. The leadership profile of the church ranged from the missionaries to the reverends (church ministers) and the evangelists. This leadership also played an important role in the church growth (or the lack thereof) as indicated in Chapter Two. The membership records that this study attended to focus on the full communicants, the Catechumen, the Women's Guild, the Men's Guild and the youths as indicated in Chapter Three. The fourth chapter of this thesis identifies several factors affecting the growth of membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod. In this last chapter, I am going to make some summary and concluding remarks, also in light of the current state of membership, as revealed by the more recent church records.

### 5.1 SUMMARY

The overall results of the research indicate that the membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is not growing drastically or dwindling drastically but are more or less stable, leading to questions regarding the lack of growth. The following factors were considered as possible causes for the stagnation (lack of growth) in membership:

**5.1.1 Language Barrier:** Most of the local people do not speak Chewa neither do they understand it. Chewa is the official language of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod.

**5.1.2 Evangelists shortages:** The other factor affecting the growth on membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod is the paucity of evangelists in the Church. Evangelists, the backbone of the workforce in the ministry, were retrenched and this greatly affected the growth on membership in the denomination.

**5.1.3 The Socio-Economic Hardships in Zimbabwe** also contributed to the stagnation of the membership. Currently, Zimbabwe is going through social, economic and political difficulties. This has brought about the suffering of many people in the country resulting in high starvation and unemployment rates. Multitudes of people therefore, left the country to seek better lives in the neighbouring countries and abroad. In this way, the Church is not spared.

**5.1.4 Unreliable Statistics:** It has become a routine in Congregations to give incorrect, insincere or false statistics on membership as a way to escape the issue of Central Fund. As a result, this does not portray the real situation on the ground regarding the Church membership.

**5.1.5 The Synod's Confinement to Towns, Mines and Farms** also affected the membership of the Church. As most of the migrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia were based in mines, towns and farms where they were working, the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod was confined to these areas as well. There were no immigrants in the Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) also known as the communal areas. It is only now that most of the immigrants have started moving into the communal areas and purchasing pieces of land for permanent settlement. So, the Synod's confinement to towns, mines and farms tremendously affected the growth on membership of the Church. As most of the Chewa speaking people are now in reserves, the Church has started moving into the communal areas, and there is great need to move further.

**5.1.6 Inter-marriages** also play a great role in the stagnation of the membership. Through inter-marriages, the Church has lost most of her **confessing members of the church** especially women. Female **confessing members of the church**, if they get married outside our Church, subsequently join the Churches of their husbands with immediate effect. In this way, the Church membership has been greatly affected.

**5.1.7 Lack of vision by the Synod** also contributed to the present situation on membership (1999 Synod Minutes: 13). The Bible says that without vision, God's people perish (Proverbs 29:18). The Synod took long before addressing the problems affecting the growth on membership. It was until 1999 when the Synod began to address this issue.

## **5.2 Concluding remarks**

This research's focus was more church historical, but these historical perspectives have some possible implications for the church's witness today. The following are preliminary suggestions that could be considered.

**5.2.1 The Use of Shona and Ndebele alongside Chewa in the Church:** As this study the view that language barrier is one of the biggest factors affecting the growth of the membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod, it is probably vital that all the vernacular languages (Shona and Ndebele) be widely used in the Church alongside Chewa. It is of paramount importance that all members in the Church feel accommodated as this is one surest way to keep members in the Church.

Members in the Church need to feel and have a sense of belonging. If the Gospel is preached in their mother tongue, they feel welcomed and accommodated. In this way, chances of

leaving the Church and join other denominations become very slim as McGravran , Kalu and Hofmeyr and Bediako put emphasis on the vernacular languages as previously quoted.

Van der Merwe (1982:37, 38) agrees to this line of thinking by saying: “Although the unity of the Church transcends diversity of cultural and linguistic background, the Bible refers to the proclamation of the Word of God in the vernacular. On the Day of Pentecost, the great things God has done were proclaimed to men of many different linguistic backgrounds in their own tongues (Acts 2:4-12). In Jerusalem Paul addresses the Jews ‘in the Jewish language’ and when they heard him speaking in their own language, they listened the more quietly (Acts 21:40-22:2). When visiting the Christian Congregation in Greece, the Apostle would have used the Greek language”.

