



**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**



## **FACULTY OF ARTS**

### **DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**A study of the impact of religion on child welfare. The case  
of Johane Marange Sect in Mafararikwa Marange Bocha  
(2000-2018)**

**BY**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of  
the Bachelor of Arts in History Honours degree.**

**APRIL 2018**

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The undersigned certify that they have and recommended to the Midlands State University for acceptance .A dissertation entitled : A study of the impact of religion on child welfare. The case of Johane Marange Sect in Mafararikwa Marange Bocha (2000-2018), submitted by Trish Maponde in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in History Honours Degree.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Trish Maponde, declare that the work I have submitted is my own effort and it has not been submitted anywhere for any degree purposes at any other university .I certify that the information in the Dissertation which is not my own has been identified and acknowledged .It is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts Honors Degree in History at Midlands State University.



# DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this study to my beloved parents, Mr and Mrs Maponde . Also to my beloved sister Nompilo and the Maponde family who made it possible for me to complete the study through their encouragement and unwavering support.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ACCZ</b>	Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe.
<b>AFM</b>	Apostolic Faith Mission.
<b>AICs</b>	African Independent Churches.
<b>AECP</b>	African Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of Child.
<b>CRIN</b>	Child Rights Information Network.
<b>EFA</b>	Education For All.
<b>GCN</b>	Girl Child Network.
<b>MDG</b>	Mellennium Development Goals.
<b>NGOs</b>	Non Governmental Organistions.
<b>NRFMC</b>	Not Ripe For Marriage Campaign.
<b>RAU</b>	Research Advocacy Unit.
<b>UNC</b>	United Nations Convention.
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nation International Children’s Emergency Fund.
<b>UFI</b>	United Families International.
<b>UNCRCAC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child and African Charter.
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation.
<b>ZANU PF</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front.

**ZDHS** Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey.

**ZIMSEC** Zimbabwe School Examinations Council

**ZCC** Zionist Christian Church.

**ZZC** Zviratidzo Zvevaporitori Church.

**ZRP** Zimbabwe Republic Police.

## DEFINITION OF MAJOR TERMS

***Child welfare*** : is the realisation of children's rights and the fulfillment of the opportunity for every child to be all she or he can be.

***Child*** : According to CRC a child is anyone below the age of 18 unless otherwise stated in the law for particular reasons.

***Religion*** : Is a belief in superhuman controlling power especially in a God or gods entitled to obedient and worship.

***Children rights*** : are the human rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to the young.

***Doctrine*** : is a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a church, political party or other group.

## ABSTRACT

*Religion is a core component in the social, political and economic sphere of mankind. The impact of religion on child welfare has been underplayed, despite it being the opium of society. The Johane Marange apostolic sect has only gained the limelight for negative reasons, as it has been widely castigated for undermining the basic human rights of its members especially children .Several NGOs have found it difficult to work with the sect, which in reciprocation does not cooperate in their activities for the fear that these organisations are bent on undermining its doctrine. Children are the ones who are suffering a lot in the name of religion .Practices such as zero tolerance to modern medication, polygamy, virginity testing, child marriage ,child pledging ,wife inheritance and child labour by the sect are the major sources of child abuse. The critics of the sect have gone on to point out that the sect undermines its children and other church follower's rights to education, health, information and even life. The denial of such rights, resulted the welfare of children to be at risk .Therefore, this study focuses much on highlighting major doctrines, teachings and practices which are proved to be hazardous to the general welfare of children in Johane Marange. The government of Zimbabwe together with other non-state actors have stepped into the center of action and tried to help out children but no resounding results yielded.*

## INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe there are many Apostolic Churches, but the Johane Marange remains the biggest sect in the country with an estimation of almost 1, 2 million members<sup>1</sup>. John Marange was the founder of this apostolic church in 1932. The church's Headquarters is located in Mafarikwa 80 kilometers West of Mutare. Chavhunduka posits that the church pursues different doctrines and ideologies which are harmful especially to child welfare as compared to other churches in Zimbabwe and Africa at large<sup>2</sup>. Daily religious practices of its members are secretive and a mystery even to government.

The Johane Marange church under chief Marange is heavily criticized mainly because of its bad practices in the area. Church members do not believe in Western medication basing only on the use of holy water (*mvura yemunamoto*). The church has been wrecked by high mortality rates of birth infants and adults than any other church in Zimbabwe<sup>3</sup>. Mbiti goes on to propound that Infant mortality is usually blamed on witchcraft or avenging spirits and never on any childhood illness<sup>4</sup>. An educationist at a primary school in Mafarikwa Mr Chatikobo says his institution has experienced some 'avoidable deaths and a number of lower-grade pupils passed away because they were not immunized against common childhood illnesses<sup>5</sup>. With age, he added, there appear to be a lower likelihood of deaths probably because those who survive are generally stronger<sup>6</sup>.

Some parents however view teachers as aids in the health-protection of their children. Parents would secretly ask teachers to assist their children with medication when the kids are unwell. Gregson articulates that there appears to be a form of genetic cleansing of weaklings in the Johanne Marange church and only the fittest, or rebels seeking medication, are

surviving<sup>7</sup>.The church's doctrines greatly undermined the life and future of many children in the name of keeping church traditions which are considered sacred to be compromised.

Children are being suffering a lot in this church, although some of these practices have been legitimized and justified by the church leaders'. The Holy Spirit (*mweya mutsvene*) has been used in many occasions in order to legitimize some of the practices. The Holy Spirit (*Mweya*) plays a central role in the spiritual life, beliefs, and faith healing of the apostolic religious community.

The Holy Spirit (*Mweya*) is believed to foretell and forewarn about any impending disease outbreak, tragedy, and complications as well as how to treat illnesses. *Mweya* works through prophets, priests and church members (who were filled with the Holy Spirit), and endows them with special healing and prophetic powers and gifts. The apostolic members of Johane Marange believe that the healing powers and spiritual gifts are endowed from God/*Mweya*, and used in promoting maternal and child health, facilitating child delivery, and restoring health to the sick. Hence this strong belief in holy spirit (*mweya*) greatly impacted negatively to the welfare of children since in some cases the *mweya* may deceived them leading to serious health implications or deaths.

In the sect of Johane Marange child marriage is being practiced at higher levels. Many children are married while they are still at a tender age The main reason why children married at this age is because of poverty. Others are forced by their families on religious or cultural basis .The Johane Marange church members considered girls as a source of income rather than a family member .The practice of early marriages has subjected many girls to acute poverty and the risk of health challenges.Chavhunduka argued that members of the apostolic church of Johane Marange believe that to marry young girls is good because they are clean<sup>8</sup>.



. In Manicaland and Zimbabwe as a whole the Johane Marange is one of the churches practicing mandatory polygamy. Church members marry as many wives as they want and children are born in large numbers. Members of *Mapositori* rely on their saying, ‘*zvaranai muwande sejecha regungwa*’ which is Biblical translation of ‘multiply like sand on the sea shore’. Children are regarded as source of labor to work in fields hence child labor is very common in the church. Children are forced to go and work in the fields of the bishop (*mambo*) called *zunde ramambo* regardless of children’s will, hence the practice of forced child labour is very rampant.

Chitando postulates that the church is also notorious for wife inheritance (*kugara nhaka*) and child pledging<sup>9</sup>. Some poor members of the church exchange or sell their young girls to the richer members in the church. This indicates that poverty is one of the key issues which contributing to child pledging and child marriage in the church. Moreso, *Mapositori* members also believe that girls should only acquire elementary education because they can be married anytime. By so doing these practices is against the best interest of children.

### **Statement of the problem.**

Marange religious doctrine poses a very dangerous threat to children rights. Children are allowed to acquire minimum education. Young girls are still married before they come of age. The Marange church also restricts children from accessing medication which is one of their essential rights they should be exposed to. Polygamy, child labor, child pledging and wife inheritance are still being practiced in the church. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child and the African Charter (UNCRCAC) outlawed this practice but in Zimbabwe such unlawful practices are still being exercised yet Zimbabwe is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children rights are being grossly violated under Marange

religious doctrines. It is the main aim of this academic research to clearly identify and expose these injustices which are being perpetuated by religion in undermining the rights and welfare of children.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the problems faced by children in the church of Johane Marange and how do these problems affect their life?
2. How did the doctrines of Johane Marange affect the welfare of children?
3. What are the Socio-economic impacts of religion on child welfare in the Johane Marange sect?
4. What role did the state and non- state organisations play in redeeming the Marangean children?

### **Research objectives**

- To identify the religious practices which are harmful to child welfare.
- To assess the Socio-economic impacts of religion on social development, including gender and human rights.
- To examine how the Marangean doctrines are used to compromise the welfare of children
- To examine the role played by the government and non-governmental organization to help the Marangean children.

### **Historical background**

John Marange the son of a Mozambican immigrant who married into a chiefly Marange family founded the apostolic church of Johane Marange in 1932<sup>10</sup>. He was born Muchabaya Momberume ( also spelled Ngomberume) near Bondwe mountain in the Marange Tribal

Trustland of Southern Rhodesia in 1912<sup>11</sup>. In 1932 when Marange was 20, he returned from journeys in the bush announcing a series of visions and encounters with Jesus Christ, calling him to be a Holy Spirit guided itinerant preacher and established a new African church<sup>12</sup>. In his vision he was also admonished that he should baptize people and observe the (Saturday) Sabbath (*Sabata in shona*). The headquarter of the church is located in Mafarikwa Marange Bocha where annual Pentecostal pilgrimage is held mostly in July. The church of Johane Marange offers a great emphasis on polygamy, wife inheritance and child pledging. The foundational doctrine of this apostolic church encourages members of the church to marry within the church.

Most children in this area are forced to be married at a tender age. UNICEF reviewed that young girls are forced to be married while at the age of 8 or even 10<sup>13</sup>. The practice of marrying while under the age 18 years is prohibited by several international conventions and many countries in the world outlaw this practice. But some low economically developed countries especially in Africa refused to outlaw this practice.

Child marriage is widely regarded as a violation of children's rights. This form of discrimination against the girl child greatly results in depriving her of basic rights such as education, development, health, and equality<sup>14</sup>. Poverty, religion, and tradition remain the key issues which accelerate the practice of child marriage, despite its strong association with adverse reproductive health outcomes and the lack of education for both girls and boys.

Johane Marange church members deny the use of modern medicines. UNICEF in 2011 published an article entitled "Apostolic Religion, Health and Utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services in Zimbabwe" which cited low uptake of modern health services and poor immunization coverage among religious communities of the Johane Marange sect<sup>15</sup>. The sect was

further criticized for undermining the value of education and despising modern trends of development. In an article produced by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) in 2011, the sect is being implicated for stifling development due to its “immoral” practices, cited as child pledging and polygamy<sup>16</sup>.

According to African Files in 2009 a measles Outbreak wreaked havoc in Nyazura’s Nzvimbe area killing at least 30 people, mostly vulnerable children and woman were members of Johane Marange Apostolic Church. Majority of the victims were aged between 1-10 years while other cases ranged between 13-40 years were reported<sup>17</sup>. Cultural and religious beliefs were the ones cited as the major problems causing the spread of the viral disease.

People in the village called for the enforcement of the Public Health Act to ensure apostolic sect members’ compliance with measles treatment. What they said was that, the only way the diseases could be halted or its negative impact reduced in poverty –hit and cramped area was to reduce early marriages that sought to perpetuate high population growth. The disease was prevalent in the area due to the refusal by the sect members to seek medical treatment at local clinics. The area was described as “an epitome of humanitarian disasters” by UNICEF<sup>18</sup>. High levels of school drop outs, illiteracy, mortality rate, crime rate, malnutrition, and disease outbreaks were said to be rampant in the area. Some reporters argued that Johane Marange members see their children as bricks, RAU consider the married woman in the sect as “sex slaves”.

It is of paramount importance to note that most of the members of Marange Apostolic church are living below the poverty datum line and Children’s rights are still undermined. ZANU PF mainly turned its attention to the area, and the sect in particular, following the downturn of its fortunes on the political arena after the 2000 general elections .In a bid to lure votes its officials

have been frequent visitors in Mafarikwa, for the sole purpose of sourcing support base. President Mugabe visited the shrine in 2010 and expressly approved the concept of polygamy and hailed the self determination of the African Independent Churches<sup>19</sup>. It appears that Mugabe's approach succeeded because it was accompanied by some acceptable religious undertones.

