



**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**EXPLORING THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN  
ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF ZVISHAVANE DISTRICT**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF BACHELOR OF ARTS  
(HONOURS) DEGREE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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**June 2021**

**ZVISHAVANE, ZIMBABWE**

## APPROVAL FORM

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YEAR:                      2021

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I, Dehwe Tapiwa (R1176797C) do hereby earnestly declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgements, references and comments included in the body of the dissertation, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other university.

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...../...../.....

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this research project to creator Jehovah, for He has been my Provider and has never failed me yet. Thank you DEAR LORD. I'm also dedicating this valued work to my beloved parents and brothers, thank you for being my real pillars of support; your prayers are keeping me going. Special dedication to all my friends, your presence means a lot to me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Lord, the ultimate reality for the unmerited favor, guidance and protection throughout my studying period in which I went through thick and thin.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr Sophia Chirongoma for supervising this research project. I thank her for the time she spared in her busy schedule to read, correct and offer suggestions in the write-up of this project. I also would like to thank the participants who accorded me the opportunity to interview them and those participants who completed questionnaires.

I would not have done justice if I fail to acknowledge my parents and brothers, for their love and support in all areas of my life which is beyond expression. My uncle Sacred Chingwe and my friends I really appreciate your presence in my life at the University, for it is a haven for me.

## ABSTRACT

*This research investigates the position of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. It was a case study of the Church of Christ, Zvishavane District. The main objective of the study was to explore the status of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, show challenges and areas where women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe are unfairly treated and to suggest strategies that can be implemented to enhance women's participation on influential leadership positions, particularly focusing on the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. The main data collection tools were interview guides and questionnaires. The questionnaires were completed by ordinary church members and face-to-face interviews were conducted with church leaders. The research also used the phenomenological approach to collect data. The research concluded that there is no equal participation between males and females in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. The study recommended that the gender activist groups should consider running programs that teach church-going women of their rights. The study also recommends church leaders to deliberate on gender mainstreaming in leadership positions without conditions. They should also consider revisiting and amending their church constitutions to allow full women participation in church activities and leadership positions.*

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## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCING THE STUDY**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Women in Zimbabwean churches have been suffering from social, political, economic and religious injustices since time immemorial due to cultural and religious beliefs that hinder the participation of women in influential positions like church presidents, pastors, evangelist, deacons and other high leadership positions in the church. The situation of the oppression of women is worsened by the silence of the church or lack of prophetic voice of churches in Zimbabwe. It must be noted that the churches' interference is undoubtedly a pre-requisite. We do have so many feminist theologians who are advocating for the equal participation of men and women in the church but it should be noted that not all churches are ready to adopt the changes. Those who are adopting are very slow to implement the change into practice and others are only agreeing to this on the paper but not putting it into practice due to unknown reasons, maybe because people who are at the top leadership are men. Throughout the years, women have been struggling to find their place in a society primarily and historically dominated by men. One area of such controversies is the position of women in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe. The study seeks to explore why women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe though they were very active, educated and enthusiastically participating in many church activities and comprising the majority of the membership, seem to be very few of them when it comes to taking up leadership positions such as being church deacons, Moderators, Evangelists, Pastors, and church Presidents. The researcher sought to find out the reasons why women are left behind in the occupation of high leadership positions in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and to suggest measures that can be taken to ensure that there is equal participation of males and females in the church.

#### **1.2 Background of the study**

The Center of Religion and The Professions (2013), states that women outnumber men as members in religious groupings but their roles in many aspects of church membership and leadership leaves so much to be desired. Women remain in the minority at the highest religious

leadership and influential positions in the church. According to Maseko (2014 p12), in the Baptist churches women are not permitted to take up senior pastoral positions and the Roman Catholic Church does not ordain women as priests. In the Roman Catholic Church, women can only serve as nuns under the leadership of male priests.

In the past, in almost all societies, women were treated as second class citizens or slaves, whose main purpose was to serve men at night as sexual objects meant to please men. Females were treated as a distinct sub-human species as evidenced by their few privileges in the political, social and economic structures. Women could not own property or personal belongings and they could be bought and sold on the will of their owner. A female was viewed as serving little to no purpose. This led to a common practice known as female infanticide. It was a shame to be presented with a female child and at the time of birth many of these unlucky babies were put to death, whereas a celebration was declared at the birth of a baby boy (Muzaffai, 1996). While realizing that the change and development of our societies cannot proceed without women, through the years, women have been struggling to find their own place in the world since society is primarily and historically dominated by men. A study on past cultures and civilisations based on historical evidence reveals male domination in almost all areas including the home and the community as well as civil and non-secular institutions. Men have continued to place women in a position of subjection and submission in virtually all areas from private to the public sector and the same situation also prevails in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.

Oduyoye and Kanyoro (1997:89) argue that, women in many African societies have no say on marriage issues. Lack of legal status in the African traditional system implies that women are seen as second class citizens where women would not give evidence in the traditional court or dare. Corwant (1956: 30) further states that throughout history, men have continued to treat women as inferior. In most Zimbabwean societies, it is a serious offense if a woman is being suspected of being unfaithful but it is not an issue if this is done by men. It is not surprising that there is an increase of married men having extra marital affairs. This shows that women are treated everywhere as inferior socially, politically and religiously. This is also probably the root cause of the mistreatment of women in the religious aspect as well in Christian churches in particular.

Corwant (1956) says that amongst the Shona people, property inheritance is the privilege of the male child and it is on rare occasions that the girl child is given a fair share of property. In ATR, possession of property or wealth is still the right of men. In Africa, the majority of women live on hand to mouth with regards to issues of wealth. An environment was made that causes women to depend on men only for them to survive. Machingura (2011) states that if women have been given equal access to credit, access to adequate resources and access to leadership positions, they would not live under the mercies of their male counterparts.

Issues concerning the status of women in the Christian churches have been discussed for a long time. The following questions have been raised: are women substandard or inferior, equal or superior to their male counterparts? There are both print and electronic media publishing stories of Zimbabwean women who seek gender equality. Gender issues have been discussed in various constitutional debates. However, many Zimbabwean communities take tradition or culture as their guideline, hence, they endorse the perspective that a typical African woman who was raised well must accept being secondary or submissive to men. One will then wonder whether the Zimbabwean culture is liberation-centred in nature when it comes to the status of women. Will our society change for the betterment of our life or worst if women started taking up leadership positions? Why doesn't the situation of women change in most churches when it comes to pastoral leadership positions especially for women who underwent some pastoral training and studied at the same theological schools as men? Why are women only allowed to sing, dance and lead during the praise and worship sessions but they are only told to be silent when it comes to preaching the word of God and occupying influential leadership positions in the church like pastors, presidents and deacons in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe? The answer rests in the practice of gender discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping based on a person's sex or gender, focused on women, hence sexism.

Even though most Christian churches in Zimbabwe are known as the voice of the voiceless in dealing with life threatening issues like the welfare of widows and orphans, the disabled and developing underprivileged societies, one wonders what has happened to the issues of women and leadership positions in the church. Were they born to be followers of men? (Machingura, 2014). According to Machingura (2014), patriarchy is to blame on most challenges faced by women. Patriarchy has produced distinctions that alienate women by defining life and

determining relationships. Distinctions nurture attitudes of superiority against inferiority hence allowing domination and support of certain groups (Williams, 1997:106). Yet for William, distinctions are no more for communities of persons who have clothed themselves with Christ. As clearly articulated by the apostle Paul in the book of Galatians, in Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free person, male and female. Galatians 3:28 is one of the texts that has not found prominence with the leadership in the Church of Christ. Its lack of prominence is not surprising as all leadership positions in the church are gendered with men as leaders and women as followers. In most cases, the Galatian text is used to support other texts that portray men as predestined leaders or heads of families for example, Ephesians 5:21-25 states that:

21, Submit yourself to one another because of your reverence to Christ. 22 Wives submit yourselves to your husband as the Lord. 23, for a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church and Christ himself is the saviour of the church his body. 24, so the wives should submit themselves to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ. Good News Bible

Texts like Ephesians 5:21-25 referred to above are commonly cited in many Zimbabwean churches like in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe because of its patriarchal nature. The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe has its roots in the reformation times and it is also known as the Christian Church. Masengwe, Machingura and Magwidi (2012) postulated that the Church of Christ was founded upon the 200-year old declaration of the stone-Campbell movement which was unfortunately meant for an association rather than a church. Foster and Blowers (2004) also argue that this Church is one Church that did not like to be associated with denominationalism and is traced back to the Campbell movement. The Church was against the idea of attaching personal or family name to the congregation. As a result, they agreed that only geographical labels would be accepted.

Machingura (2013) cited that the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe accepts the following doctrines: the lordship of Christ, baptism by immersing in water and the observance of the Lord's Supper. These are the common doctrines accepted in other Churches. However, the church's doctrine on the roles, privileges and responsibilities of women is found inadequate even though they always celebrate the popular statement, "we speak where the bible speaks and become silent where the bible is silent". The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe claims to adopt bible teachings on day to day issues though some of the biblical texts are quoted out of context, misinterpreted or deliberately

ignored, for example, texts that put women in good light like Galatians 3:28 and Romans 16 where women were positively acknowledged for saving Christ. Some of the church doctrines on women besides being influenced by what they literally read from the Bible have an influence from the Shona culture.