**5.2.2 Resumption of the Much Needed Evangelists’ Training Programme:** Evangelists play a vital role in the Church growth. Mutumburanzou (1999:57,58) notes: “Evangelism means the bearing witness to Good News that Jesus Christ has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to Him. It is also not one activity of the Church among many but rather its very reason for being. Thus, it embraces the total; existence of the whole Church. Its Kerygma (its proclamation of God’s action in Christ) and its diaconia (its service with Christ in the world)”.

Indeed, evangelism as the Christian practice of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus, to both **confessing members of the church** and non-**confessing members of the church**, is very vital in the ministry. The intention of most of evangelism is to effect conversion to Christianity. Evangelism is done in obedience to the Great Commission; instruction from Jesus to His disciples to proclaim, as recorded in the New Testament. Thus, **confessing members of the church** who specialize in evangelism are known as evangelists, whether in their home communities or as missionaries.

Some Christian traditions like in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian - Harare Synod, consider evangelists to be in a leadership position, and may be found preaching to large meetings and in governance roles. In this way, evangelists are of great importance in the Church and society at large.

Humanisation plays a vital role in as far as evangelization is concerned. According to Saayman (2007:5), the concept of *humanization* is very important for Christian mission. He understands this to mean that Jesus of Nazareth, the new human being, incarnated in his joy and grief, victory and pain empathy and anger embodied what it means for all of us to be authentically *human* in relating to self, others, the created universe and God. He invites us to participate in his liberating, healing and evangelizing mission, thus *being missionary, while being human*. Evangelization leads to conversion. According to Lewis (2004:158), conversion involves the orientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning point which implies a consciousness of a great change, and that the old was wrong and the new is right. With this in mind, the Synod should resume the trainings and intake of the evangelists to bring back the situation to normalcy. As the Synod has embarked on the fast track training of the evangelists on voluntary basis, the programme should be intensified to augment the few evangelists who are still in the field. Most of the Congregations, as already indicated, do not currently have evangelists. The ministry work becomes heavy and burdensome for the few remaining evangelists in the field.

As previously indicated, many *confessing members of the church* in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian- Harare Synod have their faith shaken by the socio-economic and political hardships the country is experiencing. This has greatly affected the growth of membership.

**5.2.3 Proper Statistics:** As insincere statistics on membership have made the statistics unreliable in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod, it is of great importance for the Congregations to always strive for accuracy and transparency in furnishing the presbytery or Synod with the statistics. Stewardship campaigns should be thoroughly carried out at congregations, Presbytery and Synod level in order to put Congregations on sound financial footing.

As the research has revealed that congregations give false statistics with the intention to avoid contributing faithfully to the Central Fund, it is therefore vital to teach and bring awareness to **confessing members of the church** on the importance of giving. Unless congregations understand the importance of tithing, the falsification of statistics still remains.

A misuse of statistics occurs when a statistical argument asserts a falsehood. In some cases, the misuse may be accidental. In others, it is purposeful and for the gain of the perpetrator. When the statistical reason is false or misapplied, this constitutes a statistical fallacy. False statistics can be quite damaging to the quest of a realistic assessment of the situation, and in the process it hinders the church in responding in the right way.

#### **5.2.4 Intensification of the Evangelism Program**

As evangelism plays a vital role in the growth of the Church, evangelism campaigns should be carried out more intensively in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian-Harare Synod if a more significant growth on membership is to take place. As many **confessing members of the church** of this denomination have moved to rural areas, it is very important for the Church to cast outreach campaign nets wider so as to reach those in the communal lands. Some of the congregations have successfully started the outreach programmes in rural areas, for

instance: Bindura in Musana Communal Lands; Highfield in Mhondoro Communal Areas; Karoi in Karuru Resettlement Area; Norton in Zvimba Communal Lands; Marondera in Svosve and Bhora growth Points and Mutare in Zimunya (to mention but a few). If the Church is successfully planted in rural areas, there is no doubt that the membership will increase. Rural Church planting is definitely one of the surest and most reliable means of seeing the membership growing. In order to achieve this, good Church planting skills should be applied.

Let me end with the following quotation:

“Jesus educated His disciples by sending them out on journeys, sometimes going with them, other times processing their experiences when they returned. Jesus’ classroom was the world. Theological students should likewise be allowed to journey outside the confines of the classroom and interact with the world in all its complexities.

Go to the people

Live among them

Learn from them

Love them

Start with what they know

Build on what they have

But of the best leaders

When their task is done

The people will remark



We have done it ourselves”

(Perkins quoted in Bevans 2002:70).

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