### **Justification of the study**

The study has been restricted to the Mafarikwa area of Marange since it is where the headquarters of the Johane Marange apostolic sect is located. About 75% of the inhabitants in the area also belong to that sect. Mafarikwa is an area where large numbers of Mapositori believers practice polygamy, child marriage, child labor, child pledging and wife inheritance. The area is highly populated with members of the church who strongly believe in zero tolerance to medication. In Manicaland there are plenty of churches but Johane Marange is still the main church with different doctrines and ideologies as compared to other churches. That is why the researcher chose to research about this church.

### **Literature review**

Hastings postulate that child marriages are prevalent among the apostolic sect that is believed to constitute approximately 1, 2 million members in the country<sup>20</sup>. Sibanda argued that Johane Marange, the church founder, passed away in 1963, leaving 13 windows behind and the church has gone a long way in addressing Christianity from an African perspective<sup>21</sup>. Most of the church songs are converted or expressed in dialect (vernacular) language and they believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit (*mweya mutsvene*).

The members of the church also used the Holy Spirit as an intimidating tool in order to instill fear to the members. For instance the Johane Marange members believed that if you commit adultery you will be caught by the Holy Spirit at the gate entry of the church. Mwamba argued that the same Holy Spirit is used to validate Child marriages as the prophets would have been ‘directed’ by the Holy Spirit to marry young girls<sup>22</sup>. This means that religion is no longer used as a way of moral development of individuals but as a whip of enforcing orders yet preventing criticism.

In terms of education, both girls and boys are affected by religion. Young girls are mostly affected in the church because as soon as they reach puberty stage they will be married off by elders in the church. Dawkins narrates that in the church, these children do not have the right to question any harmful practices, for instance the right to acquire medication from Health institutions and education<sup>23</sup>. Scholars are more concentrated on the issues of maternity health and polygamy hence neglecting other very important factors such as education, child labor which is being practiced at higher level by this church. That is why the researcher was forced to look deeper into those areas which are left out by many scholars. The former senator Sheila Mahere articulates that early marriages are a social ill that threatens to derail government’s bid to fulfill its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on increasing access to primary education as girls continue to drop out of the already constrained education system<sup>24</sup>.

Chakawa postulates that, “Child marriage takes a form of customary marriage in Marange”<sup>25</sup>. By this statement Chakawa was explaining that these unlawful and discriminative marriages are even supported by elders. Chakawa further argues that pressure might even come from parents of the girl child to accept marriage, in which he referred to it as enslaved in

religion<sup>26</sup>. It is because of belief in prophecy that many girls are preyed upon by church elders who use this belief in prophecy as an advantage to practice child abuse in the church.

Polygamy is still being practiced at higher level in the church and it is because of this practice that many girls are being placed on the high risk of HIV/AIDS infection because they will be forced to have unprotected sex as pointed out by Elberdour<sup>27</sup>. The church practice female circumcision which is also contributing to HIV/AIDS. Deborah postulates that the practice of genital mutilation has been condemned worldwide except in Islamic strongholds and this practice endorses women as a sex organ<sup>28</sup>. By so doing rights of children are being undermined in the church and they will be socialized with such a dirty lifestyle which they will pass on to their own children leading to difficulties in breaking such a cycle.

Jenson says where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as an economic burden and her marriage is believed to benefit the child and her family both financially and socially<sup>29</sup>. In Mutare West District and some Marange areas where child marriage is practiced, marriage is regarded as a transaction, often representing a significant economic activity for a family. In the church, child pledging is still being practiced. A daughter can be exchanged for something and can also be used as currency or to settle debts.

Sibanda articulates that the general belief of Johane Marange church members is that whoever leader is in power has been ordained by God, and therefore they may be subjected to political manipulation where they have de facto protection<sup>30</sup>. The Zimbabwe African National Unity – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) has targeted the Johane Marange Apostolic Church for political reasons because of its huge number of followers. The growth of the church mainly the African Independent Churches also led to many political parties to source support in those churches. Since the beginning of 2011 when ZANU PF started talking about elections, its senior

officials have been visible at the church's gatherings where they are telling them to vote for ZANU PF in the coming election time<sup>31</sup>. By so doing, the government of Zimbabwe is not taking the issue of child marriage and zero tolerance to medication seriously and this is not by default but is a strategy meant to avoid alienating their electorate.

Myers postulates that the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child was an ambitious attempt to safeguard the rights of children. In contrast to the ILO Minimum Age Convention, the CRC articulates its principles and objectives, giving broad scope to the state to choose policy interventions that best fit their situation<sup>32</sup>. The CRC establishes the right to educate, acknowledging that fulfilling this right must be achieved progressively. It also emphasized the issue that elementary education must be free and compulsory. International Co-operations also support the developing countries in meeting these obligations are encouraged. It is the right for every child to attain education but in Zimbabwe the Johane Marangean children are very few in school hence irresponsibility by the Zimbabwean government.

The Girl Child Network (GCN), States that child marriage is not only common among the '*vapostori*' it is also common in secular groupings too<sup>33</sup>. Due to that many questions have been raised. Some of the questions are, what reason can be attributed to the perpetuation of this harmful practice in Zimbabwe? Are the laws that govern marriages in Zimbabwe inadequate and if so how? Is litigation the best way to solve the problem or are there wider social justice issues that need to be addressed to ensure that this practice is effectively eradicated? Do we have an enforcement problem in this country since the police appear to turn a blind eye to such activities? Therefore for this practice to be reduced advocacy campaign may be necessary to deal with the attitudes and beliefs.



Betcherman postulates that the international community rallies around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a comprehensive vision for development, Child labor, stands as a serious obstacle to achieve a number of goals, including poverty reduction<sup>34</sup>. Most directly, child labor has obvious implications for meeting the goal of universal primary education. In April 2000 committee to Education For All (EFA) as a partnership to achieve education for every citizen in every society<sup>35</sup>. This initiative will not meet its objectives by focusing only on the education system itself. Therefore, its implications for Child labor and schooling must be fully addressed if the rights to education at the heart of EFA are implemented meaningfully.

The above reviewed pieces of literature have paid much attention on poverty and the use of intimidating religious sayings as being influential in accelerating the mishandling of children in Johane Marange church. Afore mentioned authors have done justice to history by highlighting that the government plays pharisaic roles in the plight of numerous children through the politicization of the church. These have also brought to light the fact that the government usually sends its election candidates to attend church services and deliver political speeches that encourage the suffering of children and women in apostolic churches. ZANU-PF's Machiavellian politicians have seized the gap that apostolic sects are obsessed with Europhobia and all opposition politicians are labelled traitors who wish to recycle the most dreaded colonialism hence ZANU-PF's government has since remained silent so as to gain political millage.

However, the reviewed authors provide shallow literature on the plight of children in apostolic sects and such gaps will be addressed in this dissertation. Johane Marange as a form of religion, its negative impacts on the welfare of children in Manicaland is both physical and psychological. All congregants and children are required to be barefooted when attending the

shrine which is commonly known as 'Sowe'. This bare footing is done regardless of cold weather and most services are held during the night which leads to cuts on the feet and cracks known as 'manga'.

Moreover, when it rains, no one is allowed to flee no matter the severity of the storm and all people including the young are forced to cut their heads bald hence exposed to danger and when the storm has ice blocks. More so, this practice of remaining in the shrine during heavy rain has led to a number of them getting struck by lightning. The above mentioned scholars failed to note that what prevents Marangean children from attending school is not only refusal by church leaders but the main reason is that the church spends three to four weeks in the shrine during the '*mativi mana*' initiation process and this leaves no time for school at all. The church itself does not collect offerings like other Pentecostals and this alone brings the impression that it is good to be poor and those who acquire money or wealth are usually blamed for using goblins commonly known as '*kuromba*' hence the psychological impact of this church on its children. This phenomenon induces superstition mentality on children such that they will never delight in any form of science projects and commerce programs because they explain all things within the nooks and crannies of witchcraft.

## **Research methodology**

The research is dominated by in-depth Oral interviews which were conducted in Mafararikwa Community. The researcher targeted all villages that are found in Mafararikwa community to come up with broad based qualitative data. The targeted population were the members of the Johane Marange and those who were not the members of the sect. These people helped the researcher to come up with tangible information about how children are being treated in the church.

Oral interviews were considerable in giving clarity since the interviewer could ask for detailed explanations. Interviews were also vital in gathering much data from different informants because they accommodated even the illiterate's. The researcher involved the use of the phone for recording the narrations while contacting the interviews. Interviews as the research instrument helped the researcher to collect primary information as needed. The members of Johane Marange were given the room to air out their views concerning the issue of child welfare during the interview process.

The researcher also used stratified sampling which is a technique used to divide the population into subpopulation on the basis of supplementary information then drawing sample for each sub-population. In this study the population was divided into strata's and random sampling method was used to select sample members from each stratum. The researcher select this method because it can be used accurately and it ensures each subgroup within the sample. In this study the Marange church members are the key informants. This technique was so advantageous to the researcher because it reduced section bias and the researcher managed to discuss some topics which are sensitive with the members of the church.

Questionnaires were used to gather information from different sources. The researcher submitted questionnaires to different government ministries which include the Ministry of Health (Marange Rural District Hospital), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and some question were given to the members of the Community in order to gather the correct information from the horse's mouth. Questionnaires helped the researcher because large amounts of information was collected within a short period of time and in a relatively cost effectively way. The researcher was also able to get accurate information since the question were pre-planned hence it enabled the researcher to plan well.

The researcher also made use of Desktop research .This is a technique of gathering and analyzing information, already available in print or published on the internet. The use of secondary research helped the researcher to clarify the research question .Also the use of secondary data has allowed the researcher access to valuable information for little or no cost to acquire.

## **Chapter breakdown.**

### **CHAPTER 1: History of Religion in Africa.**

This chapter looks at the historical role of missionary activities in Africa and their influence of religion in Africa .The chapter also pays attention at the reasons which led to the development of African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe with particular reference to Johane Marange.

### **CHAPTER 2: Doctrines of Johane Marange .**

This chapter seeks to highlights some of the doctrines which are practiced by Johane Marange church in relation to children. The chapter will also expose some of the worst forms of abuse against children which are being practiced in this church.

### **CHAPTER 3: Socio-economic impacts of Religion on Child welfare in Johane Marange.**

This chapter discusses the socio–economic impacts of religion on child welfare. The chapter will also indicate that the negative impacts are more than positive impacts.

### **CHAPTER 4: Effectiveness of state and non-state roles in redeeming the Marangean children.**

Explaining and evaluating all means that have been employed in an attempt to save children oppressed in the name of religious conservatism is the purpose of this chapter. It has to be documented that some of the strategies have little significance whilst others totally failed to bring change. Two major players have in several times collaborated and sometimes worked individually in easing the yoke of religious bondage on children in Marange church and these players are NGOs and the Zimbabwean government.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **General Conclusion.**

This chapter serves as the concluding chapter. The chapter begins by giving concluding remarks of the research findings .The researcher is going to give a detailed analysis of the whole research basing from his own observation. The chapter revisits the research questions and objectives to draw the research conclusion.

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# Chapter One

## History of Religion in Africa.

### **1.1 Introduction.**

This chapter mainly focuses on the historical role of missionary activities in Africa and their great influence on religion and through the manipulation of religion in the continent of Africa. The chapter also looks at the main reason which led to the development and formation of prominent African Independent Churches with particular reference to Johane Marange.

### **1.2 The role of Missionary activities and their great influence on religion in Africa.**

The main aim of Christian missionaries in Africa was to convert as many Africans as possible. In order to achieve their goal, missionaries concentrated their effort on teaching and preaching about Christianity. Zvobgo asserts that the message preached by Missionaries encouraged Africans to rebel against everything that formed the foundation of African family and society<sup>1</sup>. They even preached that salvation could only be obtained through formal work which meant one had to earn a paycheck as also propounded by Bhebe<sup>2</sup>. For the missionaries to convert many Africans, were supposed to learn the indigenous language first. To further interest in and understanding of Christianity, missionaries worked to translate portions of the Bible into local languages.

European missionaries especially from Portugal, France, Britain, and Germany came to Africa under the premise of going to convert the locals to Christianity. Some of them stuck to their mission others however, aided in the colonization of Africans by Europeans. In many cases Christian conversion looked more like European Capitalist conversion and the plunder of African

resources. Missionaries came with the attitude that all things European were superior to all things African. Zvobgo postulates that most missionaries like David Livingstone and Fabri of the German Missionary Society in Namibia believed that once Africans were colonized by European countries they would be more likely to seek after Western Education and Christianity which the missionaries controlled<sup>3</sup>. It was their mission to do anything necessary to convert Africans who were viewed as uncivilized and barbaric.