It should be noted that the oppression of women can be traced back to the Hebrew Bible where success stories of women were never celebrated. Women's lives and experiences are only marginally represented in the bible, and women are often presented as objects of male activity and as subordinate to the desires of men. Women in many biblical texts are not ascribed the same full human status as men. Although the bible has been used to oppress and subjugate nations and people of different classes and entrench gender injustice, many feminist scholars still find the Bible very meaningful, inspirational and spiritually significant. They regard the bible as the word of God for the church. The task of interpreting the bible is considered as a way to better hear and understand that word. The patriarchal interpretation of the text has done so much harm such that they undertake to retrieve the positive aspects from the text. Lapsley (2005) cited that in the Hebrew bible, we see women playing a pivotal role on the deliverance of Israelites from the Egyptian bondage (Exodus 1-4). Women served as a catalyst to defy various forms of violence and bring about deliverance. Exodus chapter 1:1-12 shows that the fertility of the Hebrew women made the king of Egypt anxious about their multiplying in his midst. Although women are not explicitly mentioned, but they are key players in the whole drama. In order to put a stop to the Israelites' rapid reproduction, the king decided to oppress them with forced labour, but these women defied the king's logic of suffering and death, they remained healthy and continued to reproduce healthy children.

In Exodus chapter 1:13-22, women also played a pivotal role on saving others. Realizing that forced labour alone will not address the root of the problem; the king speaks to Hebrew midwives so that they would eliminate boy children. However, the midwives are motivated not to kill the boys because they 'fear God'. When questioned they argue that the Hebrew women deliver before they arrive. Pharaoh's schemes fail because he underestimates the tenacity and creative power of Hebrew women. The Egyptian king's narrow assumption that the men are the source of the Hebrew's strength reflects a patriarchal culture in which men are valued more than women. It should also be noted that without women, Moses could not have been delivered



(Exodus 2:1-10). Out of desperation to keep her son alive, Moses' mother hides him in a basket in the river Nile and his sister Miriam watches over him from a distance. When Pharaoh's daughter found baby Moses lying and crying in the basket, she immediately identifies him as a Hebrew child, out of compassion she rescues and preserves him. Moses' sister Miriam emerges from the shoreline and offers to find a Hebrew woman who will nurse the child for the Egyptian princess. Whether or not the princess was aware that she was paying the child's mother to nurse him, she is knowingly collaborating with the Hebrew women in an act of cross- gender, cross - ethnic and cross-class deliverance (Lapsley 2005).

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

In the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, women constitute almost above three quarters of the total membership of the church and they form a critical portion of the church's financial base. It is believed that in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, women constitute about 85% of the total membership of the church and the remaining 15% is for men (Machingura, 2011). However, available data indicates that they are inadequately represented in leadership positions in all sectors of the denomination. The most possible explanation for this situation could be that gender issues have not been well received or taken into consideration in the church. Some women are privileged to enrol at the theological college for the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and train as female pastors but the problem comes after their completion of their three year training, only few of them, particularly those with parents who have great influence in the church will be ordained as assistant pastors while majority are ending up either changing their profession or joining Pentecostal churches where they can be recognised. This study sets out to investigate the factors that hinder the participation of women in church leadership positions like pastor, youth president, church president and other influential positions in the church.

### **1.4 Aim**

The aim of this research is to explore the position of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe using, Zvishavane district as a case study.

### **1.5 Objectives**

1. To explore the status of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

2. To show challenges and areas where women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe are unfairly treated.
3. To suggest strategies that can be implemented to enhance women's participation on influential leadership positions, particularly focusing on the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe

### **1.6 Justification of the study**

As a member of the Church of Christ Christian church in Zimbabwe, during the time for my work related learning as part of my degree programme at the Midlands State University, I was attached to Christian churches under Africa Development Mission Trust. After a close analysis, I found out that in the Church of Christ Christian churches in Zimbabwe, women constitute more three quarters of the total membership of the church but when it comes to the church leadership positions like pastors, church president, evangelist and deacons, there are very few women holding these positions. Many positions are occupied by their male counterparts who are less than one quarter of the total membership of the church. More so, the researcher found out that there is immense potential for women who are privileged to train as pastors at the Zimbabwe Christian college which trains pastors for Christian churches but upon completion of their studies, they are not ordained as pastors as unlike their male counterparts who get to be ordained after the completion of their studies. For an example, a popular evangelist who has a massive following on social media known as Chaplin Phiri is also a former student of the Zimbabwe Christian College who is preaching very effective sermons on open spaces in the town of Harare. She is well received and followed by many people on social media.

The researcher also found out that there are very few women occupying the influential church leadership positions yet there are many potential and educated women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe who are worth suitable candidates for taking up influential positions in the church leadership. It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate whether women are not holding the influential positions deliberately or it is the church doctrine that hinders them from occupying these positions. During the period when I was undertaking work related learning among the congregations of the Church of Christ Christian churches in Zimbabwe, I also found out that if women had something they did not understand very well, they were not allowed to ask

any questions in front of the church, instead, they are advised to ask their husbands at home (1Corinthians 14: 34-35). This stance becomes a critical issue to the widows and single mothers. The researcher's aim is to portray the actual presentation of women and give the suggestions on what can be done to create equal participation of men and women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.

Suggestions for the study will create a gender responsive environment where men and women will be treated equally in the church; none will be left out when it comes to the leadership positions, key decision making and ceremonial participation. The study will benefit all women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe by highlighting areas where they are oppressed by their male counterparts and possible measures that can be taken to ensure that there is equal participation between men and women in the church.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

The main targeted group for the study is Churches of Christ, Zvishavane district. Leaders of the women gathering (*china chemadzimai*) have been selected in the identification of areas where women felt that there is injustice that hinders their participation in the church. Church leaders both male and female were consulted so that they could give their opinions concerning gender justice issues in the church. Senior church members and youth were also given the opportunity to share their opinions on factors hindering female participation in selected leadership positions and ceremonies in the church.

### **1.8 Methodology**

Corbin (2008) defines methodology as a way of thinking about and struggling with social reality. She poses that it is also a set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analysing data. Methodology is also defined by Flass (2008), as the systematic theoretical analysis of the method applied to a field of study and it comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of method and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. In carrying out this research, the researcher made use of research methods that suit very well to the topic under investigation.

### 1.8.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology of religion is a reaction to earlier theories and approaches to the study of religion. Phenomenology seeks to provide an objective, fair, neutral approach in religious studies. It seeks to treat all religions equally and to refrain from pronouncing judgments/evaluations on religion. It aims at coming up with a descriptive accuracy in religious studies. It also searches for the essence of religion, trying to establish the inner meaning of religion as it is lived and experienced by the believers. The phenomenological approach is defined by Husserl (1859-1938) as the study of reality and knowledge. It is also derived from a Greek term *phanos* which means that which “manifests itself”. The Church of Christ in Zimbabwe must speak for itself rather than the researcher to speak on its behalf.

In using this approach, the researcher exercised “*epoche*” which means holding back, suspending, putting brakes, and refraining from evaluating. In exercising *epoche*, religious studies scholars try to bracket off ideas, notions and prejudice about gender justice issues in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. They seek to understand the religion afresh and not to understand it according to rumors, reports etc.

Furthermore, in using this research method, the researcher must have empathy or getting inside the shoes of the members of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe to know better from experience. Smart (1982) adds that the researcher should enter inside the shoes of the believer for more information. The central concern for entering the believers’ shoes is that the researcher wants to become a participant observer and watches from the close range.

However, this method has its own weaknesses, according to Cox (1992), bracketing previously held beliefs and knowledge is very difficult for human beings. On empathy, one major limitation is that the researcher is concession ally limited in trying to articulate a new or foreign tradition. He may fail to understand certain practices and gestures. More so, there are some instances where the insiders were regarded as outsiders where some other rituals and practices are only reserved for certain individuals. On these areas, empathy will not yield the intended results. It should also be noted that if the researcher is not strong, he or she can be totally converted into the religion or church under investigation.

### **1.8.2 Case Study**

A case study is a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of pre-specified procedures. A case study, as defined by Robert K. Yin (2009) is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Woodside (2010) posited that a case study research can be defined as the process which involves the prediction, description and comprehending. The case study technique is mainly fundamental in cases where the context of the conditions of the events that are being investigated are beyond the control of the researcher pertaining the time of the unfolding of these particular events.

## **1.9 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

This has to do with tactics and various ways being employed to obtain specific and relevant information. In this study, the writer was able to access data that needed to be collected for the study. Information was gathered from numerous sources including written documents, video and audio recordings and interviews.

### **1.9.1 WRITTEN MATERIAL/DOCUMENTATION**

Written materials or documentation is defined by Guzman and Verstappen (2003) as an act of recording results of an investigation or research. A lot of written materials have been used during the compilation of this study. Sermons (audios and videos) of the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe, different books and the internet are some of the written materials that were used in this research.