The legacy of Christian missionaries in Africa lives up to this day. In every country or area where Christian missionaries operated they opened schools and hospitals. Ranger articulates that at first, the main focus of these schools was to teach reading and religious instruction<sup>4</sup>. In southern Africa most of the leaders who participated in the fight for independence were educated by missionaries or schools built by missionaries. During colonialism in South Africa they defied the government and educated black students at a time when the colonial governments forbade this practice. Many missionaries built clinics and brought in medicine that improved infant mortality and immunizations which saved countless millions of black lives<sup>5</sup>. Christian missionaries in Africa believed that the ability to read the Holy Bible was of paramount importance in the conversion process. Arntsen articulates that in Zimbabwe father Gonzalo da Silveira played a crucial role in the early stages by converting the locals although he was later killed by the local people.<sup>6</sup>

In Zimbabwe mission stations were opened for instance in Chishawasha by the Jesuits and the Methodist missionaries opened at Hartzel in Old Umtali. Also the Dutch Reform church opened at Morgenster in Masvingo. Because of their great works, the missionaries managed to convert as many local people in the area they operated. The American Board Missionaries

opened the M<sup>t</sup> Selinda Hospital in Chipinge in 1893. Therefore, Christian missionaries managed to extent their influence in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole.

### **1.3.The emergence of African Independent Churches (AICs)**

Chitando postulates that the emergence of key charismatic leaders such as Garrick Braide of Niger Delta in Nigeria, William Wade Harris from Liberia and Simon Kimbangu of Belgian Congo inspired some of their followers to start their own churches. In Zimbabwe Johane Marange also encouraged his followers to start their own churches with a reason to spread the word of God<sup>7</sup>.Turner argues that some African Christians broke away from mainline historic churches in order to have the freedom to exercise their charismatic gifts, for the manifestation of which they felt the mainline churches did not create enough room within their framework<sup>8</sup>. John Marange was born in the Methodist church but later on he received a vision and decided to broke away to form his own church called Johane Marange.

Johane Marange rebelled against the overtly Eurocentric brand of Christianity and sought to express Christianity in African terms. Chirenje argues that the translation of the Bible into the mother tongues of various African ethnic groups enabled Africans to read the Bible in their own languages, thus they became more self-conscious as African and this provided them with a major impetus to form their own churches<sup>9</sup>.This is the same case with the Marange church, the members did not read the bible and their songs are translated into vernacular language in order to suit their own way of worship.

Some leaders of these AICs were nationalists who used religion as a protest against European colonial rule and as a means to pursue the policy of African self-expression and freedom from missionary control. Chitando narrates that the crisis situations such as the deadly influenza epidemic that spread through West Africa in 1981 and to which orthodox medicine

could not find a solution led people to seek healing through faith and other spiritual means<sup>10</sup>. This development led to the emergence of prayer groups some of which later became independent churches.

#### **1.4.The rise of Africa Independent Churches (AICs)**

The African Independent Churches also known as African Indigenous Churches, African Initiated Churches or African Instituted (AIC), represent well over 10,000 Independent Christian denominations in Africa as argued by David<sup>11</sup>. African Independent Churches are normally found in every region and country in Africa but they are more adequately documented in West Africa and Southern Africa. He went to narrates that even though the denominational, ritual and linguistic diversity of these churches makes it difficult to analyze and classify, the common thread uniting all of the Christian churches is that they were all established African initiative rather than by missionaries agendas<sup>12</sup>.

Even though many of these churches have traditional denominational names and relationships, they are not defined by these traditions. These churches placed a strict emphasis that they are led and established by Africans. Some scholars claim that African Independent Churches are syncretistic in that they combine indigenous African religion with Christian beliefs, but the degree to which this occurs is varying. These African Independent Churches (AIC) are often classified by common characteristic including denominational names or traditions, so there are Anglican, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Methodist and other classifications include Ethiopian, Apostolic, Zionist or Messianic<sup>13</sup>.

By the late nineteenth century, there were quite a number of African Christians who decided to break away from their Independent churches. On the other hand it is of great importance to note that the formation of African Independent Churches was mainly motivated by

racism and the rejection of African culture or religious culture. In that regard Chirenje articulates that Afro-Americans played a role in the promotion of the AICs<sup>14</sup>. He cites the formation of the African Episcopal Church in Philadelphia which followed their discrimination by their white counterparts at St Georges Church. Africans began to identify themselves with Ethiopianism or Zionism as their rallying point. References were usually made to Isaiah 8:18 insinuates that the “Lord almighty dwells on Mount Zion”. David argues that these churches received this designation because of the number of times that Ethiopia is mentioned in the bible<sup>15</sup>. Thus Rev Mangena and Makoni broke away from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Transvaal in 1892 and formed his church called the Ethiopian Church of South Africa, as attested by Chirenje<sup>16</sup>. Johane Marange also broke away from Methodist to form the apostolic church of Johane Marange.

The second group is the Zionist Independent Churches found in Africa. Austnaberg attested that these churches are also known as the spirit churches because they put a strong emphasis on spiritual and physical healing through the intervention of the Holy Spirit<sup>17</sup>. This emphasis reflects the influence of African religious beliefs and practice. A good example is the Johane Marange church in Zimbabwe. The Zionist prophets or leaders are similar to priest and Shealers in African indigenous religions. Many Zionist churches stress faith healing and revelation and in many meetings or congregations, the leader is viewed as a prophet. The way the Zionist churches worship is mainly characterized by singing and dancing. They strongly believe in the guidance of Holy Spirit in whatever they do and they also put great emphasis on divine healing, the wearing of white robes and abstention from pork.

Most Zionist churches in Africa brought together the elements of Christian and indigenous African religious belief and practice. It is of paramount importance to note that

Christian Zionism is not a rejection of Christianity but rather is the adaptation of Christianity to African cultural values, beliefs and practices<sup>18</sup>. They observed Saturday as their Sabbath day. These Zionist churches are mostly found in Southern Africa in countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, and Mozambique. In Zimbabwe these African Independent churches are known as *Mapositori*.

Another type of African Independent church are the Messianic churches .These churches mainly focus on the power and sanctity of their leaders .Denominations described as Messianic include the Kimbanguist church in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Nazareth Baptism church of Isaiah Shembe in Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa and the Zion Christian church with its headquarters in South Africa's Limpopo province<sup>19</sup>. This type of church is then followed by Aladura Pentecostal churches which originated in Nigeria .The church also rely on the power of prayer and in all effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Zimbabwe these churches are United Families International (UFI) and Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM).

In Zimbabwe these African Independent churches are mostly headed by strong charismatic leaders whom claim a direct relationship with God .The Johane Marange church, popularly known as Marange , originated in Manicaland and the founder John Marange was raised and educated as a Methodist<sup>20</sup>.He claimed that he received the vision of God while at a tender age .In 1932 he founded the church Johane Marange with the guidance of the holy spirit .At first he claimed that the Christ gave him a mission to convert the members of his extended family in the Mafarikwa area under chief Marange .He appointed numerous relatives to the churches hierarchy and he even developed an ecclesiastical nucleus as a basis of his remarkable missionary career and the growth of the apostolic movement .So far the church is the largest sect in Zimbabwe with the population of approximately 1,2 million followers.



It is believed that for more than thirty years Johane Marange travelled regularly often on foot through Rhodesia and the neighboring countries such as Zambia, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique and even as far as DRC. Ranger argues that in response to his prophetic message of Salvation for Africa through the spirit inspired proclamation of African Apostles, thousands were converted, baptized and organized into congregation<sup>21</sup>. His message was based on the confrontation of traditional African religion and a contextualization healing . Setting the example of an itinerant missionary, Marange modeled his church as a missionizing evangelizing body of African believers without church buildings, involvement in secular education or the use of medication.

Johane Maranges vision figured prominently in Apostolic theology and became a major focus in apostolic preaching . While his leadership had distinct messianic traits , constant reference to his encounters with Jesus Christ served to preserve and protect the mediating and salvific functions of the biblical Christ . Annual paschal celebration popularly known as *Musangano/Penda* (from Pentecost), last for seventeen days ,culminating in holy communion ceremonies and at times involve the participation of up to 100 000 apostles from Zimbabwe and neighboring countries<sup>22</sup> . The annual pilgrimage is normally held especially in July near Johane Marange's old home stand.

Chitando postulates that in Zimbabwe there are quite a number of Zionist churches, some of them include the Johane Masowe, founded by Shoniwa Masedza Tandi Moyo (1915-1973), the African Apostolic church popularly known as (Mwazha) founded by Paul Mwazha, Thomas Nyamombe formed Zviratidzo Zvevaporitori Church (ZZC) popularly known as Zviratidzo and Samuel Mutendi formed Zionist Christian Church (ZCC)<sup>23</sup>.

Although there are many Zionist churches in Zimbabwe the above mentioned are the most popular churches in Zimbabwe because of their membership .It was because of the rise of African Independent Churches which sort to mix local African practices such as polygamy, child marriages and fortune telling that encompasses the modern day African Independent churches .For instance the Marange church followers strongly believe in polygamy which in turn promotes child marriages. It was because of this background that the Marange members are being heavily criticized for their roles in promoting child infant mortality due to their resistance to medication.

Currently, there are a number of characteristics that make the AICs distinctive. Revelations through prophets and faith healing are two prominent features of the AICs. In Johane Marange the search for healing and deliverance is the most common reason why people join the church. This led most of the AICs to establish healing centers such as guest houses where patients could be kept for a period until they completely recovered. In the sect of Marange healing is usually effected by praying and the laying on of hands. Most churches stress fasting in their healing process. They also practice anointing with water, ritual bathing, and the drinking of blessed water. Most of the AICs also practice exorcism of evil spirits and cure confessed witches. Armstrong argues that indeed exorcism is closely associated with healing since there is a strong belief among most Africans that mishap, evil, and ailment are caused by evil forces like witches and demons<sup>24</sup>.

### **1.5. The Johane Marange's support base.**

Despite the fact that Johane Marange sect is receiving much criticism from outsiders such as the international and local NGOs, the church is still growing and a large number of people are being baptized almost every day .Polygamy is still being practiced .Given a scenario whereby one might have 5-10 wives automatically it means that a single person might have an average of

11-15 children. Basing on the doctrines of the church one is not allowed to marry or to get married outside the church. By so doing this will create a favorable environment for the churches to grow.

Polygamy is also believed to be beneficial in the church of Johane Marange .The benefit of the polygamous family is to have multiple sons .The members of the Johane Marange strongly believe in high birth rate hence they rely on their saying, ‘*zvaranai muwande sejecha regungwa*’. They also believed that these sons can generate extra income by helping their parents with domestic labor .Those practiced polygamy in the church believed that the more wives they have, the power and success they are believed to have. However, according to European journal of research in Social Science, children in polygamous marriages may face abuse, low self-esteem, marital discord and psychological distress<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, polygamy played a pivotal role for the growth of the church.

Their teachings do not allow church members to go against their leaders or against the holy spirit .Therefore ,it can be seen that in most cases before the church service ,people go through a cleaning session known as (*pamagedhi*) where people will be told to enter the gate or not basing on what the prophet would have said .Basing on this ,discipline will be promoted hence increasing the size of the church .It also needs to be highlighted that the low levels of education in the church also played a crucial role in increasing and creating popularity in the church as pin point by Isabel<sup>26</sup>. Due to lack of education the church members will be in a position of failing to understand that they are being abused or their rights are being undermined.

Hastings articulates that it was due to colonialism that Johane Marange became so popular than before<sup>27</sup>.It was due to this background that they were denouncing colonialism and

all the racial activities which were occurring in that time, because of that many local people found it necessary to join Johane Marange since he was against the colonial masters.

The members of Johane Marange also rely heavily on Holy Spirit .The Holy Spirit act as their divine force that guides the church and the fellow members of the church .The same holy spirit equips prophets of the church and some church members with special prophetic and healing power (UNICEF)<sup>28</sup>.Therefore, the Holy Spirit led the members of the church to be united .Their refusal of modern medication it also indicates that they were united and they heavily rely on the use of holy water (*mvura yemunamoto*) as their medication. Young children in the church are treated for certain diseases by their priest and bishops using the holy water. By so doing this attracted other people in the community to join the church because of the issue of Holy Spirit.

## **1.6. Conclusion**

Traditional religion was practiced in Africa long back before the coming of Christian missionaries; but it waned with the establishment of colonies. Christian missionaries in Africa believed that the ability to read the Holy Bible was of paramount importance in the conversion process. In Zimbabwe, father Gonzalo da Silveira played a crucial role in the early stages by converting local contemporaries although he was later killed by the local people. Mission stations were opened; for instance in Chishawasha by the Jesuits and the Methodist missionaries opened at Hartzel in Old Umtali and the Dutch Reformed church opened at Morgenster in Masvingo. Missionaries managed to convert as many local people in the area they operated. The American Board Missionaries opened the M<sup>T</sup> Selinda Hospital in Chipinge in 1893. Therefore, Christian missionaries managed to exert their influence in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole.

The emergence of key charismatic leaders such as Garrick Braide of Niger Delta in Nigeria, William Wade Harris from Liberia and Simon Kimbangu of Belgian Congo inspired

some of their followers to start their own churches: which were largely influenced by Zionism/Ethiopianism in USA and South Africa. John Marange founded Johane Marange in 1932, in Manicaland. Johane Marange church is regarded controversial by NGOs and other civil societies for its endorsement of child marriage, polygamy and general overlooking of Western education. Johane Marange's sect relies much on the Holy Spirit for orders and doctrines hence orders cannot be debated or avoided no matter how negative they might be on the welfare of its adherents. Nevertheless, Johane Marange is Zimbabwe's largest sect with more than a million members.

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# Chapter Two

## Doctrines of Johane Marange

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to highlight doctrines which are practiced by Johane Marange sect in relation to children. The chapter will also expose some of the worst forms of abuse which are being practiced in the church. Marangean doctrines are said to be sanctioned by the Holy Spirit.

### 2.2 Doctrines of the Marange church in relation to children

#### 2.2.1 Holy Spirit (*Mweya*)

Johane Marange sect has been criticized a lot by many scholars mainly due to its controversial doctrines. Children are suffering a lot in this church; although some of these practices have been legitimized and justified by the church leaders'. The Holy Spirit (*mweya mutsvene*) has been used in many occasions in order to legitimize some of the practices. The Holy Spirit (*Mweya*) plays a central role in the spiritual life, beliefs, and faith healing of the apostolic religious community.

Mbanje argues that the Holy Spirit (*Mweya*) is believed to foretell and forewarn about any impending disease outbreak, tragedy, and complications as well as how to treat illnesses<sup>1</sup>. *Mweya* works through prophets, priests and church members (who were filled with the Holy Spirit), and endows them with special healing and prophetic powers and gifts<sup>2</sup>. The apostolic members of Johane Marange believe that the healing powers and spiritual gifts are endowed from God/*Mweya*, and used in promoting maternal and child health, facilitating child delivery, and restoring health to the sick. Hence this strong belief in Holy Spirit/*Mweya* greatly impacted

negatively to the welfare of children since in some cases the *mweya* may deceived them leading to serious health implications or deaths.

The Johane Marange teachings strictly says no one is allowed to go against their leader or to go against the holy spirit, given such a scenario it can be seen that in some cases before the beginning of every church service people go through a cleaning session known as (*pamagedhi*) were people will be told to enter the gate or not, basing on what the prophet would have said. Moreso, the Johane Marange church members they don't allowed to eat anything contain yeast (*mbiriso*) because they strongly believed that yeast is totally unclean to God. Therefore, this led many children to suffer from malnutrition.

### **2.2.2 Polygamy**

Members of the Johane Marange Apostolic church justify the practice of polygamy, quoting Bible verses. They assert that, in Genesis 16, verses 1–3, it is written:

*“Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram’s wife to Hagar, her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt 10 years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.” But the Bible example does not end there. In Genesis 4, verse 19, it says, “And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.”<sup>3</sup>*

From the understanding of these verses, the followers of the Johane Marange church, argued that polygamy is very much in sync with traditional Shona culture. They also assert that long before the missionaries arrived with their monogamous doctrine, polygamy was common in order to increase the wealth of the household. A large number of children also helped as extra labour in the fields.

The researcher found out that polygamy is one of the major doctrines and is considered as normal in the church. It is against this background that the girl child is even married at the age of 10. Chakawa articulates that in most cases marriage mostly takes place during religious festivals such as *Penda* or *Musangano*.<sup>4</sup> Polygamy in the church of Johane Marange is rampant mainly because church members do not need to pay lobola in terms of Cattle or huge amounts of cash but they can only pay a token of appreciation in terms of church garments and some few dollars as attested by Muzembe<sup>5</sup>. Given such a scenario girls will be more vulnerable because in some cases their parents are the ones who even help in the facilitation of these marriages, whereby they even look for able man to marry their daughters. Such practices have exposed girls to abuse since they don't have the power to argue or to negotiate for better and safe sex so it is against this background that these girls will be on high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

The late former Marange chief Gilbert Marange said most polygamous families especially the Johane Marange, the husband is the head of the households and one of the advantages of having large polygamous family is the financial benefits that come from having multiple wives and children<sup>6</sup>. He went on to unveil that the father in a polygamous family does not even bother himself in terms of food security since his wives and elderly children will do so<sup>7</sup>. The researcher noticed that many polygamists believed that if you have many wives you are now regarded as the father with power. Having many wives and children can create a great deal of conflict, particularly on issues to do with the payment of fees<sup>8</sup>. This practice impacted negative to the welfare of children since they will be denied their access to advance their education and it also created poverty, disturb the thinking and reasoning capacity of children.

Mbiti argues that most of the children in polygamous marriages in Johane Marange church greatly face abuse, psychological distress, low self-esteem, and even marital discord<sup>9</sup>.

According to Elbedour the frequent marital conflict and distress can cause emotional harm to these learners through conflict, tension, unequal treatment by the polygamous father and jealousy<sup>10</sup>. These children frequently feel discontented with their families. By so doing, the researcher found that polygamy can be viewed as one of the bad practice which is carried out by the members of the Johane Marange in order to satisfy their self needs.

### **2.2.3 Early Marriage**

The researcher also noted that members of Johane Marange used Holy Spirit (*mweya*) to validate child marriages as the prophets would have been directed by the Holy Spirit to marry young girls. A fourteen year old girl called Chipo testify that they were forced to enter into these relationships because they were told that it is against the church principals for one to go against his parents' wishes and the church<sup>11</sup>. Chipo also said that when she was married to his 52 year old husband she could spent days crying since she was not prepared for marriage but Mr Gwazai a well-established businessman at Marange Growth Point, tend to differ with that girl because he said that marriage in the church is not through force but people agree before any arrangements are made<sup>12</sup>.

Mrs Zisengwe one of the church member said, many young woman in this church who spoke on condition of anonymity strongly emphasis the fact that many girls in the church are forced to enter into these polygamous relationships mainly because their parents will want to maintain good relationships with some influential people in the church especially those who are rich and famous<sup>13</sup>. Therefore the researcher also noted that child marriages imposes social isolation on girls, bringing unwanted separation from their friends and family.

Jabson postulates that once married, girls are most likely to feel powerless to refuse sex<sup>14</sup>. Child brides find it difficult to insist on condom use by husbands who are usually older and more

sexually experienced making the girls vulnerable to HIV including STIs. He went on to argue that child marriage can result in bonded labour or enslavement – a sentence to regular exposure to domestic or sexual violence and a pathway to commercial exploitation<sup>15</sup>. Child brides are also under intense pressure to fall pregnant immediately after marriage presenting a major risk for both mother and baby<sup>16</sup>. Therefore the practice of child marriage as one of the major doctrine in the Johane Marange church affected many children in the sense that these young girls were held as sex slaves.

Gideon Mombeshora, a sect member, said that most men in the church prefer to marry under-age girls because it is easier to control them<sup>17</sup>. The researcher also identified that most men in the sect of Johane Marange want to get married to docile women and the younger the bride the more chances for dominance for the man. Mombeshora further explained that the sect strongly believes in the practice of under-age brides, although it is not in our church's statutes that old men should marry under-age girls, the practice is deeply entrenched in our belief system<sup>18</sup>. By so doing the church beliefs greatly undermined the general welfare of many children and also the researcher found that a number of man in the sect prefer to marry young children because they believed that young girls are easily to be colonized and bribed.

Muzembe articulates that, allowing people to marry under the age of 18 is against several United Nation Conventions and the practice is outlawed in most countries, but other countries denied especially in poorer communities<sup>19</sup>. Child marriage is now widely recognized as a violation of children's rights and it is also a direct form of discrimination against the girl child, who, as a result of the practice, is often deprived of her basic rights to health, education, development and equality as articulated by UNICEF<sup>20</sup>. The Johane Marange members in Mafarikwa consider girls as source of income rather a family member and this practice of early

marriages has subjected girls to acute poverty and the risk of health challenges .In an oral interview with the Head master of St Noah College Mr Momberume said that poverty, tradition and religion continue to fuel the practice of child marriage, despite its strong association with adverse reproductive health outcomes and the lack of education for girls<sup>21</sup>.

#### **2.2.4 Child pledging**

This practice is being done in many forms in the church of Marange. The researcher witnessed that in Johane Marange sect, cultural practices such as *kuripira ngozi* (where a girl is used as compensation for a serious crime committed by her family), *kuzvarira* (where a girl is married off in return for financial support and *kugadza mapfihwa* (where a girl is substituted for her in the event that the aunt has failed to conceive children or dies) have contributed significantly to the number of child marriages.

#### **2.2.5 Education**

Most girls in Mafararikwa stop schooling in July because this is the time the sect celebrates Passover, a religious festivity which marriage ceremonies take place as attested by Kachere<sup>22</sup>. Former senator Sheila Mahere said ,early marriages threaten national economic development, as bright and intelligent girls are forced out of school to become cheap labor and child bearers in their homesteads. Most of the girls become farm laborers on their husband's farms<sup>23</sup>.She even went on to say under the Johane Marange church early marriages are a social ill that threatens to derail government's bid to fulfill its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on increasing access to primary education as girls continue to drop out of the already constrained education system<sup>24</sup>.In Johane Marange sect education has no value and they believed that if a person is educated he/she will be enlighten and could be easily identify the bad practices of the church.

The researcher also found out that it is a common phenomenon that boys in most cases are the ones who can go beyond primary education .Mr Muradzikwa a senior teacher at Mafararikwa narrates that, it is the church policy that a girl child should acquire minimum education claiming that she would be married and she will be of little value to the family<sup>25</sup>.By educating the boy child they claim that he will provide assistance to the family in the future since in some cases he can buy groceries and provide financial security to the family.

### **2.2.5 Virginity testing (*Zemeni/Mucheso*)**

This practice is done once a year during the Pentecost (*Penda*). Girls were forced to go through this exercise and this is mainly done by elder women of the church as said by Gogo (grandmother) Munamati<sup>26</sup>.She also said that all the church girls are forced to go through this exercise and this practice is normally done in July and girls will be taken to a nearby river called *Muroti* where this exercise is done. Those girls who were found not virgin were forced to wear a ton garment as a sign of unclean and those found clean they will be taken to the church and the priest prayed for them .After that, those young virgin girls will be forced to sit in front of the bishops, priest, elders (those who occupy high ranks in the church) for them to choose who they want<sup>27</sup>. According to the CRC such practices are against the best interest of the child hence it can be classified as child abuse.

### **2.2.6 Zero tolerance to modern medication**

The religious teachings, doctrines and regulations of the ultra-conservative apostolic sect of Johane Marange emphasize faith healing and strict adherence to church beliefs and practices undermine modern health care seeking .They strongly prohibit the use of modern medicines in any way .They base their arguments on the fact that only God can heal them due to that they make use of Holy water (*mvura yemunamoto*)<sup>28</sup>.In most cases children are the ones who are

affected by these practice since they are the ones who are prone to the six child killer diseases and malaria.

Mrs Njerere, the nurse in charge at Marange Rural District Hospital said the church members of Johane Marange also have a practice of feeding their new-born babies with Coke, believing it would improve their children's health<sup>29</sup>. A member of Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Africa called Jofirisi Jofirisi said in the Johane Marange Apostolic Church there are more infant deaths than there are the adult ones<sup>30</sup>. While children generally have weaker immunity than adults, he said, many discreetly seek medical attention that they deprive their children of. Illnesses/diseases are deemed to have spiritual and religious undertones, and hence the strong tendency to spiritualize even medical conditions<sup>31</sup>. Such beliefs about illness tend to reinforce the skewed bias towards faith healing while overlooking the importance of medical treatment. Hence, some apostolic members forgo modern medical treatment, and such refusal can lead to serious health implications or deaths.