### **1.9.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

According to Osteen (2004), participant observation is a form of sociological research methodology in which the researcher takes a role in the social situation setting under the study.” He further says that the researcher is immersed in the social setting under study. This aims to experience the events in the way in which they happen under the research study. Barret (1982) asserts that, “... researchers who employ participant observation as a research tool aim at discovering the nature of social reality by understanding the actor’s perception, understanding and interpretation of a social world.” Participant observation helped the researcher to record

some of the activities done in churches in Zimbabwe. In addition, participant observation became advantageous as it helped to provide the researcher with a guide on the subsequent methods of collecting data.

### **1.9.3 Personal interviews**

Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and another way of collecting data from individuals through conversations from various forms of information. Kvale (1996:14) defines an interview as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, seeing the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasizes the social situation of research data. Therefore, interviewing is a way of collecting data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals. This helped the researcher to identify as well as to interpret some gestures and facial expressions portrayed by the interviewers. In carrying out this research, the researcher interviewed pastors and other the members of the church and also the outsiders.

### **1.9.4 Mailing of questionnaires**

Questionnaires were mailed to the respondents with a request to return after completing the same. It is the most extensively used method in various economic and business surveys. Before applying this method, usually a Pilot Study for testing the questionnaire is conducted to reveal the weaknesses, if any, of the questionnaire. The questionnaire to be used must be prepared very carefully so that it may prove to be effective in collecting the relevant information. However, this method has some weaknesses because some of the subjects to be studied will be very slow in responding to technology.

## **1.10 Literature Review**

The researcher made use of the works written by other scholars but also taking cognizance of the fact that not much has been written concerning the subject matter within the Zimbabwean context. Granted, the researcher is also aware that this is not the first time this subject is being explored. This study also seeks to explore the works of other scholars and writers in as much as gender justice issues in Christian churches is concerned. However, this part is not blinkered to the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe only, but will greatly as much as gender justice issues are

concerned. The researcher will also highlight the gaps from various scholarly views concerning the subject at hand, and thus giving a critique and evaluation.

Matope, et al (2011) defines gender as a reference to human traits lined by culture to each sex. This definition is also supported by Haralambos and Holborn (2004). Here, it implies that males are socialized to be masculine whilst females are taught to be feminine. Furthermore, Matope, et al (2011) argues that gender starts when sex is known, is socially constructed, varies from culture to culture and it is learnt. Gender is perpetuated by family, school, the peer group and mass media. So, if gender is human traits linked by culture to each sex, which means it can be reconstructed to meet current trends. In the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, the researcher's main focus was to investigate whether gender issues are influenced by local or foreign culture.

Scholars' views from the Biblical point of view point out the positive image of women in the church. Jewett (1980) argued that woman, as equal to man should share with him in all aspects of the church's life and mission, full access to privileges and responsibilities of the Christian ministry. Women like everyone else can be ordained and play both priestly roles: sacramental, pastoral and other church services. Instead, they are given roles like singing in the choir, leading praise and worship, serving as ushers, heading Sunday school and women's departments. The arguments against the ordination of women in ministry are inadequate: that the nature of women is weak, the nature of ministry is fit for men alone, and that the gender of God is male. These are issues that have been proved wrong in history, for instance, Jewett (1980:57-108),

Ruether (1983) and Ruether (1998), argue that there is enough evidence both in scripture and history that women occupied leadership offices. She points out the reasons why women were dominated and gives solutions towards addressing these causes of female domination. They blame women's low status on the patriarchalization of God and Christ, sexism and other roots of domination. Ruether cites redemptive history in women's struggles and experiences. Grady (2006), has observed the lies that the church perpetuates in order to keep women in spiritual bondage. These lies portray how the bible has been abused such as: God created women as inferior beings and women are not equipped to assume leadership roles in the church. From the biblical point of view, this is incorrect because Jesus believed that women could lead in (Luke, 8:1-3), Acts 2:17. Texts like 1 Timothy 2:12 which instructs that "Women must not teach or preach." Many people fail to understand why Paul said these words, a woman should view her

husband as the priest of the home, in Ephesians 5:23-28 - women are portrayed as liable to being more easily deceived than men, in Gen 3, it is made to appear as if women can't be fulfilled or spiritually effective without a husband and children, true fulfillment is in Christ, John 17:3, Luke 14:26, women shouldn't work outside the home, I Timothy 5:14. All these are lies and Sheeratan (2010) has advocated for men as partners with women because they are all created in God's image.

Fiorenza (1995) asserts that it is sexual dimorphism and defined gender roles serving patriarchy that we find manifesting in modern day denominations like the Church of Christ. Therefore, Galatians 3:28 can go a long way in the empowerment of women in the broader society. The understanding is that Paul's teaching about wives' subordination is altogether taken as cultural and not normative to all situations. Societies are progressively changing where marriage has become egalitarian. It is not surprising that women are now bosses, directors and managers just like their male counterparts. To deny women that opportunity results in the modern Church lagging behind in terms of their empowerment. It is an unacceptable hermeneutic on the status and role of women in the modern 21st century Church. In fact, women should also be eligible for ordination if we base on Galatians 3:28.

Kambarami (2006) also noted that patriarchal attitudes in Christianity strengthened the traditional customs which men use to control women's sexuality or deprive the rights of women in the church. For an example, the contention that Eve was created from the rib of Adam has made women to occupy a minor position in the family as well as a lower position in the church. By implication therefore, women are viewed as second class citizens who were created by God after the man. Women are therefore viewed merely as second class citizens. This means that if God had found it good for Adam to stay alone, then Eve would never have been made and hence women would not exist. Such patriarchal attitudes made women to believe that they should always be submissive to males. This causes some stereotype that reduces the self-esteem of women. To worsen the situation, after the creation of Eve, she led Adam into sin by giving him the forbidden fruit. This negative portrayal of women as the weaker sex that brought death in the world has made men to treat them as people who should be kept under continuous monitoring in case they go wrong. Paul's letter to the Colossians gives church-going men a justification of their control over women. The woman is instructed to be "submissive to her husband" (Colossians



3:18 KJV) whilst the husband has to love his wife in return (Colossians 3:19 KJV). As a result, men in Christian churches control their women and justify their ill treatment of women basing on the Christian doctrine.

Maseko (2014) propounded that Christian men selectively make use of the Bible to justify their superiority over women. For example, references to Bible verses like, Genesis 2vs22-23, an account of a woman being created from a man is given. The fact that Adam was given authority to have dominion over every creature including naming them, in the same manner, Adam was given dominion over Eve just like he had over all other animals. By implication therefore, women are subjected to their male counterparts. She further went on to say that some mainline traditional churches do not allow women to participate in the church leadership's influential position and in some churches, the bible texts are selectively functional when dealing with the issues of gender discriminations and that is how religion can act as a tool in causing gender inequalities. Maseko (2015) recommends the government to enforce laws and monitor church constitutions in order to reduce doctrines that cause the subordination of women in the church as well as appointing groups or organizations to run programs for the church members dealing with women's rights and the ordination of women as well as ensuring that women have been appointed into top church leadership positions.

Nyoni (2016) says that the oppression of women in the Churches of Christ is based on two ideas, which is the identity and character of the church. The Church of Christ believes in biblical commands' superiority and thus it uses Pauline teachings and Jewish practices to support conservative African cultural beliefs and practices as biblical instruction on women's position in the church. This shows that the character and identity of the church also contributed to the subordination of women in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe.

Kina (2014) says that the Zimbabwe Christian College is the only college that offers pastoral training for the Church of Christ pastors in Africa and although the college is over 30 years old but up till now, the college has trained less than one hundred women as student pastors. The sad part of it is that none of them is solely leading any congregation except for Pastor Chipso Katsande who is working as a junior to a male, Pastor Chembuya at Harare Christian Church. For Kina, it is clear that there are factors that contribute negatively against women in the Church

of Christ ministry. The Church follows certain biblical teachings as well as setting doctrines that negatively work against women intending to get into full-time ministry.

Armour (2000) in his presentation titled “Women in leadership position in the church” cited that as the 1900s opened, almost no one in the Churches of Christ took issue with what we might think of as “the traditional view” of male and female roles in the church. Elders, deacons, and ministers came exclusively from the ranks of men. Men alone were responsible for leading and facilitating worship. And where men and women were both present in gatherings of the church, only men were free to teach. As an extension of these convictions, many congregations placed added limitations on women. For one, most churches did not permit women to participate in business meetings of the congregation or to serve on ministry steering committees. And in mixed settings of males and females, women usually did not lead prayers. This shows that the oppression of women in the Churches of Christ existed from time immemorial and it is a worldwide problem within the church.

Nyakuhwa (2015) views the status of women in the Church of Christ as a replica of the Shona culture. He says that the position of women in the Shona culture is not much different from what we can find in the Christian churches. This is not in line with the fact that they preach about equality as part of the salvific message of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the status of women in most Church of Christ denominations in Zimbabwe has suffered from the conflict and charisma which women often display against the administration created by men (Polema 1989:13). The few women who by chance are in leadership positions are affected by appeals made by the Zimbabwean society on traditional gender stereotypes which demand that women be submissive to men. What is interesting is that, the stereotype doesn’t spare women who have trained to become Christian leaders as pastors.