The Manicaland Provincial Health Promotions Officer called Mr Murerwa also said it is difficult to clearly establish the number of child deaths as they are communal and some are buried at night<sup>32</sup>. During a 2010 measles outbreak which killed thousands of children nationwide, members of the Johane Marange church, he said, would hide their children in caves. Community leaders had passed an edict that whoever lost a child would be fined cattle or goats<sup>33</sup>. So most parents would then secretly bury their children under cover of darkness. By so doing, this practice of denying modern medication greatly impacted negatively to the welfare of children.

The researcher also noticed that violation of church doctrine or regulation on non-use of modern healthcare services attracts sanctions, which include confession, shaming (asked not to wear church regalia or "*kubvisiswa gamenzi*", or re-baptism (*kujorodwa*)). Mbiti argues that these



social controls often take a militaristic-type discipline in order to ensure strict adherence to the norms, values, and beliefs of the church<sup>34</sup>. The members strongly believe that everyone must obey the rules and regulations of the church. The bishops, priest, prophets, elders called (*rabhahuma*), guided by the Holy Spirit are the ones with divine authority to punish others who breach the laws.

The doctrines of Johane Marange church are the ones which cause problems to the general welfare of many children .Many organisations are trying their best to down play such practises but the church members are still involve in these practices. Although the church tried to hide their practises by constructing the St Noah college, the Headmaster of this college Mr Momberume said starting from 2012 the number of girls who were coming to school were very few as compared to boys the reason being that most of the girls normally get married in July during the Pentecostal festival (Penda) and some of the children both boys and girls died due to lack of treatment against certain killer diseases such as cholera, diariah and malaria.<sup>35</sup>

### **2.3. Conclusion**

The religious teachings, doctrines and regulations of the ultra-conservative apostolic sect of Johane Marange emphasize faith healing and strict adherence to church beliefs and practices that undermine modern health care seeking. The church claims to get much of its instructions from the Holy Spirit (*mweya mutsvene*) and such orders are delivered through prophets who claim to have encountered an angelic visitation. It is worth noting that such a doctrine ignores much of the biblical teachings, with prophets uttering their own words to gratify their own desires under the illusion of being inspired by the Holy Spirit. As a result, the church is very notorious for practicing polygamy and child marriages. Most girls have been dragged out of school into marriages and into polygamous marriages; an action which stands as a serious

challenge to the empowerment, dignity and rights of girl children. Moreover, most girls have been married to HIV positive husbands, due to child pledging; an action that is supported by parents in sending their children into marriages without the consent of children. The church is usually opposed to school education by labeling it a project of whites which they think is unholy.

Furthermore, the church prohibits its believers from attending hospital, the type of medication which the church labels as 'worldly' and might be an act of humiliation against the healing power taught in their churches. Such denunciation of Western medication has led to high rates of infant mortality among the believers of Johane Marange and with some kids dying at birth. Above all, Marangean doctrines affect girl children through child pledging, virginity test, early marriages, anti-education and anti-school philosophies which will make gender empowerment unachievable within the church's future because young believers are like recycle the same philosophies to their offspring.

## ENDNOTES

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# Chapter Three

## Impacts of religion on child welfare in Johane Marange sect.

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to highlight the socio-economic impacts of religion on child welfare. Religion as a social practice has effects on people through changing their behavior and imprisoning them in most cases. Prophets in Johane Marange are thought to be custodians of the communication channel between God and the congregation, therefore making their words law, their words cannot be repealed no matter how dangerous they are to children. This authoritarian character of religion has led to the untold suffering of children through child marriages, child labor, child pledging, polygamy, zero tolerance to modern medication and advanced education, perpetrated and sanctioned by prophets at Johane Marange. All these negative impacts has led to low literacy, poverty ,high mortality rates, and high levels of child abuse especially through child labour and child marriages.

### 3.2 The socio-economic impacts of religion on child welfare in Johane Marange.

#### 3.2.1 Child marriage

In the sect of Johane Marange child marriage is being practiced at higher levels. Many children are married while they are still at a tender age The main reason why children married at this age is because of poverty. Others are forced by their families on religious or cultural basis .The Johane Marange church members considered girls as a source of income rather than a

family member .The practice of early marriages has subjected many girls to acute poverty and the risk of health challenges.

According to Chakawa ,in Marange Child marriage usually take place without the consent of the bride, force is exerted on the girl from all directions ,parents ,prophets, the bridegroom and various church institutions especially the *dare* until the girl submits<sup>1</sup>. In most cases it will be against the best interest of the child as noted in article 3 of the Convention of Rights of the Child .The researcher find out that those who fall under the age group 6-10 are usually married under the shona custom *kuzvarira or bondwe*.

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) noted that in Johane Marange 21% of children mostly girls are married before the age of 18<sup>2</sup>.According to the Girl Child Network (GCN), a civic organisation whose mission is to shelter, educate, and empower female victims, an estimated 8 000 girls of Johane Marange have been forced into early marriages or were held as sex slaves since 2008<sup>3</sup>. Chief Chiduku, a senator for Manicaland province in Zimbabwe and a member of the Apostolic Church of Johane Marange said in an interview there was nothing wrong with marrying off underage girls because we agree with the parent of the girl before marriage<sup>4</sup>. In Johane Marange young girls are being married off to men often older than their own fathers. This scenario has significantly contributed to pregnancy complications in teenage mothers.

Nyamayemombe said, “Single adolescent girl who become pregnant are more likely to drop out of school, thus compromising their future earning capacity and becoming more likely to end in poverty. Maternal mortality and mortality from HIV/AIDS related causes became reality for these girls and often lead or exacerbate poverty”<sup>5</sup>.She went on to add that in Johane Marange, a pregnant teenager may face the problem of immature uterine muscles and mucous membrane

that pose serious danger and a high risk of ruptured uterus in cases of prolonged labour<sup>6</sup>. Former Senator Sheila Mahere articulates that, early marriages threaten National Economic Development, as bright and intelligent girls are forced out of school to become cheap labour and child bearers in their homesteads<sup>7</sup>. Hence child marriage impacted negatively on the welfare of many children especially girls.

The researcher discovered that members of Johane Marange preferred to marry young girls because they regard them as clean. Munjanja argues that the impact of child marriages for girls in Johane Marange goes beyond the obvious end to a career path<sup>8</sup>. Jabson narrates that child marriage brings an abrupt and unnatural end to a girl's childhood and adolescence through imposing adult roles and responsibilities before she is physically, psychologically and emotionally prepared<sup>9</sup>. Marriage imposes social isolation on girls, bringing unwanted separation from their friends and family. Once married, girls are most likely to feel powerless to refuse sex. Child brides find it difficult to insist on condom use by husbands who are usually older and more sexually experienced making the girls vulnerable to HIV including STIs, he said<sup>10</sup>.

The researcher also identified that in Johane Marange boys are allowed to marry within the church but after they graduated in the church doctrines. They are given the last opportunity to choose who they want to marry. Mavungandize articulates that those older men especially the rich are the ones who have the first preference to choose whom they want to marry<sup>11</sup>. Mrs Chikata a sect member said that in an oral interview, the boy should work hard for him to be identified as strong man by the parent of a girl then after the priest engaged the two, no lobola is paid in the form of cash but grocery only<sup>12</sup>.

*(Kutema ugariri)* a system where by a man worked for another person in return of a woman is also practiced in the church. Sibanda reviewed that those boys from poor families, are



mainly the ones who are involved in this practice and they worked for a stipulated period in reward of a woman<sup>13</sup>. Those who are lazy they found themselves in a position of getting ugly woman. Boys in the church of Johane Marange basically they allowed to marry starting from the age of 16 and above but the researcher identify that for a boy to marry at the age of sixteen he is not mature enough to handle the responsibilities of a family since his mind is still of a child.

### **3.2.2 Polygamy**

This practice is widely accepted in the Johane Marange sect. The Johane Marange encourages men to have many wives if they can sufficiently support those wives. In a polygamous family the husband or father is the head of the households. One of the positive impacts of having a polygamous family in the sect of Johane Marange is the financial benefit that comes from having multiple wives and children .The researcher identify that in Johane Marange women are allowed to give birth to many children since they believed that a good wife will produce many children, especially male children. They base on their argument that, '*zvaranai muwande sejecha regungwa*'. Polygamy is believed to be more beneficial in the church of Johane Marange sect and the main benefit is the birth of multiple sons .They believed that these sons can generate extra income by helping their father with domestic labour.

Elbedour postulates that children in polygamous marriages in Johane Marange sect may face abuse, psychological distress, marital discord and low self-esteem <sup>14</sup>. Elbedour went on to say, the frequent marital conflict and distress can cause emotional harm to these learners through conflict, tension, unequal treatment by the polygamous father and jealousy<sup>15</sup>. These children feel discontented with their families. The researcher also discovers that the Johane Marange men can marry another wife if the senior wives failed to meet the standards set by their husband. Elbedour postulates that many women see the addition of another wife or wives as an inconvenience and

view them as a competitor or one who makes trouble<sup>16</sup>. This clearly indicated that the learners typically do not like being one of multiple wives children. In most cases the learners in polygamous marriages they normally have lower levels of education than those women in monogamous marriages.

In view of the fact that polygamy is characterized by the union of a single man as the father with two or more women, competition and jealousy among co-wives is commonly observed. The researcher found out that polygamous marriage especially in the church of Johane Marange, the chances of getting HIV/AIDS infection is very high since the husband sleep with all the wives without protection. Nenge argues that the church members of Johane Marange believes that HIV which causes AIDS does not exist among the righteous and dedicated members of the church, ignoring the fact that the practice of polygamy and wife inheritance can spread the virus, their line of defense is that 'mweya' holy spirit can detect one's HIV status<sup>17</sup>. The Marange members they gave birth to many children while at the same time they failed support them. Some fail to acquire even elementary education because of lack of finance and they ended up working in Marange Growth point as garden boys, cow boys, house maids many other duties which are of poor value.

### **3.2.3 Health**

The Johane Marange church members denied the use of modern medication. They believed in the use of holy water (*mvura yemunamoto*) to cure certain diseases. In Zimbabwe the Johane Marange is one of the church with the highest infant mortality rate as compared to other churches. The researcher found out that many children in Mafarikwa died because the members strongly undermined the use of modern medication and the area is unclean and overcrowded. The area was once been attacked by various diseases such as cholera and measles.

Mrs Njerere nurse in charge at Marange Clinic said in 2009 many children died because of the outbreak of cholera a disease caused by poor hygiene and the members of the church made use of coke and water mixed with ashes to treat their children<sup>18</sup>.

During 2010 measles outbreak which killed thousands of children nationwide, members of the Johane Marange church would hide their children in caves and the number of child deaths was high and some were buried at night. This led to Community leaders to pass an edict that whoever lost a child would fine cattle<sup>19</sup>. So most parents would then secretly bury their children under cover of darkness. Most parents in the sect of Johane Marange they strongly believed that the Holy Spirit is there to protect them against certain diseases. Religion is the major factor given the blame by the majority since many children died mainly because their parents refused to access medication hence resulted to high mortality rate in the sect.

An educationist at Mafararikwa primary school says, his institution has experience some avoidable deaths. He cited that a number of lower grade pupils passed mainly because they are not immunized against common childhood illnesses<sup>20</sup>. Some parents however view teachers as aids in the health protection of their children. The parents would secretly ask teachers to assist their children even with medication when the kids are unwell. Another teacher from the same school Mr Maponde said, there appears to be a form of genetic cleansing of weaklings in the Johane Marange church and only the fittest or rebels seeking medication are surviving<sup>21</sup>. Therefore the issue of refusing to access medical treatment from the nearby Health Centers is affecting many children in the sect of Johane Marange.

More so, the researcher discovered that Manicaland province has the highest child mortality in the country mainly because it is the home of most members of Johane Marange. The Johane Marange members they believed that '*mweya mutsvene*' holy spirit is there to protect

them against certain diseases .During the Pentecostal (Penda) this is where the rate of child mortality is witnessed going high and some children even died at the shrine. The Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey held few years ago noted that poor health outcomes among apostolic woman and children of Johane Marange were linked to low or poor utilization of modern maternal and child health care by its members<sup>22</sup> .In 2010 Dr Custodia Mandlhate the World Health Organization representative said in 2010 they tried to convinced some conservative members of Johane Marange in the area ,but “it was a struggle to convince them to get their children immunized, religion is passed from generation to generation, so it is hard to fully convert them to subscribe to modern health care facilities”<sup>23</sup>. Therefore it is crystal clear that religion impacted negatively to the welfare of many children in the sect since it is indicated by their practice of zero tolerance to medication and this resulted to poor health of children and high mortality rate in the sect.

### **3.2.4 Poverty**

The researcher found that in Marange poverty is being passed on from one generation to the other. Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) narrates that in most cases, poor people do not have the resources necessary to get out of poverty, such as financial capital, education, or connections<sup>24</sup>. This is true with Marange people they are failing to realise that in their situation education is the only thing that can set them free from this bondage and for that reason they have been trapped. According to Ruby, poor people have their own culture with a different set of values and beliefs which keep them trapped within that cycle generation to generation<sup>25</sup>. This also proves to be true in the sense that Marange beliefs in certain ideologies and it is because of these ideologies that many members from Marange have been trapped in this circle of poverty. According to UNICEF, about 70% of Marange members are not employed they mostly depend

on selling pots ,used clothes (Bhero), wild fruits, baskets and generally these professions are not rewarding that much, they will be forced to not to send their children to school hence creating that chain of poverty<sup>26</sup>.

**Fig.1.** Shows some members of Johane Marange selling their wild fruits (*masawu*) and used clothes (*bhero*) during the July 2017 Pentacostal (Penda) at Mafararikwa market.



*Source: Photos taken by Trish Maponde.*

The researcher discovered that most of the market places were dominated by members from Marange especially at Marange Growth Point, Mafararikwa, Zvipiripiri, and Chirinda market places. According Mrs Zingani a member of Johane Marange said, we are forced to come and sell these farm produce and used clothes (*mazitye/bhero*) here simply because our husbands are not working and a day, one can make \$5-10 which is not even enough<sup>27</sup>. Consequently, in order to make ends meet they will be forced to use their children. Poverty is the overriding reason for child labour in the Marange church. It is also at these market places that woman members from Marange will be seen loitering around the market place dressed in their common regalia of white head covers.

### 3.2.5 Child labor.

The practice of child labour is very common in the sect of Johane Marange. Most of the children are not going to school because they spent a lot of time working in the fields, selling fruits and farm produces. Vengayi argues that most parents viewed their children as source of labour to work in their fields<sup>28</sup>. Children in the sect ,especially those from poor families they are still heavily abused .Some parents from the poor class may force their children to go and work in the prophet (mambo)'s fields known as *zunde ramambo*. Some children are even forced to go and work in the church's farms in as far as Odzi, Chipembere and Mutambara. After working for a specific period these children earn nothing at all.

Since it is internationally agreed that the worst forms of Child labor should be eliminated in order to promote children's welfare the consensus breaks down when trying to define what constitute light work .Schlemmer articulates that the term 'Child labour' is pernicious because it depends on a definition of both work and childhood, thus complicating the task of reaching a precise definition<sup>29</sup>. Although there is widespread agreement that paying wages exposes children to exploitation .According to UNICEF, work can even be an enriching experience ,provided that it does not jeopardize the child's health and development or prevent the child from attending school<sup>30</sup>. It is due to this background that the researcher managed to find out that it was due to poverty and the inability of their parents to meet the basic demands of a big family that has forced these children into informal market.

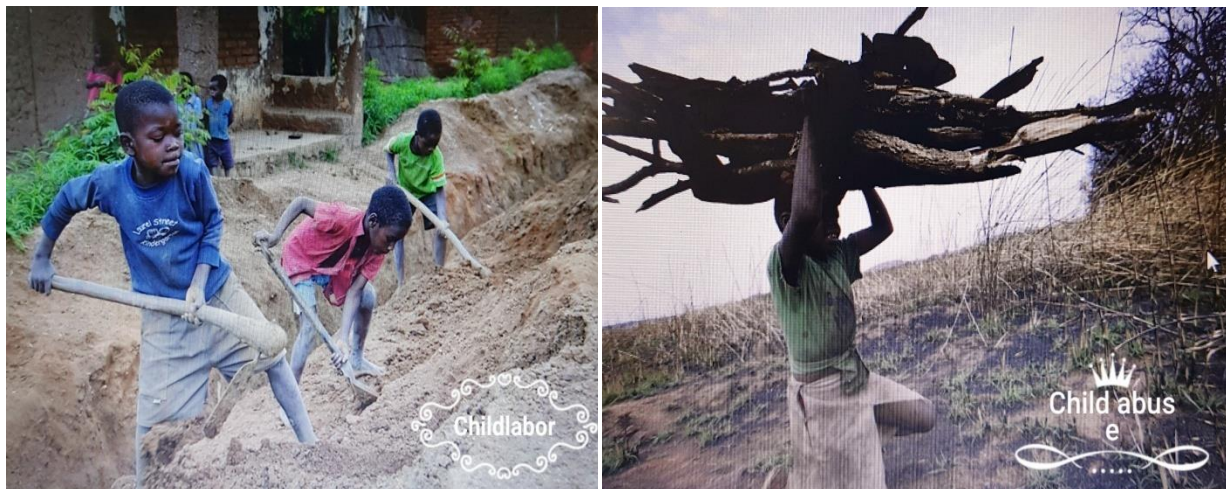
The researcher also discovered Child labor is rampant in the Marange church , because most of the parents are unemployed hence the children will be forced to go and look for work in the nearby Marange Growth Point, in most cases they will be employed as heard boys, maids and caretakers. This has seen a rise in child labor in the Marange church as compared to other

churches in Manicaland. Some children and their parents in the area they look for piece jobs known as (*marikicho/maricho*) for them to earn a living.

Bunny Mushipe who is the local Counselor in Marange said that the major reason why there is a major increase in child labour in Marange is due to the fact that they got too many children whilst they are not employed hence the only way for them to survive is through using children so that they can bring some home<sup>31</sup>. In the Marange church it has been estimated that almost 75% of men are found in informal sectors and most of them relied heavily on piece work.

The doctrines of Johane Marange encourages children to work hard in order to develop skills .Children are considered as assets to generate income in time of poverty .Chakawa postulates that the members of Johane Marange strongly believed that children should therefore be given work at home early in life and be obliged to assist parents<sup>32</sup>. In Marange most child laborers begin working at very young age and the most working children ages range between 8 to 16 years, frequently they do not attend school even though the church recently open the St Noah Primary and Secondary school.

**Fig.2. shows some of the Johane Marange children performing different chores.**



**Source: Newsday 3/07/12.**

Heady postulates that, short term, the most obvious economic impact of child labour at the family level in Johane Marange is an increase in household income. Long term, the under accumulation of human capital caused by low school attendance and poor health is a serious negative consequence of child labor, representing a missed opportunity to enhance the productivity and future earnings capacity of the next generation<sup>33</sup>.The researcher found that Mapositori could not even foresee future problems of their children hence they only identify child labor as normal to them. In this way, poverty and child labor worked hand in glove in undermining the general welfare of children and is passed from generation to generation in the sect of Johane Marange.

### **3.2.6 Education**

Members of Johane Marange church don't consider education as very crucial, although they were surrounded by many schools such as Mafararikwa, Maponde, Nharira, Chirinda and St Noah College which was opened soon by the members of Johane Marange. Church members argued that it is a loss to educate a girl child since she will be married soon and a boy child can use his hands for him to earn a living. Most young boys spent much of the time herding cattle and doing piece jobs in the village.

#### **Reasons for low enrollment for both primary and secondary schools in Marange area.**

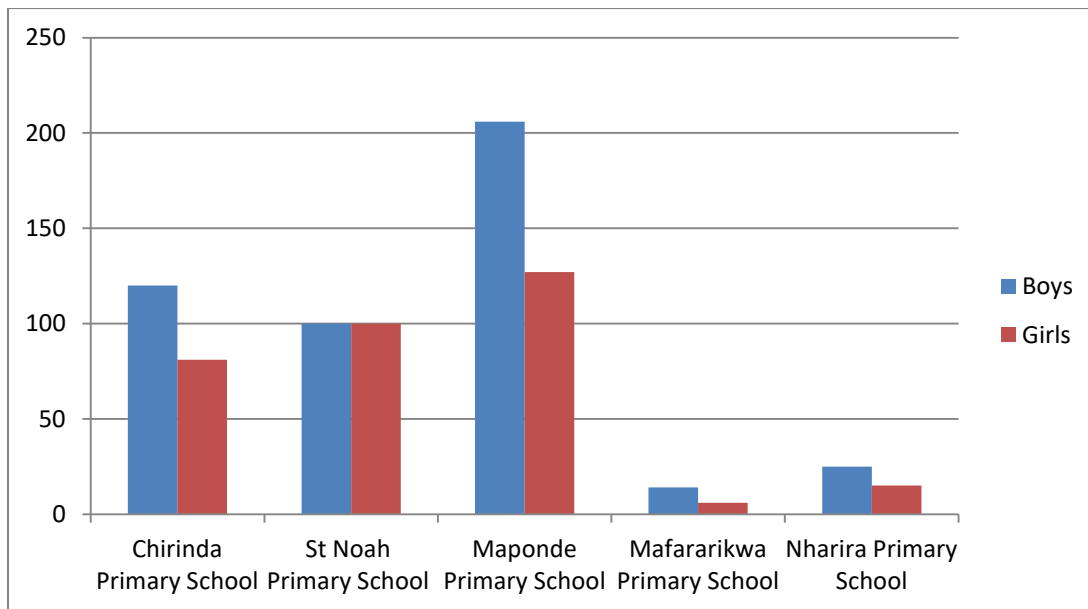
The researcher found out that at Primary level there are more boys than girls and there are many reasons for this, chiefly among them being the issue of absenteeism. Since they don't go to Hospital they fall ill, they will go to a prophet (*murapi*) where they stay there for many days treated with Holy water through the process known as (*kudhoza*) where water will be poured through the anus believing that the intestines will be cleaned hence removing malaria from the



body but this had failed to work in many situations and this had been witnessed by many deaths in the communities. So when they go back to school it will be difficult for them to catch up with others.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT Fig:1.1**

**The table shows the statistics of the enrolment ratio of both boys and girls in Primary School in Marange Area.**



**Source: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Archives: Mutare, 23/07/16.**

The table above shows results obtained from 5 primary schools in Marange area. This was a comparison of enrolment of children of Marange and non Marange children. From the above table it can be seen that children from Marange are more as compared to other children from other schools. It is against this background that even at primary school there are few girls than boys. The researcher also found out that at lower levels they will be more children from Marange but as they go up the ladder, they start to drop in numbers but that is not the case with

boys since it was noted that boys tend to maintain their numbers even though they are few. The researcher noted that children from Marange do not attend school regularly as compared to other children. It was also revealed that children from Marange are always ill now and then and this had affected their performance a lot.

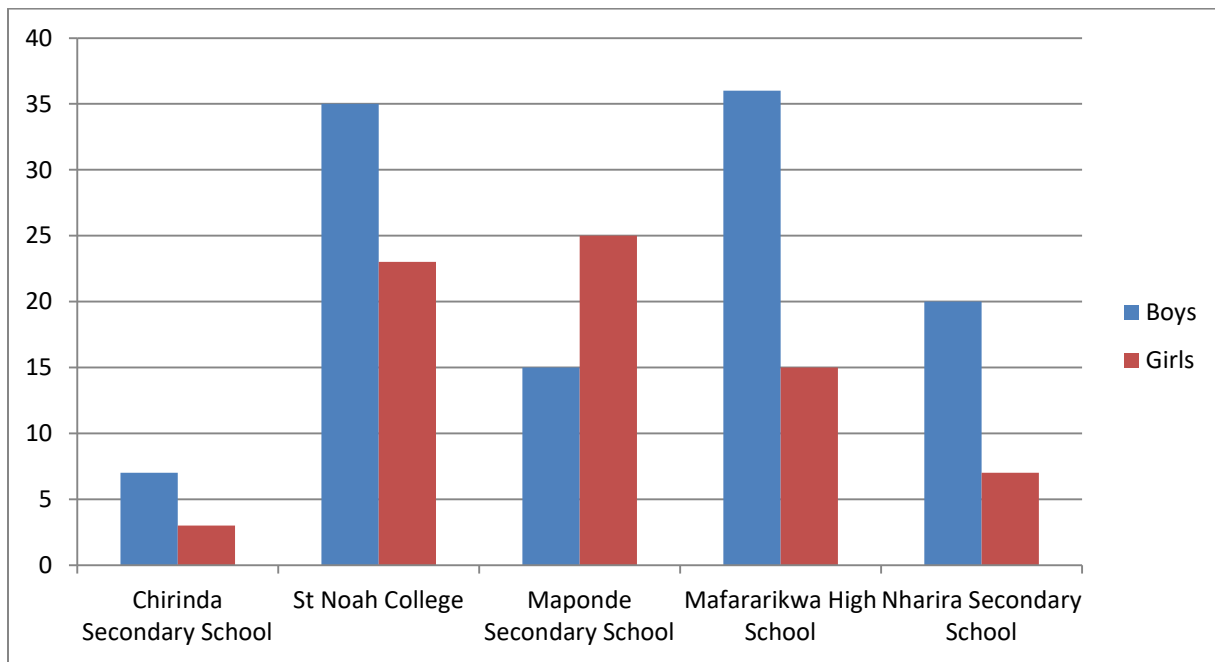
The researcher also found out that not only girls are affected in Marange, he realised that they are few boys in primary schools as compared to girls the major reason being the fact that in most cases boys are forced to look for employment at an early stage in the nearby community areas, many young boys are failing to attend school mainly because they will be forced to go and work at the Mutumwa's field popularly known as (*kuzunde raMutumwa*)

At Secondary level the researcher found that there are few children attending school mainly because their parents viewed education as a privilege and in many cases at Secondary schools male children are mostly preferred as compared to girls. The researcher managed to identify that shortage of money is the major problem when it comes to low attendance in schools and he also noted that due to polygamy many parents are failing to pay fees for their children. In the surrounding areas some have managed to marry about 10 wives one example was Mr Momberume who resides in Mafararikwa village who holds a senior position in the church of (*Rabhahuma*) or spiritual elders, he has 10 wives and 35 children at the same time he is not employed .He only survives from the money he gets from his wife who depends on piece jobs popularly known as (*Maricho/Marikicho*).Out of his 35 children only 15 went to school, out of 15 only 5 went to Secondary school. When the researcher asked him the reason why he is not sending his children to school he said, *hazvina basa kuendesa vana kuchikoro chero vachitowana chokudya, ini ndoiwanepi mari yacho* (it is not important to send children to school

what is crucial is to give them food because I don't have the money<sup>34</sup>. Given such a scenario, it is quite clear that they don't value education and they view it as an expense.

**SECONDARY LEVEL ENROLMENT Fig: 1.2.**

*The table shows the enrolment ratio between boys and girls in Secondary school in Manicaland, Marange Area.*



*Source: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Archives: Mutare, 23/07/16.*

The researcher also found out that at secondary schools they are very few children from Marange. Unlike primary school where the enrolment is very high. At Maponde Secondary School, out of a total enrolment of 500, only 40 children are from Marange. As for the teachers there were no teachers from Marange at Chirinda secondary school and other surrounding secondary and primary schools. At Chirinda Secondary school, out of a total enrolment of 850 students the researcher observed that only 30 were from Marange the situation was even worse at Nharira High School in which out of a total of 1100 students only 61 were from Marange. From this it can be seen that enrolment decreases as people go up the ladder as noted in the tables and results collected from the field. This is a common phenomenon in Marange in which secondary education is regarded as a privilege and in many cases at secondary schools male children are

mostly preferred as compared to girls. Again their performance is also very poor as compared to other students due to the above mentioned reasons.

In Johane Marange lack of education leads to unemployment, it also creates a chain of poverty as witnessed by the researcher .It is due to the fact that most of their parents are unemployed and due to that they is no where they can afford to send their children to school. Chiketo articulates that due to lack of education, children from Marange are founding it difficult to find employment in the formal market<sup>35</sup>. Their low levels of education are forcing them to rely on the informal sector .From a survey conducted in Marange Growth Point, Zvipiripiri, Mafararikwa and Matanda market places most of the people who are conducting informal business there are mainly from Marange sect in which they are seen selling clothes, wild fruits, and tomatoes and there are more children than adults at these market places. According to a local environmental health worker at Marange Clinic Mrs Charekwa said to them it is the only way they could make money and without that they will starve<sup>36</sup>.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Children of Johane Marange church have suffered a lot on the account of religion. Child marriages have highly affected girl children who most of them have been married under the age of eighteen, as stipulated by the Zimbabwean law. For girls, entering into marriage comes with the consequence of dropping out of school hence making them unable to fend for themselves but have to look upon their poor and abusive husbands for basic needs. Children have often entered into polygamous marriages where contraceptives are prohibited, therefore a couple of competing with older women (within the marriage system) and child bearing which is done annually, strains the minds of children. As means of survival, such children who have entered into marriage; together with their offspring survive on peace jobs (*maricho*), an action which is akin to child

labour. Moreover, child labour is also evident through *zunde ramambo*, a practice whereby children join their parents in cultivating the prophet's field as a show of allegiance with the illusion of sucking blessings from God. Above all, girls have suffered more than boys through school dropouts.

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## Chapter 4

# Effectiveness of state and non-state roles in redeeming the Marangean children.

### 4.1 Introduction

Religion has been dubbed the mother of all oppressors throughout the world and this sounds very true in Africa, in Zimbabwe in general and Johane Marange in particular. Apostolic sects are the most visible players in the field of oppressing children and Johane Marange is the most notorious of them as depicted in previous chapters. Every form of oppression usually meets its own means of curbing it as it is dealing with Johane Marange church headquartered in Manicaland. Explaining and evaluating all means that have been employed in an attempt to save children oppressed in the name of religious conservatism is the purpose of this chapter. It has to be documented that some of the strategies have little significance whilst others totally failed to bring change. Two major players have in several times collaborated and sometimes worked individually in easing the yoke of religious bondage on children in Marange church and these players are NGOs and the Zimbabwean government.

### 4.2 The Zimbabwean Government

In as much as the Zimbabwean government has been in intimate bond with the controversial church when it comes to elections hence the politicization of the church and ultimate silencing of loud abuses perpetrated on helpless children by wolves hiding behind white garments, masquerading as prophets who do nothing except putting into practice every word

whispered to them from heaven. For reasons of state's responsibility on its subjects and perhaps the need to silence both local and foreign critics, the Zimbabwean government has done something within its limited capacity in confronting activities of Johane Marange on matters affecting children's welfare and human rights. Some of the reasons why the Zimbabwean government has approached Johane Marange Church include the rampant child marriages and child pledging which are in most cases done through the blessing of uneducated and irresponsible parents. Nevertheless school dropouts follow as a result of early marriages (legitimized rapping). The government of Zimbabwe has used various means that include introducing new legislations, arresting perpetrators and issuing out documents to children during church conferences.

#### **4.2.1 Registration as proper citizens**

Due to their strange traditions, members of Johane Marange usually consider themselves outsiders in comparison to other religious denominations and this religious perception has influenced parents in overlooking the registration of their children. Registration is always thought to be way of qualifying to vote in political elections and as such the government of Zimbabwe has been helping adults above the age of eighteen in getting national identity cards. (I.D cards) this action of helping adults has been a matter of serious debates in parliamentary sessions whereby members of the opposition parties have been taking it as way of rigging elections hence forcing the government to consider children too. Registration of children into recognized citizens is a constitutional mandate of the state and it has nothing to do with elections but it helps children to sit for the grade seven ZIMSEC exams<sup>1</sup>. By nature, withholding such a vital document to children, who most of them were not born in a hospital, is a form of child abuse. Tobaiwa Mudede, the Register General says since 2010 the government has been sending

its officials to register children (issuing birth certificates) in Mafarikwa shrine during the annual Passover festival<sup>2</sup>. In July 2017, 1 174 birth certificates were issued and this action by the government was a role in helping children whose right of holding birth certificates has been overlooked and neglected by their parents<sup>3</sup>.

#### **4.2.2 Nutrition Campaigns**

The ministry of health realized that most children have been affected by kwashiorkor and other diseases related to malnutrition, the Zimbabwean government launched State Mandated Fortification enforced through the Grain Millers Association of Zimbabwe. This campaign was scheduled to run from 2014-2018 after realizing that 1,5 million adults have anemia deficit and 19% of children between 6-59 months with Vitamin A deficiency, 31-71% have iron and anemic deficiencies<sup>4</sup>. Fortification entails adding levels of minerals in food during processing. All starch foods got fortified in Zimbabwe with Vitamin A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, Zinc, iron and folic acid<sup>5</sup>. Madzimai Eunice Saizi Johane Marange who claim have more than two million followers in Zimbabwe claimed that they were not consulted on such matters and do not agree on the artificial materials in the staple food as it is against their church doctrine<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, food fortification program was rubberstamped after Dr Parirenyatwa threatened to cancel licenses of all millers who do not comply with the program. In as much as this was a nationwide campaign, Johane Marange in Manicaland was collectively included hence the role played by the government on children's health ion the church and the nation at large.

#### **4.2.3 UN Convention on the rights of a child**

U.N Convention on the rights of a child sates that all actions concerning a child should be in the welfare of a child and the state should take responsibilities if parents fail to do so<sup>7</sup>. This convention makes it clear that the government should fight against sexual exploitation and abuse

of children. Zimbabwe is a signatory of this convention and as such it uses the police in arresting cases reported. Moreover, the government of Zimbabwe plays a role by maintaining the Marriage Act section 22:1 which denounces the marriage of anyone under the age of eighteen either customary or religiously<sup>8</sup>. The Criminal Codification Act Section 70 criminalizes sexual activity with a young person (under 16); and a minor (under 12) is deemed incapable of consenting to sexual intercourse or a sexual act<sup>9</sup>. However, the role of the government and through the police should not be emphasized because most sexual assaults on children happen under the guise of religion and are sanctioned by parents, only a few of them are reported by teachers.

### **4.3 The role of Non-Governmental Organization and Civil Organizations**

NGOs have remained a viable actor in the continent of Africa in matters including drought alleviation, disaster management, and have crossed ethical boundaries into helping these affected by laws of traditions and religion. These NGOs comprise of foreign based and local organizations and these include Not Ripe For Marriage Campaign, Real Open Opportunities For Transformation, WASH and Girl Child Network.

#### **4.3.1 Girl Child Network (G.C.N)**

Girl Child Network is one of the multiple organizations that have been of paramount help in against injustices on children, on the girl child in particular. GCN, an activist organization whose mission is to support the empowerment of a girl child through education and since its inception in 2005, it has tackled over 20 000 cases of child sexual abuse in Zimbabwe<sup>10</sup>. In Manicaland, GCN has been campaigning that girls should break silence on sexual abuse especially rape in places like Rusape, Nyazura, Penhalonga and Mutare since 2004<sup>11</sup>. Apart from rape, GCN has tackled cases of forced marriages, virginity test and incest. GCN has also

unearthed that Johane Marange church legitimizes marriages of minors by gray heads whereby Stanley Manyaire an 83 year old man from Nyamaropa in Nyanga married a 14 year old girl<sup>12</sup>. Officials of the GCN took it as legitimized rape cushioned by religious traditions and took the matter to the police leading to the arrest of an 83 year old rapist. Moreover, GCN also rescued an 11 year old girl from Marange church married off in Bocha and rehabilitated her as well as reinstated her in school<sup>13</sup>. The perpetrator of the crime was reported to the police but committed suicide before arrest. Furthermore, Chipu was married to Mr Mukoromindo a church elder that is 60 year older than and the GCN rehabilitated her into the Girls Empowerment Village where she attends school<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, campaigns of the GCN have helped a lot in freeing girl trapped by church tradition under the Marange church in Manicaland, in speaking out child abuses and empowering girls through education who have been denied education by church by church conservatives.

#### **4.3.2 Plan International**

NGOs work hand in hand with the government in the enforcement of government policies. Plan International works through educating school pupils to report child abuses to their teachers and teachers in turn will report to the police on behalf of children. In 2015, Plan International helped Loveness Mukarwa and Ruvimbo Tsopodzi from Mutare who had been made brides by members of Johane Marange church and the abusers were arrested<sup>15</sup>. Above all, Plan publishes newsletters which are distributed for free to teach parents on how to handle children and emphasizing on reporting cases of child abuses done under the cover of religion.

#### **4.3.3 Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ)**

Johanes Ndanga the president of ACCZ spoke to Chronicles condemning marriage, abuse and molesting of girls under the age of eighteen. He condemns framing of dreams and visions by

Johane Marange prophets as being abusive<sup>16</sup>. He suggests that such prophets should dream of widowed women who exist in bulk in the church than abusing and ruining the future of girls<sup>17</sup>. Ndanga and the ACCZ defend children against wanton abuses through basing on the fact that the law of Zimbabwe is against marriage of minors. This campaign by the ACCZ cannot be underestimated because it forces Marange church members to reform.