On gender issue in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe, Kling (2004) commented that it is really surprising when people go misogynistic on issues to do with women and leadership positions. Yet they don’t find it problematic when women serve in Church as ushers, praise and worship leaders, decoration team leaders and intercession leaders. Critics propound that the proponents of women’s ordination respond that the Church fathers and reformers failed to group the full implications of Galatians 3:28 as a result of their prejudices against women thereby ruling out

any passages like Galatians 3:28 that grant women freedom for full involvement in the Christian ministry.

There is need to focus attention on the views of African women theologians on feminism. Phiri and Nadar (2006) have suggested a feminist theory of praxis. They see feminist theology as taking a special interest in the lives of women, their stories, hopes, beliefs, experiences of oppression and liberation. If it is praxis, it points to intentional social activity as supported by Chopp (1996). A feminist theory of praxis seeks to shape Christian activity around the norms and visions of emancipation and transformation. Here, there is a focus on willingness to be God's hands in the world alleviating oppression and forming communities of endurance, hope and new understandings of what constitutes human flourishing. African feminist theologians talk of accountability, collaboration in relation to diverse cultures and a shared commitment as conditions for their praxis (Phiri, and Nadar, 2006). They conclude their opinion of this praxis by viewing it as a critical analysis of contexts of gender roles and engaging such with liberating and transformative praxis in order to encourage human flourishing furthering God's reign on earth.

Another African woman theologian, Njoroge in Phiri and Nadar (2006) posits for life-giving theology which addresses the trauma women undergo in the quest for a child of their own as articulated by Oduyoye (1999). Here, silence and passivity are not the options but African women theologians are advocating for churches to formulate counseling methodologies and materials that help women and men to realize that there is more than one way of being fruitful in the eyes of God. Life-giving theology will multiply the fullness of humanity as well as bring life after death through Christ.

It is clear that when it comes to the issue of leadership, the average women do not dream to ever become one of the leaders in the church, (Goodwin 19194 p33). Women in the Christian church have been forced to play a second fiddle because of the set of conditions that makes man become automatic leaders and pillars of the church who believe to carry on with the tradition of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. According to Mrs Useni (interview 29 January 2014) in Machingura (2014), whose husband is a pastor, "even if your husband is a pastor, the wife is disregarded even though it is us women who make our husband's ministry successful". If the husband is an elder or deacon, this does not mean the wife holds the same position. In the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe, women are made to believe that it is not important to become

leaders. It is that monopoly of the pulpit by many churches like the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe that needs to be overthrown for securing to women equal participation and positions with men. There is need to grant them full equality as men in the ministry. Critiques particularly from Pentecostal churches justifiably argue that the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe lacks relevance by leaving out women on leadership positions even though women generally constitute majority of the total membership in the church. Women only declare their presence by colorful regalia they put on.

In conclusion, scholars agree that there is need for transformed gender relations between women and men. A transformed gender relation between women and men is achievable when communities identify their weaknesses and try to forge a way forward through implementation of gender sensitive strategies.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The current status of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe: A case study of Zvishavane District**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The chapter seeks to discuss the current status of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. The chapter is going to show challenges and areas in which women are oppressed or not allowed to participate in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe.

#### **2.1 Challenges and areas where women are not allowed to participate in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe**

##### **2.1.1 Female ordination and preaching**

In the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe, there is a very few number of ordained female pastors despite having very well trained female pastors who went for pastoral training. They also acquired a diploma in Pastoral and Religious Studies at the Zimbabwe Christian College (ZCC), Church of Christ based theological school which trains pastors and offers diplomas for those who may wish to acquire a diploma in Religious studies. Out of all those who managed to train as Pastors, very few of them are privileged to be appointed as associate Pastors. Only their male counterparts are serving for less than two years and they get to be ordained to lead a congregation or assembly. Those few female pastors employed by the church, they can only serve as Sunday school pastors, youth pastors and women's ministry pastors. Their salaries are very low as compared to that of their male counterparts. According to one of the female pastors (interviewed 23 March 2020), she said,

The painful part is that both female and male pastors we are trained at the same theological school, we study the same content and receive the same qualification and in most cases us female pastors we graduate with merit awards. However, when it comes to employment, we are assigned to do secondary duties at the church like teaching Sunday school and doing church administration.

In the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, women are treated as second class in their own church despite their many numbers which occupies more than three quarters of the total church membership. Machingura (2014) says that the Church of Christ has forced women to believe that being a woman means subordination in every aspect of life including church ministry. The church fails to understand that there are women who have profound potential who can perform much better than male pastors. For example, there is Chaplin Christine Phiri who is a former female student who trained at the ZCC, she is well known for her sermons on public forums in and around Zimbabwe, on social media and has also travelled around the world preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. In an interview by Machingura (2014:98) Bandera said,

There is fear of the unknown amongst the Church of Christ leaders as such; they cannot state exactly why they are reluctant in ordaining women. Most of the leaders in the Church of Christ don't want to be known for having advocated for the cause of women let alone the ordination of women during their time as office bearers.

The church was named from the word Christ, and it claims to follow biblical principles. The Church of Christ used to celebrate the popular statement that 'we speak where the bible speaks and become silent where it is silent.' The Church of Christ claims to apply biblical principles in their day to day operations even though some of the biblical texts are quoted out of context and ignored deliberately. For example, Gal 3:28 says 'there is no difference between Jews and gentiles, between slaves and free people and between male and female, you are all one in union with Christ' (Good News bible). It should also be noted that in the letter of Paul to the Romans in chapter 16, there are a number of women who were mentioned there and appreciated for serving the Lord. There is Phoebe who was a deacon at a church in Rome and she was known for the help she gave to the people outside the church (Romans 16:1-2). The same chapter also mentions Priscilla who was known for serving God (Romans 16: 3-4).

Tables 1 and 2 below show the number of men and women who participated at the conferences held in 2019. Table 3 shows Zvishavane district youth committee from 2018-2020. Table 4 shows Zvishavane district leadership, pastors, deacons and deaconesses from 2018-2020. From the tables below, it is clear that the women belonging to the Churches of Christ are not oppressed at district level only, but the problem originated from the national level, women are treated as secondary beings in the church that cannot stand and preach in front of their male counterparts.

**Table 1**

Participants at the 2019 National conference held at Somabula national conference Centre for Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe

Day1	Male	Female
Presider	1	0
Main speaker	1	0
Day 2		
Presider	1	1
Main speakers	5	1
Day 3		
Presiders	1	1
Main speakers	2	1
Day 4		
Presider	1	0
Main speaker	2	0

**Table 2**

Participants at the 2019 Zvishavane district youth conference held in August at Wedza Church of Christ, Zvishavane

	Number of male presiders	Number of female presiders	Number of male preachers	Number of female preachers
Day 1	2	1	5	0
Day 2	3	0	4	2
Day 3	1	1	1	1

**Table 3**

Zvishavane district youth committee, 2018-2020

	Male	Female
2018	4	2
2019	4	2
2020	4	2



**Table 4**

Zvishavane district leadership, Pastors, deacons and deaconesses 2018-2020

	Number of male pastors	Number of Female pastors	Number of deacons	Number of deaconesses
2018	22	2	162	54
2019	22	2	166	50
2020	22	3	168	48

### **2.1.2 Leadership positions in the church**

According to Pastor Bandera (in an interview on 22 March 2020), the traditional position of the Churches of Christ pertaining to women ordination in leadership positions like deacons, church persons, and church presidents varies from groups. There are two groups in the Churches of Christ, some are conservative groups and some are liberal groups of the churches of Christ. The liberal group has come up with new names for themselves, for instance, they call themselves Christian churches and the disciples for Christ. Those who still maintain the name Churches of Christ are the conservative group but these three families met at the world convention and regard themselves as one family but some of the differences are that pertaining to female ordination and spiritual gift. So there are some women in the Churches of Christ who are allowed to rise up and even take up the teaching responsibility. Now here in Zimbabwe after the split of Dewure splinter group, the national church has somehow embraced women leadership although not official but women have started partaking the leadership positions like chairpersons at assembly level and women are also found in the national executive although it is very small numbers as compared to their male counterparts.

Despite the inclusion of few women in leadership positions, it should be noted that women in Zvishavane district are still struggling to occupy leadership positions at assembly, regional and national level. All influential positions like chairpersons, eldership and deacons are mostly

reserved for men. This is despite the fact that there are a number of women who are highly educated and have leadership qualities which they can put to good use by leading in the church. Women's positions are normally the position of treasurer, secretarial positions and leading the praise and worship teams. The same problem is also prevalent in the National youth conference executive. According to Pastor Mabani who is the former youth president, since 2010, the National youth conference executive never included any females. It was only in 2017 after the amendment of the constitution that there was only one young woman who was just a committee member; all other influential positions were occupied by males. The president of the women's fellowship group in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe commented that there is no equality between men and women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. She noted that for example When we look at the Pastor's fraternity, it is dominated by males, ladies are left outside the key leadership positions and they are segregated from actively participating in leadership and decision making forums. At the national structure, ladies are not proportionately represented even though they have the majority number in the church (23 March 2020).