#### **4.3.4 UDA-CIZA**

The Union of the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa a coalition of 160 apostolic sects tries to raise awareness among apostolic leaders on the dangers of child marriages. In 2008 this organization led to the arrest of a 47 year old man for marrying a 11 year old girl. Edson Tsvakai the manager of UDA-CIZA claims that they have reported even their senior leaders to the police for committing crimes against girl children in the name of religion<sup>18</sup>. This campaign is very vital in instilling fear of being arrested among apostolic sects not excluding Johane Marange.

#### **4.4 The role played by the church**

It is a great fallacy to rule out Johane Marange Church as total savages concerning their attitude towards their children. The church has of late embraced the idea of education to all even though at a minimum stage. This is evidenced by the building of a school in Manicaland, St Noah Collage which has an enrollment from grade one to form six<sup>19</sup>. In as much as this school is church owned which logically means it can also serve as a further incubation institution in which children can be initiated into a new look on education, hence salvaging children.

##### **4.4.1 Maternity education in the church**

It will be a gross exaggeration and great injustice to history if one overlooks the role played by enlightened church leaders in an attempt to curb health injuries on children. Johane

Marange church has embraced education on sexual and reproductive health. Jacob Kutsira in his thesis research claims that all women he interviewed highlighted that the church provides teaching and training as they prepare to give birth<sup>20</sup>. The church offers education on sexual and reproductive health. A certain women interviewed by Kutsira reported that “We help so many women to deliver in the Church safely by preparing them; teaching them how to be good mothers who can look after their healthy children. We tell them and teach them what to expect when giving birth; for example, the water that is prayed for helps them to prepare a safe passage for the baby. During birth time we also help people deliver their children safely. Yes there are challenges but mostly we pray and consult the prophet when the problem is there. Mothers whom have just given birth are helped to rest after birth with the help of other women in the Church.”<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, most conservatives of the church still regard hospitals as cursed institutions but it has to be appreciated that maternity help given to pregnant women by elderly women help reduce infant mortality.

#### **4.5 Impediments to employed strategies on salvaging children**

In as much as many strategies have been employed to deal with the rampant child abuses in Johane Marange Church, most of the employed strategies have since met stumbling blocks hence nullifying most of the employed efforts. These pitfalls include the compromise of the government, stubbornness of church leadership and in compliance of parents.

##### **4.5.1 Compromise of the government**

On several annual Passover gatherings, ZANU-PF has sent its representatives to hail the indigenous church for its approach towards homosexuality and perhaps its anti-European stance. President R.G Mugabe himself has been to the shrine in one of the Passovers in which he donated robes and groceries to congregants. This was a campaign for the 2013 harmonized

elections in this Passover, President Mugabe praised the church for keeping the country non-Sodom, promoting education and agriculture<sup>22</sup>. This brings a compromise in the sense that school dropouts are rampant in Johane Marange due to poverty and early child marriages. Such expressions by the government head do give an impression of excellence to the church hence the closure of all doors for reform.

#### **4.5.2 Sovereignty of the church**

‘Sovereignty’ is a common shield that has been used by African heads of states in blocking criticism from the ICC and the International community at large on matters concerning human rights abuses. The same shield has been borrowed by Johane Marange Church refuting orders from the government and non-state actors. This is also coupled with the church’s stereotype of not staying away from all mandates dictated to them from heaven with fears of committing apostasy and sacrilege<sup>23</sup>. Due to this stereotype, the church refused donations from WASH during the Cholera outbreak in 2008 giving the explanation that donations come from sinful white colonizers.

#### **4.5.3 Inadequate Justice System**

GCN has reported that the justice delivery is inept in handling child sexual abuses especially those perpetrated within church borders<sup>24</sup>. This encourages perpetrators to keep on abusing children in Johane Marange Church and it discourages abused children from reported cases of nuisance. Moreover, the power of money has also conquered the justice system because once one commits a crime against a child can either buy a lawyer or simply pay fine.

#### **4.5.4 The role of parents**

Parents of the victimized children usually choose to be silent because they take it as an orderly church form of worship. This might be explain from two speculations, either for the



benefits of bride price that will be paid to parents of the abused girl child through early marriage or simply a sign of apathy and lack of responsibility on the education of a child hence an easing of the burden of child welfare as attest by Chiketo<sup>25</sup>. With such an attitude from parents, all strategies of helping children go free from the shekels of sexual abuses on religious grounds can be nullified.

#### **4.5.5 Bread winner phenomenon**

Wives in Johane Marange church do not report cases of sexual abuses and early child marriages done to children by their husbands. This is mostly because most women in apostolic sects are house wives so they cannot report such cases to the police because their breadwinning husbands will get behind bars leading to severe poverty of the wife and countless children of the same man.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Since the doctrines of the church have proved hazardous to the welfare of children in Johane Marange; the government of Zimbabwe together with the non-state actors have stepped into the center of action and tried to help out children through various programs and campaigns. Most Marangean children have no birth certificates due to the fact that they are not born in hospitals and they do not go to school; the government realized the need and facilitated a program that through sending its officials to register children (issuing birth certificates) in Mafarikwa shrine during the annual Passover festival since 2010. The government also launched the nutrient campaign that was meant to deal with malnourishment and fighting kwashiorkor among children in Zimbabwe and Marangean children were collectively included in the program that was enforced with threats of arrests if one denies the program. Apart from efforts made by the government, the girl child network has had an impact in collaboration with

Plan International and the Union of Development of Apostolic churches together with Zimbabwe Council of Churches have preached against child marriages, forced labor and have rehabilitated some girls who have been forced into marriage. However, child marriages are still rampant in Johane Marange and other ills against children are still prevalent due to the compromise of the government towards the church because they are source of election of the ruling party. The government does not criminalize the marrying off of a minor but it only caramelizes sleeping with a minor hence the weakness of government's efforts. Some of the programs by the NGOs have failed largely due to the church's sovereignty which needs to maintain its conservative status quo. Some of the enlightened church members have distanced themselves from child marriages, child labour and have embraced Western health and education as evidenced by the church's effort in building its own school.

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## **General conclusion**

Traditional religion was practiced in Africa long back before the coming of Christian missionaries; but it waned with the establishment of colonies. Christian missionaries in Africa believed that the ability to read the Holy Bible was of paramount importance in the conversion process. In Zimbabwe, father Gonzalo da Silveira played a crucial role in the early stages by converting local contemporaries although he was later killed by the local people. Mission stations were opened; for instance in Chishawasha by the Jesuits and the Methodist missionaries opened at Hartzel in Old Umtali and the Dutch Reformed church opened at Morgenster in Masvingo. Missionaries managed to convert as many local people in the area they operated. The American Board Missionaries opened the M<sup>T</sup> Selinda Hospital in Chipinge in 1893. Therefore, Christian missionaries managed to exert their influence in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole. Such a control of schools and hospitals by Christian missionary denominations fueled John Marange suspicion towards Western education and medication and made it a monumental doctrine in his church because he considered Christian mainline churches as a form of colonization and that has encouraged patriotism in the church hence making it a darling of the ruling party.

The research discovered that the emergence of key charismatic leaders such as Garrick Braide of Niger Delta in Nigeria, William Wade Harris from Liberia and Simon Kimbangu of Belgian Congo inspired some of their followers to start their own churches: which were largely influenced by Zionism/Ethiopianism in USA and South Africa. John Marange founded Johane

Marange in 1932, in Manicaland and he was inspired by the principles of Zionism. Johane Marange church is regarded controversial by NGOs and other civil societies for its endorsement of child marriage, polygamy and general overlooking of Western education. Marange's sect relies much on the Holy Spirit for orders and doctrines hence orders cannot be debated or avoided no matter how negative they might be on the welfare of its adherents. Despite of such controversies surrounding the sect, Johane Marange remains Zimbabwe's largest sect with more than a million members and more dominant in Manicaland province.

Moreover, the research has unveiled that religious teachings, doctrines and regulations of the ultra-conservative apostolic sect of Johane Marange emphasize much of faith healing and strict adherence to church beliefs and practices that undermine modern health care seeking or education. The church claims to get much of its instructions from the Holy Spirit (*mweya mutsvene*) and such orders are delivered through prophets who claim to have encountered an angelic visitation. It is worth noting that such a doctrine ignores much of the biblical teachings, with prophets uttering their own words to gratify their own desires under the illusion of being inspired by the Holy Spirit. As a result, the church is very infamous for practicing polygamy and child marriages. The church's position against the Bible and Western education has produced thousands of illiterate children the church is opposed to school education by labeling it a project of whites which they assume to be unholy.

Most girls have been dragged out of school into marriages and into polygamous marriages; an action which stands as a serious challenge to the empowerment, dignity and rights of girl children. Moreover, most girls have been married to HIV positive husbands, due to child

pledging; an action that is supported by parents in sending their children into marriages without the consent of children. Most child marriages are forced marriages through the authority of the prophet who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit coupled with the collaboration of poor parents who send their children as way of getting the bride price in return.

Apart from the above, the church prohibits its believers from attending hospitals, the type of medication which the church labels as 'worldly' and an act of humiliation against the healing power taught in their churches. Such denunciation of Western medication has led to high rates of infant mortality among the believers of Johane Marange and some kids dying at birth, while some infants got infected with HIV in the absence of trained midwives at delivery. In direct comparison with boys in the sect, Marangean doctrines affect girl children through child pledging, virginity test, early marriages, anti-education and anti-school philosophies which will make gender empowerment unachievable within the church's future because young believers are like recycle the same philosophies to their offspring.

Children of Johane Marange church have suffered a lot on the account of religion. Child marriages have highly affected girl children who most of them have been married under the age of eighteen, as stipulated by the Zimbabwean law (adult age). For girls, entering into marriage comes with the consequence of dropping out of school hence making them unable to fend for themselves but have to look upon their poor and abusive husbands for basic needs. Children have often entered into polygamous marriages where contraceptives are prohibited, therefore a couple of competing with older women (within the marriage system) and child bearing which is done annually, strains the minds of children, health status and self-esteem. As a means of survival,

such children who have entered into marriage; together with their offspring survive on peace jobs (*maricho*), an action which is akin to child labour. Moreover, child labour is also evident through *zunde ramambo*, a practice whereby children join their parents in cultivating the prophet's field as a show of allegiance with the illusion of sucking blessings from God. Subsequently, girls have suffered more than boys through school dropouts.

Since the doctrines of the church have proved hazardous to the welfare of children in Johane Marange; the government of Zimbabwe together with the non-state actors have stepped into the center of action and tried to help out children through various programs and campaigns. Most Marangean children have no birth certificates due to the fact that they are not born in hospitals and they do not go to school; the government realized the need and facilitated a program through sending its officials to register children (issuing birth certificates) in Mafarikwa shrine during the annual Passover festival since 2010. The government also launched the nutrient campaign that was meant to deal with malnourishment and fighting kwashiorkor among children in Zimbabwe and Marangean children were collectively included in the program that was enforced with threats of arrests if one denies the program.

Apart from efforts made by the government, the girl child network has had an impact in collaboration with Plan International and the Union of Development of Apostolic churches together with Zimbabwe Council of Churches have preached against child marriages, forced labor and have rehabilitated some girls in Manicaland, who have been forced into marriage. However, child marriages are still rampant in Johane Marange and other ills against children are still prevalent due to the compromise of the government towards the church because they are a



source of elections of the ruling party. The government does not criminalize the marrying off of a minor but it only criminalizes sleeping with a minor hence the weakness of government's efforts. Some of the programs by the NGOs have failed largely due to the church's sovereignty which needs to maintain its conservative status quo. Some of the enlightened church members have distanced themselves from child marriages, child labour and have embraced Western health and education as evidenced by the church's effort in building its own school. As a result, children's welfare remains at risk in the Johane Marange church and the most affected are girls.

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**APPENDIX A : SOME OF THE PICTURES TAKEN BY TRISH MAPONDE DURING HIS RESEARCH STUDY IN MAFARARIKWA MARANGE BOCHA.**

**No.(i).** The pictures shows Trish Maponde with some of the Johane Marange children at Mafararikwa Shrine (2017).



*Source : Photos taken by Trish Maponde.12/07/17.*

**No.(ii).**The below picture shows Johane Muchabaya Momberume at the shrine with his followers.



*Source: The Herald 06/12/14*

**No.(iii).**The below picture shows some of the members of Johane Marange after the July 2017 Pentacostal festival at Mafararikwa



*Source : Photo taken by Trish Maponde.12/07/17.*

**No.(iv).**The picture below shows Mr Jofirosi with his family .



*Source :Photo taken by Trish Maponde.12/07/17.*