Pastor Banda who is the National youth President (interviewed on 21 March 2020), said that in the National youth Executive, the position of presidency is reserved for men only because according to the constitution of the church, a president and the Vice president must be a male pastor who is not yet married. Ladies can occupy other positions like the post of treasurer, secretariat or becoming ordinary committee members. Currently, there are three ladies out of seven members of the executive holding the position of secretariat, treasurer and committee member. So it is clear that in the national youth executive, there is the inclusion of ladies but they are very few as compared to their male counterparts. The Associated Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe Youth (ACCYZ) constitution mentions gender equality considerations on the executive board but it is not fully implemented on the ground.

On the same note, the constitution of the ACCY, a youth board which covers Zvishavane district, Bulawayo and Gweru, article 1B says in sections where words in the masculine appear, the corresponding feminine shall also apply for example he (she), his (her) except where the context indicates otherwise. However, in the same constitution on article 5A, where duties and responsibilities of the executive committee are indicated, there was no gender consideration, the corresponding feminine was not applied at all, only the word he/ his was used as if only men are

the ones responsible for leadership positions. This clearly shows that women and ladies in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe are not fairly represented when it comes to the issues of leadership positions despite their positive attributes in the church.

The same problem also extends to the national executive of the church conference, throughout the entire history of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe; there is only one female pastor who was in the national leadership of the Pastors' forum that is Pastor Chipo Katsande. At the assembly levels in Zvishavane district, women remain also on the periphery, especially when it comes to representation in the influential leadership positions like chairpersons, and eldership positions, only men are considered as eligible to take up these top influential positions. Women's posts are secretarial, treasurer and youth advisors. This has made women to have no influence on decision making on matters of the church, only men holding influential positions are the ones who make the major decisions.

In Zvishavane district, statistics show that there is no congregation led by a female pastor in the district which is made up of 72 Assemblies. The only three female pastors in the district are working as a Sunday school pastors and they have no congregation to lead. Usually, on church programs such as all night prayers, and church building projects, only men in leadership positions meet and discuss what to do and make final decisions without considering the views of women who outnumbered men in the church. Amour (2000) says in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe, women usually serve in ministerial roles, mostly they serve in specialties for example youth, education, women's ministry, children's ministry and counseling.

### **2.1.3 Church uniforms**

Women in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe are obliged to wear church uniforms. There is a theological assumption that the uniform represents an amour for every Christian. This theological concept was adapted from Ephesians 6:10-13 which says:

Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand (KJV).

The women's uniform in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe emulates the design of the Roman soldiers' uniform. They believe that all the weapons mentioned there resemble the uniform. Apart from the uniform, all women are required to have a hymn book and the bible as part of the weapons/ armorers (nhumbi dzemu Kristu dzokurwa nadzo). It is however a paradox that their male counterparts are not required by church doctrine to have uniforms as their female counterparts. This raises the following pertinent question, "If the uniform is the weapon referred to by Ephesians 6:10-13 as believed by the majority of women, why does that weapon not apply to all men in the church?"

The status of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe is also defined by the church regalia. Machingura (2015) says it is the dressing of women that distinguishes the identity of women in the Christian churches though it is a common feature in Zimbabwean churches. The regalia / uniform of women in the Churches of Christ declare the presence of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. Women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe are identified by putting on red and white uniforms on church gatherings such as every first Sunday of the month, conferences, big Sundays, funerals and Thursday women gathering (Ruwadzano \ China chemadzimai). Those with no church uniforms usually put on attires written Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. This is not only found in the women's fellowship group, even the youth are also required to put on church uniforms.

According to Kakava (in an interview on 02 May 2020), the president of women in Christian churches, the use of uniforms in Christian churches was initially introduced for identification purposes only, but now it is taken as weapons mentioned in Ephesians 6:10-13:

Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. (KJV).

According to Bandera (in an interview on 22 March, 2020), from as far back as the 1970s, the Churches of Christ did not have uniforms for women. This phenomenon was introduced by the wife of Todd together with some indigenous pastors in Zimbabwe from Zvishavane, Dadaya. The reason behind that was to be like other churches in Zimbabwe which had started to have uniforms in various colors as a mark of identity. However, one other positive reason was to

reduce discrimination between the rich and the poor when people come to church since they would all come dressed in uniforms. Now people moved further from having those traditional red and white uniforms, the church has now introduced the African attires more of fashion and rebranding which women have introduced for them and they are now enjoying these African attires more. The challenge is why only women have to put on uniforms and not men, there is no clear reason of why only women wear uniforms.

According to the ACCYZ constitution on article 4 C (1)

All girls should put on uniforms. The uniform shall consist of a white hat, skirt and belt with the same design as the one of the women's fellowship group. The blouse shall be short sleeved with white endings. The shoes or tennis must be always white. The uniform must be always worn in full during the service

On the same article, it states that boys and young men should be smart and presentable only. This is also another form of denigration of the status of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe because women and girls are the ones only required to put on uniforms while men and boys are exempted, they put on clothes of their choice as if they were not part and parcel of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.

#### **2.1.4 Thursday gatherings**

Women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe are also required to meet every Thursday for women's fellowship known as Ruwadzano rwemadzimai in Shona. At these gatherings, women are taught by their elderly and Pastor's wives on how they should be good wives in their homes as well as how they should please their husbands on the marital bed. They meet every week for this service usually at the church or within their homes. However, on this note, there is another misnomer since their male counterparts do not meet regularly to teach each other how they can be good husbands to their wives and family, only women are required to so.

In an interview with Mrs Kakava (20 March 2020), she commented that from long back in the history of the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, women had nothing to do in the church, they were always quiet but they had some problems. They were not allowed to preach, pray or to give testimonies; they could only lead in hymns. So, they created a platform in the form of Thursday gatherings where they can share ideas and preach as women. It was their unique safe space where they could meet and fellowship freely during the week either on Thursday, Friday or

Saturday. This outside service was formed by women since they did not have any opportunity to exercise leadership in the main Sunday service. They therefore used this mid-week service as a time for fellowship since during the Sunday service they would come and sit and listen to their male counterparts who were allowed to lead the church service.

Reverend Bandera (interviewed 24 April 2020) commented that traditionally, women think that during the Thursday gathering, people should only be taught to please their husbands, marriage and children but now there is a great shift as far as Thursday gathering programs are concerned. Now they are dealing with issues like spiritual gifts and Entrepreneurship rather than focusing on marital and domestic issues.

## **2.2 Conclusion**

In a nutshell, women in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe are treated as second class citizens in their church as compared to their male counterparts who appear to be more superior. Women in the Church of Christ are not all ordained as pastors despite the fact that they have pastoral diplomas, they are obliged to put on uniforms which is claimed to represent the amour while their male counterparts are exempted from all this. On conference preaching schedules, women are not fully represented, only their male counterparts do the preaching. The next chapter will elucidate the main causes for the subordination/ unfair treatment of women in the church

## **Chapter 3**

### **Causes of the subordination / unfair treatment of women in the Church**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

From the previous chapter, it is clear that women in the churches of Christ are unfairly treated by their male counterparts in the church. According to the Center of Religion and profession (2013), women outnumber men as participants of religious groupings but their roles as far as the leadership is concerned leaves so much to be desired. This chapter seeks to discuss the causes of subordination / unfair treatment of women in the Church by their male counterparts who take the most influential leadership positions in the church.

#### **3.1 Patriarchal Interpretation/Misappropriation of the Bible**

##### **3.1.1 The order of creation**

Some scholars have made people to believe that the order and mode of creation stories in the bible is the reason that causes the subordination of women in the churches. From Genesis chapter 2, the Bible is clear on the order of creation: Adam, the man is created first and then Eve, the woman later. In this order of creation, proponents of this view claim that a revelation of God's intention is perceived here. Thus, per the order of creation, God planned male headship right from the beginning of creation by creating the man first. Piper and Grudem, (1991) states that the order recognized Adam as the "firstborn" in the human family, a position that gave him the distinctive duty of leadership in the family - whether at home or at church.

More so, on the instance of the creation of the woman in Genesis chapter 2: 18-22, it says, 'The Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him' (NIV). Ratsara and Bediako (2013) comment that, on the term helper, it is often inferred that the

woman is created for man's interest. Other scholars have even concluded that "the writer of creation stories make it clear that the divine intention was to create the woman for the benefit of the man (Ratsara and Bediako, 2013). Waltke and O'Connor (1990) agree with the same view saying that the phrase 'for him' in Genesis 2:18 indicates that the woman is made for the man's sake and in his interest. Therefore, if the woman is made to be a helper, then, the conclusion that is often reached is that the man had the main duty or responsibility of leadership in all spheres of life. For this reason, Packer (1991: 21), says

For instance, women should be confined to the gender roles of pastoral assistants, ministers, of music, youth directors, and educational ministers. He argues that these functions have "the effect of supplementing and supporting the male pastor's...own preaching and teaching... None of this... requires ordination as a presbyter.

This seems to be clear from the main references made to the man in Genesis chapter 2. Ratsara and Bediako (2013) indicate that the main references are made to the man in Genesis chapter 2, the man is referred to eighteen (18) times as compared to the two (2) times' reference to the woman (p. 24).

### **3.1.2 The fall of Adam**

Church leaders and theologians have sometimes used the Bible to support societal evils, interpreting relevant texts as 'proof' that these were sanctioned by God. In the case of women, simplistic interpretations of Genesis 2-3, for example, resulted in Christian theologians depicting women as 'the daughters of Eve' and therefore the temptresses of men. Some Christian theologians believe that the first fall of men in the Garden of Eden was caused by Eve when she was deceived by the serpent (Genesis 3:1ff). By so doing, women were identified as the devil's gateway. Tertullian quoted by Yen (2003), spoke of Eve with misogynist undertones, 'Woman do you not know that you are [each] an Eve... You are the Devil's gateway. You are the unsealer of that forbidden tree. You are the first deserter of the divine Law. . . On account of your desert, that is death, even the son of God had to die'. According to him, when the devil came to the human race, he came through Eve the woman and tempted her, breaking the divine law.

Again, Genesis chapter 2:16 says, 'And the Lord commanded to man that you are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' (NIV). Osei-Bonsu (2015) says that evidence from



Genesis chapter 2: 15-17 indicates indisputably that the law of God and responsibility was committed to him and not her. Perhaps, this appears to be the reason why some assume that despite the fact that the woman was the first to sin, the blame of sin was on Adam and not Eve (chapter 3: 9-12; 3: 17). According to the principle of fairness, he who is given the responsibility must render account. God did just that. This is because He required an account from him and not from her indicating that the primary responsibility was given to him. This is often used by some patriarchal biased scholars as the basis for arguing that the man was divinely appointed to lead and not women.

Extending this idea of leadership from Genesis chapters 1, 2 and 3, Ratsara and Bediako (2013) maintain that the opinion of male leadership is further clear in the relationship between Adam and Eve after the fall in the Garden of Eden. One reason for this conclusion is implied in the judgment as pronounced on both Adam and Eve. According to Ratsara and Bediako (2013, p. 34), “the judgment upon the woman is largely restricted to the home and child bearing...with images of conception, childbirth” and submission to the dominion of the man (Genesis 3:16). On the contrary, the judgment upon the man covers the entire productive land (3: 14-19). This consideration leads one to conclude that because the man is the divinely instituted head; his area of operation is wider in scope, as compared to the woman, even after the fall.

### **3.1.3 Jewish priesthood**

Jewish priests performed major roles in their worship system in the Temple. However, by what seems to be an eternal promise (Exodus 28: 1-4), the priesthood was given to Aaron, the brother of Moses, and his sons. Since he was a descendant of the tribe of Levi, only Levites qualified as priests. However, not all Levites managed to serve as priests. Possibly, there were some women who were also from the descendants of Aaron and from the tribe of Levi. But these women were never made priests. This is an extension of the male-headship principle in Genesis 1-3 and also an indisputable indication that only men are assigned with the authority to lead in worship.

### **3.1.4 The maleness of Jesus Christ**

Some pointed to the maleness of Christ in support of their argument of male headship. According to them, Jesus Christ is male and He is best represented by males and not females (Jewett, 1980).

That Christ Himself appointed twelve males from His almost gender balanced followers seems to be indicative of males appropriately and adequately representing Jesus Christ. In following this tradition of male priesthood and leadership in worship, some see the practice of the church, throughout its centuries of existence, in her appointment of males as priests and leaders of Christian denominations as being consistent with the tradition of Jesus Christ. For Morris (2004:6)

...the fact that God has led his church to restrict ordination to the priesthood restricted on to men for almost 2,000 years should be reason enough to continue the practice of the Church and to reject the demands of those influenced by feminism to begin ordaining women to the priesthood.

### **3.2 Cultural beliefs**

There is no one single definition accepted to define culture. Gibbs (1981) defines culture as the way of thinking and manners shared by a substantial grouping which gives them uniqueness in relation to others. It consists of the beliefs and practices of a community that have been passed from one generation to the other. All people are influenced by their cultural background, thus some cultural traits are collectively manifested. Culture is learned through socialization i.e. as one grows up in a certain socio-cultural environment. Culture holds everything which contributes to the survival of human beings – both material things and non-material interests. Bwire (2014) says cultural beliefs also affect gender roles in the society. Women are ill-treated because of biological issues of gender and gender difference. Communities identify feminine/masculine characteristics and teach their children to conform to these depending on their sex. Thus, the context of masculine/feminine difference is culturally determined and differs from one culture to another, hence it is highly variable.

#### **3.2.1 Interpretations of the gender of God in Africa**

In Africa, belief in God is common and all the people have a notion of God as the Supreme Being and as the center of religion in African communities. Mbiti (1975) says, Africans do not worship their ancestors- they are not the supreme Beings; the end in themselves, but God is the final authority above and beyond the ancestors. Africans do not question the existence of God. The Supreme Being is the originator and sustainer of all things and Africans have used various images to describe God. Cunningham (2000) states that, African communities view God as a

Father whilst the minority views God as the mother and others view God as a couple and as gender free.

Many African communities especially those that are patriarchal organized visualize God as a father. God is viewed as a father in terms of his position as a creator and provider of all human needs. For example, the Bemba refer to God as the universal father of human beings and among the Baganda, God is not only a father of human beings but also the father of the lesser divinities (Birwe, 2016). The fatherhood of God is expressed in the names given to God, prayers and proverbs, while the image of motherhood is not popular.

By implication therefore, the image of God as a father is more predominant than God as a mother. The portrayal of God as male has negatively impacted the status of women in society and communities. To a greater extent, this has meant that women are viewed as if they do not share the image of God. More so, since God is visualized as male, this has often been taken to mean that only the male can represent God in religious practices.

### **3.2.2 Education**

Another factor that influences women's role and participation is formal education. Participation in formal education is important because it equips individuals with the knowledge they require to effectively participate in various professions. Bwire (2016), states that in many African countries, it is claimed that women have the same right to education as men, but in reality, this same right has not been achieved by women because in some communities parents are still undervaluing the girl child's education. They claim that the girl child does not need education since their most important societal roles is motherhood which can be performed without education. Because of that societal belief, the girl child is prepared for her societal roles and she is more susceptible to being married off at an early age.

To add more, poverty also contributes as a factor that hinders the girl child's education especially when parents have failed to raise enough school fees for the children, girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school first. They can either be married off or sent to work as laborers in order to support the boys' education. This means that in African culture, boys are more valued than girls and they are given first preference in everything.

More so, the school system also plays a major role in directing women's ambitions towards certain professions that conform to existing gender role definitions. For example, secretarial duties, nursing, teaching, waitressing and home science among others. Hence, girls may avoid religion oriented professions since they are not much considered as suitable for women.

When one lacks enough formal education, then they can end up performing certain minor roles and not major roles. Thus, they may clean, cook, do the laundry, visit the sick, sing and teach children, but all professional ministries will not be available to them. Therefore, even if they were called to occupy leadership positions, lack of education will hinder them.

### **3.3 Biological status**

The biological status of women hinders them from performing other duties in African culture. Mbiti (1975) states that in many African societies, the potency of menstruation still looms. Therefore, there are many taboos limiting women's participation during their menses. For example, women are expected not to perform any religious duty in ATR for at least forty days after the birth of a child. In many communities, menstruating women may not cook ritual meals, they may not even go for worship in some African Independent Churches and Muslim women will not enter the mosque during such times. It is believed that menstrual blood has the power to defile all prayer and renders all ritual ineffective. Likewise, she should not go near holy places such as altars where sacrifices are offered, even in the Old Testament, she could not enter the temple.

Birwe (2016) asserts that societies hold beliefs about the nature and role of women; these serve a purpose in ensuring women's secondary status in relation to men in the society. These beliefs are communicated in proverbs, sayings, and other oral forms of communication, they create a negative portrayal of women and this can be passed from one generation to the other.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is clear that the subordination of women from all religions started time immemorial and it was mainly caused by the patriarchal misinterpretation of the bible, cultural beliefs and biological nature of women. The next chapter will discuss ways that can be implemented to empower women to take up leadership roles in the church

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Possible strategies for empowering African women to take up leadership positions in the church**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to highlight strategies that can be implemented by the church to ensure the inclusion of African women to take highly influential positions in the church. From the previous chapter, it is clear that women subordination in the church is influenced by cultural, religious and societal beliefs and these beliefs can be reconstructed to create a world which is a better place to live for women especially in the church.

#### **4.1 Deconstructing cultural beliefs that denigrate the position of women in society**

Culture refers to the way of thinking and behavioral patterns shared by substantial grouping which gives them identity in relation to the others and it consists of beliefs and practices of a community that have been passed from one generation to the other (Gibbs 1991). All people around the world are influenced by their cultural practices. Culture embraces everything that contributes to the life of people that include material and non-material interests that include dance, diet, politics, religion and so on (Maloba et al, 2018). Cultural beliefs also affect the gender roles and the question of power in society and the church. Many African cultures are patriarchal; they mainly denigrate the leadership of women in the communities. Women are treated as inferior as compared to their male counterparts. Due to the fact that the African culture is patriarchal and patrilineal, female sexuality is largely under the control of males (Khumalo and Garbus, 2002).

Machingura (2015) cited that the Zimbabwean Shona culture has to some extent been labeled by critics and women activists as anti-women or unfriendly to women and male dominated societies. There is subordination of women in the African culture. Socialization in some cases made women to believe that being women means being voiceless and submissive to men even on issues that endanger or prevent their empowerment. The assumption is that women's status and body belong to the man after the payment of lobola. Issues of morality and behavior are all given

by men and this has weakened the status of African women because they are viewed and treated as people of weaker sex as confirmed in most African societies.

For women to participate in influential leadership positions in the church, our communities should deconstruct societal beliefs which link leadership positions with men only. Our cultural beliefs should be deconstructed and promote cultural gender equality. More so, this cultural practice was fuelled by the socialization process, therefore to amend the situation there is need for resocialisation. The education sector and theological colleges and those involved in mass teaching or any public lecturing should aim on highlighting how culture has created gender inequalities between men and women. Teachings addressing the impact of culture should be regularly addressed mostly in the church seminars so that women would not continue to live as the less social, political and religious status in the community. Since culture is socially constructed and not a biological construction, patriarchy should be seen as it really is. Women in churches and communities should also be enlightened so that they can understand how culture reduces their status since majority of them are comfortable with the status quo to the extent that they worship male domination.

To add more on cultural change, our communities should also reconsider the role played by women in ATR and use them as a point of reference of celebrating other female figures that were very successful in leadership positions like Nehanda Nyakasikana and leadership roles played by the aunts and grandmothers to lead our communities. Oduyoye (1986) argues that in traditional society, women played a vital role in the society. There were communities in Africa that were ruled by women where women were heads of families. In such societies, it meant that men had subsidiary roles to play. It should be noted that even in patriarchal societies, women had distinct roles to play for example being custodians of children.

The church needs to make an obligation to create an environment where women and men can equally be successful. This involves the addressing of misogyny, and sexism and patriarchy. It means settling for nothing less than equality and honors for all people all women and all men. It means addressing understated and unrecognized biases and barriers, and showing the world what redeemed and restored gender and personal relationships truly looks like.

#### **4.2 Promote theological education for women**

Suguna (2011) states that education is a breakthrough of women empowerment because it allows them to respond to the challenges, to confront their old-style role and change their life. So we cannot ignore the importance of education in reference to women empowerment to take leadership positions in the church. In order to promote women to take leadership positions in the church, women should be encouraged and promote the education of women in our communities. In Zimbabwe, women find it difficult to be enrolled in theological colleges and seminaries. Some churches are reluctant to send women to study theology in the seminaries and other seminaries don't admit female students at their theological schools. Phiri (2007) states that challenges linked to the enrollment of women in theological schools include that there are very few women in theological schools in Africa due to the fact that the missionaries who came to Africa linked the study of theology to men only who were in the ordained ministry. By so doing, mission churches in Africa continued with the same policy linking the study of theology to the ordained ministry, up to the present day, access to theological education is limited for the majority of African women.

Channawar (2016) says that women constitute nearly half of the populace in the world and access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women's rights movements. Women's education has also been a major concern for both the government and civil society as educated women can also play a vital role in socioeconomic factor. The education of women is the most influential tool of transformation of women's position in society. Agrawal and slave (2013) cited that education reduces the discrimination and increases the status of women in her family and also community where she works. Education inspires, guides and trains in all levels for improving her qualities.

Some churches here in Zimbabwe have allowed women to study theology so that upon graduation, they can work among fellow women. The painful part is that men and women enrolled for theological education study the same content, spend the same amount of time at the college but at the end, they receive different qualifications by virtue of being women. While in others they receive the same qualification but they are assigned to perform different duties in the church where women are employed as assistant pastors or Sunday school pastors in the church.

In order to fully promote women to take leadership positions, churches should promote the education of women through giving them scholarships to study theology in seminaries and universities. Without education, none can be able to take influential positions since they come with a lot of responsibilities. Phiri (2007) noted that in Africa, other churches have allowed the ordination of women in the church to become pastors but they do not sponsor women to go for theological education. Religious organizations should channel some of its funds towards the education of women so that they would hold qualifications that allow them to take influential leadership positions in the church and religious organizations. Phiri (2007) cited that scholarships have an age limit which prevents women who postpone their studies until later as they may want to have children and take care of their families. By the time when they want to resume their studies, they would not qualify the age for the scholarships. Thus, even though they are able to find a place for theological education, they would not qualify for age limit for the scholarship.

Phiri, (2007) highlighted that while donors have a policy to channel a certain percentage of the scholarships to women, experiences in Africa has shown that the major challenge for women is to get the approval of the church leaders to endorse the application of women who may want to study theology but was not send by her church, by so doing, the study of theology remains a privilege for those who have been approved by their church leaders to study theology. Yet the study of theology must be open for all who have a passion.

Churches can also promote the education of women to study theology, engaging into gender projects that support women from disadvantaged families to further their studies in theological education. They can offer economic support in the form of provision of tuition fees to women at university level, legal support and social support. However, they may also be in the form of general support where female students will be given a sort of grants for their up keep at the college and universities. It should be noted that in many African cultures, the education and welfare for girls and women have been usually compromised. Gender projects therefore can promote equality between male and female through provision of assistance to the vulnerable group, particularly the women.



#### **4:3 Advocating for the new curriculum which includes gender issues in theological colleges**

In order to promote women to take influential leadership positions in the church, theological schools should include gender issues in their educational curriculums. This means making gender as a concept in theological seminaries and colleges. Phiri (2007) propounded that the need for gender mainstreaming in theological schools is a worldwide need and has been discussed by a number of theological conferences. For example, in 1997 it was discussed by the World conference of Association of Theological institutions in India where it was indicated that there is male domination in theological curricular. Theological staff and students numbers is something that should be given much attention to redress the situation. Churches should lead on conducting workshops and conferences that promotes the work of engendering theological curriculums mainly in church owned theological schools where enrolment and recruitment of staff is usually governed by the church doctrines.

More so, sources used in theological schools should include gender issues so that students will learn more about gender equality before working with churches. There should be gender equality on the staff recruitment at theological institutions since there are very few women in theological schools and seminaries in Zimbabwe. Phiri (2007) highlighted that in relation to the recruitment of women in theological institutions, many theological seminaries in Africa have no women on its staff and those that recruit women normally give them posts to teach non theological subjects such as Information Technology and Basic communication skills. The theological courses are mainly reserved for their male counterparts despite the fact that women also have the capability to teach just like men. This means that the few who are privileged to be ordained teach theological courses. The majority of women who are invited to teach theological courses are either contract or part time workers. Phiri (2007) stated that the disadvantages of not being a permanent employee is that one does not qualify to go on sabbatical leave so that they can concentrate on researches and publications thereby preventing the staff members to progress academically.

Gomendo (2006) cited that the lack of highly influential women visible as role models in positions of authority and responsibility reduces passion for women to aim higher on leadership positions. Flouting of recruitment and promotion procedures, attitudes of principals and heads of departments to women employees, domination of the professional/decision-making body by

males, intimidation, and uncomfortable working environment due to gender and occupational segregation in task assignment also hinders women from acquiring highly influential positions of leadership in the church and other sectors.

Once women are involved in teaching and working in the theological institutions, they become educators of the church leadership and lay people about the ordination and ministry of women. Women in theological institutions can also play an advocacy role for the provision of good services and accommodation that creates a conducive learning environment for the female theological students. They also link African women with the funding agencies who may be interested in promoting African women to study theology.

#### **4.4 Reinterpretation of scriptures**

In an attempt to include women in top leadership positions in the church, churches should reinterpret scriptures so that women can be included and their success stories celebrated. The Bible is usually quoted to support the servant role that they play as women when compared to men. Christian theology is regarded as patriarchal; it usually talking about God brought to understanding from the position of male experiences. Christian theology is presented to Christians as if it represents everyone; the reality is that Christian theology incorporates only the lived experiences in relationship to God of Christian men. Christianity should not be exempted from criticism where sexism and classism is concerned. Church leaders are using the bible to support the societal evils, interpretation of texts as a proof that these were sanctioned by God.

Human Rights monitor (2001) cited that masculine attitudes are also found in Christianity and these have supported the traditional customs, which men use to control women's sexuality. For example, the allegation that Eve was created from Adam's rib has made women to occupy a secondary position in the Church as well as in the family. Women are therefore portrayed merely as second-class citizens who were created as an afterthought. This means that if God had seen it good for Adam to stay alone, then Eve would never have been created and therefore women would not exist on this planet. Such masculine attitudes have caused women being forced to be submissive to their male counterparts. To worsen the situation, once Eve was created, she caused havoc by giving in to the Devil's temptation and dragging Adam into the sin. This representation

of women as the weaker sex has made men to treat women as people who must be kept under continuous control so as not to make a mistake.

Machingura (2015) cited that Paul's letter to the Colossians is one example of the letters which Zimbabwean men quote as a defense of their control over women. The woman is expected to "submit to her husband" (Colossians 3:18) whilst the husband has to love his wife (Colossians 3:19). Now love is much more challenging to measure than loyalty or submissiveness. As a result, men control their women counterparts and defend their actions basing on Christian sacred texts.

Claassens (2012:149), along with many other Biblical scholars, points to the way in which "biblical texts play a key role in forming and sustaining a worldview where the males in society are privileged and thus in power". She goes on to point to the patriarchal world view, in many of the Biblical texts, which "contributes to a worldview in contemporary society where the same would be said to be true. In this regard, many women and men have internalized these values and worldview reflected in the biblical text and cannot look at the text (or their world) in any other way." Claassens (2012) helps us to understand in what ways feminist biblical interpretation serves as a tool to deconstruct the power of the text to uphold patriarchal values, helping to understand the equality of male and female so that full humanity may be achieved and illustrate in what ways a reconstructed reading of the texts "may serve as a powerful source of resistance in the fight for gender justice" (Claassens 2012:150).

Churches should make use of texts that includes women's participation in the church like the Pauline letter to the Galatians which says that "there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28) that makes us to make the same call to Christian organizations like Churches and theological seminaries that all people are special and equal in the eyes of God regardless of gender, political affiliation class and color.

Churches should also follow Jesus' attitude towards women. In the New Testament records, Jesus chose twelve disciples all men and charged them with the responsibility of spreading the gospel. Jesus had to choose these twelve men because there had to be continuity between the Old and the new covenant that he represented (Clifford 2001). Jesus' mission was to liberate all the oppressed, women included (Lk. 4:18 ff). Jesus devoted his life and work to restore individuals –

female and male to full personhood. Here are some examples, (John 4:7 – 42), Jesus and the Samaritan woman, (John 8:1 – 11) the woman caught in adultery. These examples show Jesus' positive attitude towards women irrespective of his cultural background (Stanton, 2004).

Brekus (2014) states that there is no denial that certain Scriptures, when taken at face value, they criticize female headship in the Christian church, but arguments by non-traditionalist men and women within religious communities counter sacred texts are open to more egalitarian interpretations than generally taken. It should be noted that God made use of Mary Magdalene to spread the good news of Christ's resurrection. There is also Miriam, the prophetess who led all the women in song after Pharaoh's army had sunk when God directed the sea back over them (Exodus 15:20); and the prophetess Huldah (2 Kings 22:14, Chronicles 34:22) are examples of biblical female leaders.

The church as an organization must have a deliberate plan in its structures and her vision and mission to include all, at all levels of its activities: children, youth, women and men. Active leadership should be inclusive of all, in participation, in systems, structures, education, exposure, and sensitization can lead to challenging of oppressive structures and systems of leadership in the church where God's power is invoked.

#### **4.5 Promoting girl children's education**

One of the ways that can be implemented by the church for women to take influential positions in the church's leadership is to promote girl child education. Participation of girl child education in formal education is important because it equips persons with the knowledge they need to efficiently contribute in various occupations. The constitution of Kenya (2010) cited that in many African countries, women have the same equal right to education as men, but in reality, this same right has not been achieved by women due to the reasons that some parents still underestimate the formal education of the girl child. They argue that girls do not need much education since their most important societal roles are wifehood and motherhood which can be accomplished without any formal education (Bwire 2016). In such instances, the girl is prepared for her societal roles and married off at an early age.

In Zimbabwean communities, girl child education is being disturbed by early marriage. According to Machingura (2012), "The marginality of women and the status of the girl child also

become so challenging when interrogated in most African Independent Churches especially apostolic ones or white garment churches”. Beecher (1991) cited that puberty just like birth rites focus on communal and covenantal dimensions and not bodily tasks. Some girls are too young psychologically but they are required to act like adults on social issues. All these issues that hinder the education of the girl child should be addressed so that the girl child will have access to education.

Another problem that affects the education of the girl child is poverty especially when parents have a problem with school fees. In many African communities, girls are more likely to be withdrawn from schools first when there is a challenge of school fees in the family and the boy child is normally opted to continue with education at any cost. The girl child can either be married off or sent to work as untrained laborers for example as a house maid in order to support the boys’ education, this means that boys are seen as more important than girls such that for serious affairs like the church leadership positions, then boys would be preferred. When one has inadequate formal education, then they can find out that their participation is limited to those roles where higher education is not required. All professional services and ministries will not be available to them.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is clear that there are many measures that can be implemented by the church organization to promote the inclusion of women in influential leadership positions in the church. These ways includes deconstruction of cultural beliefs that denigrates the position of women, promoting women to go for theological education, promoting girl child education, reinterpretation of scriptures and advocating for the curriculum in theological schools which is gender sensitive. The following chapter is going to present the research summary, possible recommendations that can be implemented in churches of Christ to promote gender justice and the conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter will give the summary for the whole research. The conclusion reached by the researcher and the recommendations will also be included in this chapter. Areas for further research will be highlighted at last.

#### **5.1 Summary of the study**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the position of women in Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe. It was a case study of the Church of Christ, Zvishavane district. The main data collection methods were questionnaires and interview guides for face to face interviews. The researcher also used the phenomenological method as an approach for collecting data. The questionnaires were completed by church members including the youth fellowship group and interviews were conducted with the church leaders like pastors, elders, deacons and the president for the Church of Christ women's fellowship in Zimbabwe. The research shows that women in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe are portrayed as inferior in their own church. Cultural practices, patriarchal interpretation of the bible, the interpretation of the gender of God in Africa and education are found as the major factors that led the subordination of women in the Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

In line with the research findings presented from the previous chapters, the study makes the following conclusions:

##### **5.2.1 There is no equal participation of men and women in the church**

This study concludes that the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe does not fully support women's participation in influential positions in the church activities, only their male counterparts are taking up the influential and leading roles in the church. In most cases, women take secondary

roles as compared to their male counterparts. For example, women mainly do the singing and praise and worship, taking secretarial roles and ushering while men ‘teach’ them doctrines and taking all the leading influential roles like church presidents and Pastors.

### **5.2.2 Scriptures that affect the participation of women should be reinterpreted**

It should also be noted that all the leaders who were interviewed majority of them were men because women in leadership were not forthcoming and this study concludes that they lacked self-esteem. From the interviews conducted, it was revealed that some women in the church believe that women should not actively participate in the church especially on taking the influential leadership positions and this shows that there is need to teach women to understand about leadership in the church. Some women are still supporting the Bible by referring to 1Timothy 2v11 which instructs that women are supposed to learn in silence.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

This study makes the following recommendations

### **5.3.1 To practitioners**

Gender activist groups should consider running programs that teach church-going women of their rights. Gender activists should also educate church leaders to consider amending the church constitution in a bid to incorporate gender sensitive doctrines.

### **5.3.2 To church leaders**

Church leaders should deliberate on gender mainstreaming in leadership positions without conditions. They should also consider revisiting and amending their church constitutions to allow full women participation in church activities and leadership positions.

### **5.3.3 To policy makers**

The government should consider enforcing and monitoring church constitutionalism to ensure that churches do not propagate extreme doctrines on gender inequality.

#### **5.4 Area for further research**

This study investigated in general the position of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. It would be more interesting if future research in the area of religion and gender could explore in particular the impact of Christian beliefs and doctrines on the participation of women in economic activities.



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## **Interviews**

Bandera, A secretary in the church executive of the church conference, interview 22 March 2020.

Banda. P, National youth president in churches of Christ, interview 21 March 2020.

Kakava. F, National president for women in churches of Christ, interview 02 May 2020.

Kumbirayi. E. Zvishavane district regional secretary, interview 04 June 2021.

Mabani. E, National youth president, Church of Christ 2015-2018, interview 21 March 2020.

## Appendix

### English Questionnaire

I am carrying out a research for my dissertation titled “Interrogating the position of women in the Church of Christ: A case study of Zvishavane district.” You are kindly requested to give honest answers to the best of your knowledge. Do not supply your name.

This questionnaire has been designed only for academic purposes and the information you are to supply will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for this study only.

INSTRUCTION: Please mark X in the appropriate box

#### SECTION A

1, Please select your sex

Male ☐

Female ☐

2) For how long have you been attending Church of Christ?

Less than five years ☐

More than ten years ☐

More than fifteen years ☐

More than twenty years ☐

3) Which of the following can best describe your position in the church?

Ordinary member ☐

Cell group leader ☐

Elder ☐

Deacon ☐

Other leadership position not highlighted (Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

4) Do women preach in your church?

Yes ☐

No ☐

5) Do you support women preaching and leadership in the church?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain why you support your answer in the space provided below

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6) Why is it that man do not have uniforms in the church whilst women have?

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7) “Women should take leadership positions in the church.” Do you agree?

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

8) "Women should be submissive to men". Do you agree?

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

9) In the Bible, men and women are equal?

Yes ☐

No ☐

10) From the following, which statements do you agree with?

AGREE /DISAGREE

a) The Bible does not support divorce ☐

b) Birth control is unbiblical ☐

c) Single mothers should not take leadership positions in the church ☐

\*\*\*\*\*END\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire.