

Midlands State University

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

**EXPLORING THE RELEVANCE OF CHURCH RESOURCES TO SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAINSTREAM GROUPS: A CASE STUDY OF THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES (UMC) FOCUSING ON NYAKATSAPA
CURCUIT OF MUTASA DISTRICT, MUTARE, MANICALAND**

BY

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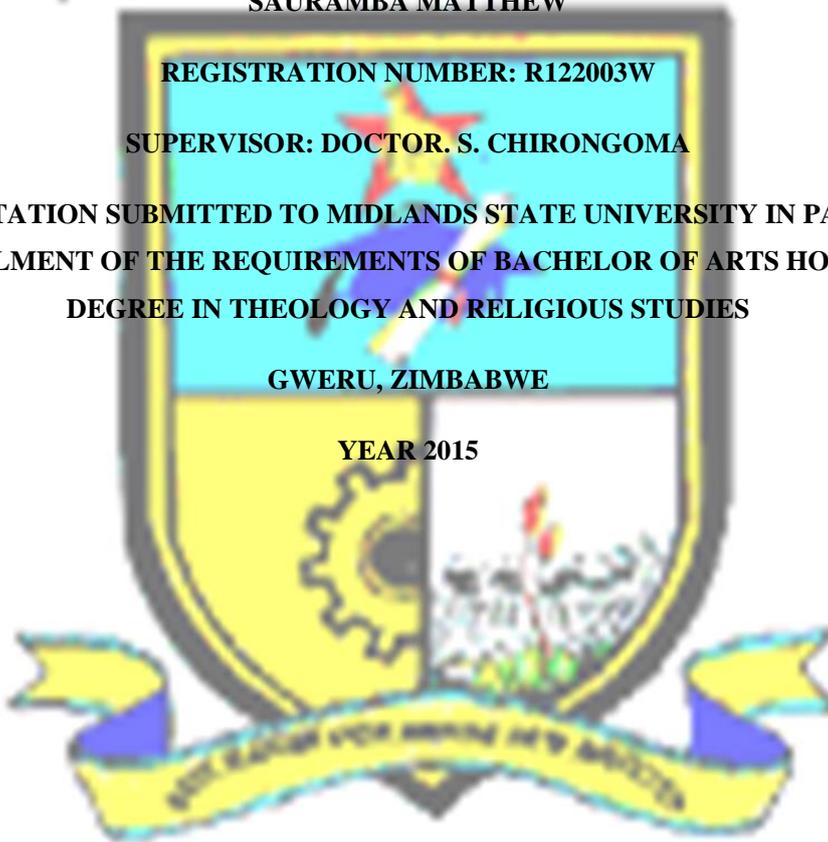
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DECLARATION FORM

I hereby declare that this research is the product of my own effort; it is the work which has not been presented elsewhere neither for purpose of academia or any other conceivable purpose. The views of others to clarify issues have duly been acknowledged.

SAURAMBA MATTHEW

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DATE

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read this dissertation and have approved its submission for marking after confirming that it conforms to the department's requirements.

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Supervisor

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Date

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Chairperson

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Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my family for giving me all the necessary support towards my education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God, for affording me the time and much needed energy as well as mental capacity and varied resources to embark on such an educational journey. My profound thanks goes to my supervisor, Dr S. Chirongoma I really appreciate her expert guidance and patience in mentoring me throughout the study. Furthermore, my appreciation also goes to Dr S. Masiyiwa and Mrs Masiyiwa for financial assistance under the Capernaum Scholarship. I would also like to express my gratitude to my family, close friends and peers for their valuable support throughout the study. My sincere acknowledgement goes to the Midlands State University, Theology and Religious studies Department, the United Methodist Church members and all others I have not mentioned specifically. I thank you all for the support that you offered to make this research project a success. May God richly bless you all.

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe, if not the whole of Africa has continued to draw the attention of many associations due to the existential problems that hinder the promotion of sustainable development. The research bears in mind that a number of development agents and development organisations have made considerable efforts in order to promote sustainable development. However, they hardly succeeded to get rid of the challenges that hinder the holistic promotion of sustainable development because they undermine the religious contribution in making their policies and implementing changes. For instance, their food stuff, clothes, drugs among others were only effective in reducing the capability and ability of individuals because they considered people as objects which only need attention through providing for them rather than teaching them how to sustain themselves. The research recognises, unveils and appreciates the role of the Churches in the promotion of sustainable development. The research draws its case study from the experiences of Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church in relation to its commitment in the promotion of sustainable development engagements that empower the marginalised people in Mutasa district, Manicaland. It offers an exploration of the Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church resources which have been influential in the establishment and advancement of church related schools, hospitals, orphanage, advocating justice, human rights, and gender equality among others. These institutions and other addressed existing challenges reveal a unique church vision with a package of transformed lives through the use of available resources of the church. In this research, the writer is convinced that available church resources are making Nyakatsapa United Methodist very relevant and vibrant in the context of promoting sustainable development in Mutasa district, Manicaland. Therefore, the whole purpose of this research is to explore how the church resources of Nyakatsapa United Methodist in Mutasa district are relevant in promoting sustainable development.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The area of study is Theology of development and focuses on the relevance of Church resources to sustainable development in mainstream groups with special reference to the United Methodist Church, Nyakatsapa circuit in Mutasa District. The claim of any religious institution to make its voice heard on issues generally regarded to be development oriented was widely given little credit even by those who are religious in personal belief. Religion has served throughout history as an ultimate authority in giving meaning to life including development issues that include poverty, HIV and AIDS, gender justice, human rights, resolving of conflict situations among others.

There is a growing acknowledgement that church values have a momentous role to play in helping to shape a sustainable future. While churches have their complicated dimensions such as intolerance, dogmatism and fundamentalism, they have also served as a wellspring of wisdom and moral inspiration. Thus they tend to be both conservators of continuity and agents of change. Before we light the discovery, there is a need to define and unpack the two concepts 'church' and 'sustainable development'. A church is defined as an institution held to be gifted by divine grace, which it intervenes to the world through priesthood. It claims worldwide influence and as a result seeks to include everyone. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2012), a church is, "a structure used for community Christian worship". Blomberg (1999: 145) states that, "the paramount way the church can both universally and locally be able to consistently obey all the Lord's commands is by increasingly capturing the vision of mobilising all its resources and share them with the needy in society". This implies that believers should show care for the marginalised in society, and not to remain unconcerned and unaffected with their suffering. By so doing, the church is doing its mission since they represent and imitate the church of God and Jesus Christ. Komonchak (1988) in the New Dictionary of Theology defines the church as, "the body of believers who have been called out of the world by God to live as His people under the rulership of His Son Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1: 22, 23). Therefore, this definition foregrounds that the church has been called into the imperfect world so that it can serve its purpose through addressing existential

problems like injustice, poverty, healing the sick and heartbroken, gender and human rights issues among other things.

According to the Brundtland Commission (1987), sustainable development is the “capacity to make development sustainable, to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This definition implies that sustainable development must have a chief focus on peace, freedom, and equitable distribution of resources among other things because if these are not met then it means the ability of the future generation to meet their needs is going to be compromised. Max (1991:38) perceives sustainable development from the viewpoint of the capabilities and potential of the human being. He contends that “Development geared to the fulfilment of fundamental human needs cannot be ordered from the top downwards. It cannot be either by rule or decree. It can only originate directly from the actions and creativeness and critical alertness of the local people themselves. Instead of being the traditional objects of development, local people that is; the affected people must take a leading role in development.” Yakubu (2004) notes that “Sustainable development is holistic, it encompasses four dimensions: social, economic, ecological and political”. The inter-relation between these four elements can be rendered understandable in the context of the biblical idea of interdependence and the relationship between the body and its parts, which the Apostle Paul described in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Verse 26 (NIV) says, ‘If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it’. This is supported by the African philosophy which asserts that every individual within a community is equally important; hence nobody is valued better than the other. Mbiti (1996) puts it across as follows, “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.” Hence, this implies that every member of the community is of equal significance and there should be no individualism in an endeavour to achieve a common goal.

In light of the noted definitions, it can be argued that sustainable development needs social systems embraced by fairness through just and equity which are established and controlled by the church structure. By so doing it can be an assurance which gives people a voice and a stake in their own future because under whatever circumstance they will never become silent. Bultmann (1977) suggested that the, “Church encourages people to be proclaiming what Christ is doing in the world and not narrowly concentrating on saving “souls” but struggling for justice in the world and salvation of whole man”. This implies that the church’s mission is

not confined to one discipline, but it is holistic in nature because it addresses every area that affects the life and completeness of a human life.

Poverty is a real challenge in the world and it can be witnessed that many societies are continuously getting affected by it although so much effort is being put by the government and Non Governmental Organisations in trying to combat against it. This situation is well explained by Alcock (1997) who mentions that, “Christians are living in a world where poverty has become a major challenge with shocking results of violence, warfare, conflict, disease, ignorance, political and economic exploitation and also environmental degradation”. Poverty has remained an unsolved challenge to development mostly in the continent of Africa. This can be noted physically because poverty breeds other minor illnesses that affect the wellbeing of humanity. To be more comprehensive, it can be argued that the Church is not a solution, but aspects of it can compliment as well as motivate development rather than undermining development. Approaches by which the church can influence development activities are not limited in their complexity. There are several written works produced by religious people, institutions, and maybe agents of advocacy, funding, innovation, empowerment, social movements and service delivery. History always repeats itself; the church has a long history of dealing with social needs of people all over the world. It has a proven record of caring and supporting those that are in need. It has handled the challenges of refugees, war victims, poverty, education, health and other social issues. This is supported by Bellagamba (1992) who says, “Mission is helping people who are unjustly treated, persecuted, oppressed by internal and external forces, to liberate themselves, to experience the liberation, the salvation, and redemption brought by Christ”. This is true because it is impossible to win a soul or to transform one spiritually if the person is under oppression, is hungry or unjustly treated. Hence, for this goal to be attained there is a need to meet immediate needs such as to counter or address the problems before introducing a new issue. This is supported by the common proverb which says that in order to catch a fish; one must first supply its need that is a worm.

The actual fact why the church is overlooked or not realised on its role of development is the wide spread misunderstanding about what a church is (Ellis and Haar, 2004). Although the church is undermined, it must be noted that health and education constitute an area in which the role of the church institutions has already been widely noted by the development experts, mostly in the field of service delivery. Even though the church played such an admirable role, in contemporary discussions on ways of attaining sustainable development and

acknowledging human development, there is still reluctance among most development practitioners when it comes to acknowledging the influence of a church. The influence of church on development has not been a primary topic of any development reports and health issues although in some cases it has received occasional attention.

In the bible, the Exodus event is seen as a sound motive for development (Exodus chapters 13 to 15). The events in the book of Exodus take place during the time when the Israelites were under the harsh rule of Pharaoh in Egypt. God is seen as intervening for the oppressed Israelites, by so doing this event shows an idea that God is in charge of all human affairs. He is the redeemer from injustice and oppression. Udayakuma (1998) argues that, “the churches have no mission separate from God’s mission”. For this reason, the church resembles God and must do everything that represents His mission.

Orobator (2005) places the church’s mission within the framework of a community because its noted roles are relative to some specific issues of social concern. According to Orobator (2005), “HIV and AIDS, refugees and poverty are burning issues in the present moment of the continent’s traumatized political and socio- economic history.” This implies that the church that makes a choice to engage in these issues becomes automatically visible and apparent as a church on mission. Hence the church has a lot to offer for the advancement of human life because it has such a record of dealing with social needs of people all over the world. For instance, it has a recognised role of caring and supporting those that are in need. Bosch (1991) argued that, “The mission of God involves activities which embrace both believers and non believers of the world, and in which the Church is privileged to participate through handling the challenges of refugees, war victims, poverty, education, health and other social and economic issues.” The church is informed by the word that needs to be confirmed by the deeds, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has learnt to respond to the cry of the poor, the widow and the orphans. Bellagamba (1992) views the “mission of the Church as the effective way that can liberate the poor from many forms of oppression”. The fact is that the church knows almost every member in a community; therefore it is in a position to know what people need than any other organisation that one can think of. For instance, leaders such as Pastors among others know every member of the community that is different families, their homes, even those who are not believers. Hence, the church is a credible voice of the people, it is very close to people and most institutions respect and appreciate the church’s voice. Therefore, the church is in a better position to initiate sustainable development using its religious ideas such as respect for all persons.

As for my case study, the United Methodist Church in Mutasa district has a long history of concern for social justice. For instance, church members often take direct positions on burning issues such as those which involve unjust practises. Early members of the United Methodist Church expressed their position against the oppressed during the slave trade, unlawful dealings, and gender issues among others. The church is principled through prayers and it has considerate efforts that challenge the human issues within the contemporary world which are based on sound biblical standards, these have been demonstrated traditionally in the United Methodist traditions. Therefore, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church is always faithful, instructive and persuasive. According to North (1908), “the United Methodist social principles call all members to be prayerful and to dialogue faith and practice”.

The United Methodist Church confirms that all people are equally important in the sight of God; this is scripturally supported in Genesis 1 verse 27, “so God created man in his own image.....” The mission of the United Methodist Church is therefore to work toward creating societies in which each person’s value is recognized, motivated and strengthened. The United Methodist Church supports and values the fundamental rights of every individual on issues such as housing, education, medical care among other prevailing issues that affect the normal life of every person.

Most of the individuals who have been identified as HIV positive often face discrimination or rejection from families and community members in which they work and interact. The United Methodist Church considers it as their responsibility to minister to and with those individuals and families regardless of their medical condition and how the disease has been contracted. The church advocates the rights of such individuals on employment, medical care, education and participation on public and church activities in which they are often denied access. Anderson et al (2009) adds that the, “United Methodist Church is urged to be actively involved in the prevention of the spread of AIDS by providing educational opportunities to the congregation and the community”. This implies that the church must be always available to the affected families through offering services such as counselling.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The church has an extended record of attending to the social needs of people in Zimbabwe. Typical examples can be noted on its handling of challenges such as of refugees, war victims,

poverty, education, health and other social issues. Such a concern shows that the church is naturally established and it is capable to handle public debates and show concern on how the world is organised, ruled and developed. Many religious groups have shared a responsibility on existing social, economic, religious and political problems which affect people at all levels in Zimbabwe. This is supported biblically as Jesus challenged all social unrest of the people that included hunger, diseases and other inhuman conditions. This shows that the subject of development programmes is not optional to the church, it must participate because it is a calling and mandatory mission from God (Matt. 28:19f and Luke 4: 18, 19). Therefore, if it only prepares people for heaven and spiritual growth through proclaiming the gospel without considering their social and material needs, it means its mission is futile because it is not holistic. The main problem identified in this research is that development agencies and other institutions often considered conflicts of religions and the resultant consequences from their wars as justifiable reasons to totally overlook church as partners in promoting of sustainable development. Such recognised tensions do not arise among Christian churches alone but often times between religions because they tend to undermine each other as a way of dominating. As a result of this tension, it goes against the norm of sustainable development which values individual differences and capabilities. As such, the church was not considered relevant in the discourse of development because of their tension which does not promote effective sustainable development. This is so, because in development every individual is capable and individual differences are respected. Therefore, it is unfortunate that the involvement of religion in development discourse has been highly selective.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 AIM

The main aim of this research is to examine the relevance of the United Methodist Church (Nyakatsapa circuit) resources to sustainable development.

1.3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- ❖ To examine the history of the U.M.C and its major duties in its ministry.

- ❖ To identify the resources of Nyakatsapa circuit and to analyse their contribution to sustainable development.
- ❖ To create awareness among church members that will help them to understand and motivate them on the role they play in all development activities taking place in their communities.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

According to Babbie and Mouton (2012), research methodology refers, “to the methods that are used in carrying out a research”. It looks at the complete process taking into account tools and steps to be used. According to Oâ-Leary (2005) the research methodology, “is focused on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most objective unbiased procedures to be employed”.

The researcher is going to use the qualitative research method as a methodology. (Haralambos and Holborn 2007:793) argued that, “qualitative data is data in numerical form, for example, official statistics are usually presented in form of words”. This method was used in the research in order to equip the researcher with a tool for gathering information from the respondents who were asked questions on how the church is relevant in promoting sustainable development using questionnaires and through the interviews. This method was advantageous in the sense that it was frequently more open as compared to other research strategies. A noted compliment of this method is that it also goes together with quantitative research methods. Qualitative research has made it easy to gain understanding of the target group because the type of questions that were used during the research began with the word why? The reason is that “why” is a much more powerful word than when, how and when. The method has got low costs because it requires a smaller scale since large surveys do not need to be taken instead, the research focuses on the sample of the population. However, this method has got disadvantages; assumptions really cannot be made outside the scope of the sample. “You can only gather the information that the small group gave to you and a safe assumption of the rest of the population would not be feasible and it is not a research method that allows for statistical data” (Turner 2013). Other methods that were used are personal interviews, focus group interviews and observations.

1.4 .1 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie and Mouton (2012), “a research design is a plan or structured framework of how you intend to conduct the research process in order to solve the research problem”. Babbie and Mouton (2012) further defined a research design, “as a plan or blueprint of how you intend to conduct the research and focus on the end product”. A research design also provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data (Bryman 2012). Bryman (2012) went on to argue that, “a choice of the research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process”. In this study, the researcher used the qualitative research method thus both primary and secondary sources were used in carrying out this research. Primary sources include interviews and questionnaires, and secondary sources include the use of literature that is, books that deal with religion in development, journals, articles, archival material as well as unpublished literature. Qualitative research is the provision of data through literature and it was used because it explores the information deeply.

Interviews allowed the researcher to get the information about the role of the church in development and the perspectives of the participants on the same issue. Also the researcher had the chance to record participants and they were able to freely express their views.

1.4 .2 TARGET POPULATION

Population is the, “total membership of defined class of people, objects or events” (O’Leary 2005). According to Paul et al (2004) population, “is composed of all the individuals of interest to the researcher.” In carrying out the study, the targeted population included the believers within the United Methodist Churches of Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa District, Bishops, Pastors, group members such as chairpersons, treasurers, circuit lay leaders, church lay leaders, evangelists, youth director and out-group members which are not close to the Pastor such as female elders, male elders, youth members, and members of the community such as primary and secondary school head teachers and the village head, development agents such as Plan International stationed in that area. The main reason for choosing this target population is because the researcher is familiar with the United Methodist Church and can be accepted by people since they know the researcher rather than a stranger to the place that might not be accepted.

1.4.3 SAMPLING FRAME

Sampling is, “the process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, fair generalizations on the results obtained can be attributed to the population from which they are chosen” (Dillman: 2002). According to Haralambos and Holborn (2004), “it is part of a larger population and selected to be representing the whole group”. The sample will provide a reasonably precise estimate of the entire population at a much reduced cost in a short period of time. Sampling was used because there was not enough time, energy, money, labour /manpower, equipment, access to suitable sites to measure every single item or site within the parent population or whole sampling frame. In this scenario, the reason why the researcher used sampling is because the Nyakatsapa circuit of the area under study has many adherents so there are no resources to cover them all, therefore a targeted group within this church was used.

The study utilized quota sampling and purposive sampling.

Quota sampling selects individuals as they come to fill a quota by characteristics proportional to populations. The advantage is that it ensures selection of adequate numbers of subjects with appropriate characteristics. The disadvantage is that it's not possible to prove that the sample is representative of the designated population.

Purposive sampling hand picks subjects on the basis of specific characteristics. The advantage is that it ensures balance of group size when multiple groups are to be selected and the disadvantage is that samples are not easily defensible as being representative of populations due to potential subjectivity of the researcher (Black, 1999). Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately select respondents possessing a set of desired competencies and characteristics. For example, the researcher deliberately interviewed the Bishops, Pastors, evangelists, development committee and community members to represent Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa district.

1.4.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Dillman (2002) defines the sampling technique, “as the method(s) used in deriving samples from a group so as to determine hypothesis concerning the population”. In order to secure cross sectional representation in the sample, the researcher used the stratified sampling method. Czrniakwa (2004) stated that, “the cost is too high to carry a survey on the whole

population and for the purpose of this study collecting information from an estimated population of more than 74 000 people is very expensive”. Therefore the researcher selected a sample size of 50 people from the total population.

1.4.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The main research instruments used for collecting primary data are questionnaires, interviews and observations, and secondary data which involve the use of existing statistics, history, diaries etc.

- ❖ Primary data is, “data collected by researchers themselves during the course of their work” (Haralambos and Holborn 2004:893). It includes data collected by researchers using questionnaires, conducting interviews or carrying out participant observations. The research instruments were administered using open format and open ended discussions so as to give respondents freedom to answer freely.
- ❖ Secondary data consists of data that already exist. Secondary data include official statistics, mass media products, diaries, letters, and government reports and the content of web pages on the internet. Secondary research allows comparison of different sources of data and it is cost effective and easy to conduct. Organizations such as trade unions, development agencies, churches, companies and charities are a useful source of data, as are documents such as letters, diaries and autobiographies produced by individuals (Haralambos and Holborn 2007). Secondary sources save time and money, furthermore, they may provide access to historical data that cannot be produced using primary research because the events concerned took place before current members of the society were born through the use of the internet, (Bryman 2012).

1.4.6 QUESTIONNAIRES

According to Babbie and Mouton (2012), “questionnaires contain questions that are designed to extract information required for the analysis”. Questionnaires are a written form of questioning and the question may be open or closed (Thomas 2009). The advantages of using questionnaires are that they are cheap, do not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys and they often have standardised answers that make it simple to complete data. The researcher used the questionnaires because of the advantages noted by Haralambos and Holborn (2004:893). Also the questionnaire is quick to administer because

quantities of data were collected from considerable number of people over a relatively short period of time.

In spite of the advantages, the following disadvantages must be acknowledged when using this data collection technique as noted by Haralambos and Holborn (2004). The standardized answers may frustrate users and respondents must be able to read the questions and respond to them.

Questionnaires were used to elicit information from the respondents who are members of the United Methodist Church to establish their perception about sustainable development.

1.4.7 INTERVIEWS

Generally, an interview is a face to face contact with individuals for the purpose of obtaining some fundamental information. Thomas (2009) describes interviews, “as discussion with someone in which you try to get information from the respondent”. Bryman (2012) also defines interviews, “as prominent data collection strategy in both qualitative and quantitative research”. This implies that there is a certain level of social interaction between the researcher and respondents. More so, it is a self-report method using a structured, semi-structured or unstructured approach.

- ❖ Semi- structured interview is more flexible and allows for analysis in a variety of ways because it is compatible with many methods of data analysis. It is easier to arrange than any other forms of data collection.
- ❖ Structured (in-depth) interviews-these are more like a conversation because the interviewer works from a list of general topics but has greater freedom to explore areas of interest. The advantages are that it permits full exploration of ideas and beliefs that is; it is a more valid account of social life. More so, it is flexible and allows the interviewer to pursue interesting points. The disadvantages are the problems of reliability, replication and time costs and also the respondent is too much in control. The key role players amongst the United Methodist Church include individuals such as Pastors, evangelists and general adherents.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION

- ❖ The issue of religion and sustainable development is a popular area that has been researched by many scholars; however, the perspective has not been explored with

particular focus on Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa district. Hence, this research seeks to fill or explore the gap looking at their achievements in Africa, particularly the people of Zimbabwe in Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa district, Manicaland.

- ❖ The research will also be relevant to some policy makers in coming up with some interventions on issues to do with development given that the mainline churches are naturally agents of development. Mainline churches usually have well established structures up to national level; they are forerunners in establishing educational and medical institutions which is the basis of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Such examples of development initiatives are recognised at local, regional and national level.

- ❖ The research is also being conducted for interest sake the researcher wants to get deep down on how these mainline churches conduct their healing, education and poverty eradication on people who do not belong to that particular church.

- ❖ There has been a mass exodus of people seeking assistance in addressing their social, economic, health, financial and religious challenges. Although science is often regarded as offering solutions to all these problems, however it has become apparent that there are some problems that require spiritual assistance hence the church has become the centre stage of many activities.

1.6 SCOPE

The research seeks to deal specifically with one of the mainline churches in Zimbabwe namely the United Methodist Church in exploring the relevance of its resources such as established education and medical institutions as contributing to sustainable development. Despite the fact that there has been intolerance, fundamentalism, dogmatism which does not promote unity among Christian churches as a whole. There are many mainline churches in Zimbabwe such as the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Lutheran church, and Roman Catholic Church among others; however the researcher is not going to dwell on those because the findings of the study will in many cases be applicable to other churches, so it is limited to the United Methodist Church, Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa district.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

A.Tergel, (1995) *Church and Society in the Modern Age* maintains that the Church's contribution to the building of society was the application of general moral principles. The business of the Church was not to supply concrete and detailed social programmes but to put forward ethical principles of love and justice by which all social problems wish to be guided. This book is important to this research because it gives guidelines to the responsibilities of the Church.

P. Gifford, (1988) *The Religious Right in Southern Africa*, gives an insight to the research since it highlights that the use of religion for political purposes is not new to Zimbabwe. However, the point of departure is that churches had a profound record in the fields of education and health. They were not recognised of the role they played in the total structure of the colonial society.

P. George, (2000) *Church and Land* reiterates that an ideal church must deal with real practical issues of human existence. The central theme in this book is that the church cannot continue to claim its relevance if it ignores the issues that are affecting the contemporary society. A real church should follow the day to day activities that challenge the nation by trying to look for solutions or possible means of helping people to come out of such critical issues.

D. Auret, (1992) *Reaching for Justice* postulates that the Rhodesian government removed the special status accorded to the churches in the past and in so doing also curtailed their autonomy. It was however, clear that the government sought to control the activities of the church which did not reflect the fundamental role of the church. It from this background, that the church has a recognised role to guide political activities.

Verstraelen, F.J (1985: 82) in his book *Christian and human transformation* gives insights on healing as a major concern in all spheres of life. He argues that healing is a process of bringing a dynamic state of wellbeing of individuals and society; of mental, emotional, spiritual, economic, political and social wellbeing of being in harmony with self, with others, with the material environment and with God. Healing is a tool in human transformation. It is the church's responsibility in this process of healing to develop an environment which initiates and encourages healing in all areas of human existence. However, this book focuses much on healing alone; hence this sets a point of departure for my research.

Muranda, J. (1988: 7) also wrote valuable information pertaining the church's role to sustainable development in his book *Communism in the Bible*. He sees the church as not individualistic in nature in the sense that every person is responsible for other's welfare. All believers together had everything in common; they sold their possessions and the goods were distributed among all in accordance with each one's needs (Acts 2: 44 -45). The author argued that communism was there so that there may be no poor person among us. However, the book does not give tangible examples; rather it just focuses on expectations of a responsible church.

Willace, L. (2000: 133) in the book called *Developing a methodology for measuring the impact of an international NGO and its local partners* also wrote about churches as an instrument for sustainable development. He argued that in the gospel, Jesus demonstrated time and again his deep commitment to holistic mission of the poor. The Acts of Apostles and epistles make it clear in many places that this also was an integral part of the church's divine commission. In a sense then it is not to begin from this standpoint that the church is perhaps, the most "natural" development agency of all. Apart from the divine calling to minister wholeness in its broadest sense in the world's poor, there are logical arguments in favour of a primary role for the church's involvement in poverty reduction and poverty alleviation programmes. This will help in providing a basis upon which to develop my research.

Deryke, B, Caldernsi, R and Chris. S (2002: 152) in his book *Faith in development: partnership between the world bank and the churches of Africa* points out that the churches of Africa live and work in the context of extreme poverty and dehumanising situation, most of their members comprise a sizeable proportion of the poor. The church has grown impressively from 60 million to 300 million today. Its development role must be taken seriously, not just because it is trusted and broad based within Africa, but also because it is part of improving the lives of the poor.

Michael Mbona (2002) *HIV and AIDS: an epidemic of "pandemonium" amid denial and stigma by the Roman Catholic, Anglican and United Methodist Churches in Manicaland, Zimbabwe*, states that the arrival of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s caused pandemonium in a young nation that was still basking in the glory of attaining political independence. With more than 75% of the population being Christian, churches were in a strong position to tolerate and support people infected and affected by the new disease.

Using oral and archival sources, Mbona argues that between 1985 and 2002 the reaction by churches to the epidemic was dominated by denial and stigma. Christian communities from the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican and the United Methodist churches in Manicaland, Zimbabwe, failed to provide safe havens for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. However, it is against this background that the United Methodist Churches are taking into consideration and concern to the people living with HIV/AIDS. This is noted in many activities and initiatives in which these people take lead in certain high positions.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has introduced the background of the study and identified the problem behind this research. It has showed methods which were used in collecting data in order to come up with a sound research. The researcher also shows literature review of diverse scholars which has helped in reflecting the background of the study.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND NYAKATSAPA MISSION OF MUTASA DISTRICT IN MANICALAND, MUTARE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

History does not only record the singular successes and failures of men, women and organisations, but it remembers those who contributed to the progress and improvements of the current situation. Hence, the past gives the perspective to the present; it is of paramount importance to value the historical development of the United Methodist Church. The matter of how church resources are significant to sustainable development must be understood from a broader point of view after looking at the whole idea of the origins of the United Methodist Church, history of the church, how and why it came into existence. This helps to put everything into context for easy understanding of the concepts under study because the researcher will have traced the origins of the United Methodist Church at large. On the other hand, it is of paramount importance to give an in depth explanation on one of the churches because any incorrect idea about it may negatively affect sustainable development.

2.2 DEFINING CHURCH

From a theological perspective, the church was born at the point of creation during such a time when Adam and Eve were enjoying great companionship with God. Traditionally, the New Testament Church was born on the day of Pentecost after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to heaven. Before ascension, Jesus commanded the disciples not to leave the City of Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit had come upon them (Luke 24:49, Acts 2:1-4 and 5:32). The word church is used to translate the Greek term *ekklesia*. During the early times, *ekklesia* was a common word for civic gatherings, which was formed from the noun form of the verb *kaleo* (“to call”), and the prefix *ek* (meaning “out of”). From *kaleo* also come *klesis* (“calling”) and *kletos* (“called”). Komonchak (1988) in the New Dictionary of Theology defines the church as the body of believers who have been called out of the world by God to live as His people under the rulership of His Son Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1: 22, 23).

2.3 MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The church is meant to unite all people to spiritual growth (Ephesians 4: 13f; Hebrews 10: 25f). It is from such kind of fellowship in the church which makes the believer to have a sense of being part/ belonging; a sense of spiritual safety which avoids them to be engaged in heresy teaching, however they exercise spiritual gifts with love (1 Cor. 13: 1 - 3). God did not call the church to offer one dimension of life, for instance to meet spiritual needs of people only. However, God called the church out of the world and sent it back into the world to proclaim God's love of salvation in every sphere of life to all people that is the believers and the unbelieving community (Matt. 28: 19; John 20: 21; Acts 1: 8; Ephesians 2: 10, and 1 Peter 2: 9). This can only be achieved by decreeing the word which is confirmed with good deeds. Bosch (1991) supported this: "The Missio Dei is God's activity, which embraces both the Church and the world, and in which the Church may be privileged to participate."

From the above, one can argue that the church was formed by God so that it attends to the suffering of the poor and those who are marginalised in various communities. Therefore, the church can fulfil its holistic mission by analysing and revealing unjust structures and work for change through its kindness and mercy. By so doing, it maintains the attributes that reveal the church's importance and its special gift to the world by God. This means that the church must exist to meet the common destiny of humanity and all creation. Therefore, the church serves as a keeper of God's creation. Blomberg (1999) states that the best ways the church, that is both globally and locally, can consistently obey all the Lord's commands is by increasingly capturing the vision of mobilising all its resources and share them with the disadvantaged in society. Believers must show that they are concerned about the marginalised people in the society and to remain unaffected and unchanged with the suffering of the disadvantaged. The Old Testament and the New Testament shows that God is concerned with the whole person.

2.4 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

The United Methodist Church has a long history in Zimbabwe. This church started in England in the early 1700s, under England clergyman John Wesley and his followers. Wesley did not formerly organize a new Church but he influenced a rebirth movement within the Church of England. According to James (1933), missionaries of this church came from America and arrived in Manicaland in 1897 led by Bishop J. Hartzell. Cecil John Rhodes

granted them 13,000 acres of land. Zvobgo (1996) says these land grants were granted on condition that the church would build a school for European children and an industrial mission for the local blacks. In the following years the United Methodists opened other mission stations; some of the major ones being Mutambara Mission (1905), Nyakatsapa mission (1907), Murewa Mission (1909), Mutoko Mission (1911) and Nyadiri Mission (1923). Many other mission stations were established which were later developed into several Congregations countrywide (Makunike 2010).

2.4.1 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH APPROACH TO DEVELOPEMNT

Pauw (1980: 146) is of the view that, “the role of the church of Christ cannot only be preaching of the gospel without necessarily touching on people’s social needs”. This implies that declarations of the word should go hand in glove with an attempt of attending to people’s needs according to the work and teaching of Jesus Christ (Mat. 28:19). Therefore the gospel must embrace the socio-economic assistance, health and education as well. Alston (2002: 108 -110) explains that, “the church must apply the gospel because declaration and exposition of the gospel is not done in a vacuum, but in relation to the particular human realities of life”. James (1933) pointed out that, “there are six mission centres situated at strategic points in addition to Nyakatsapa United Methodist church and they have worth of assets including land, buildings and equipment”. These assets are the resources to be considered because they play a very relevant role in promoting sustainable development.

August (1999: 33) pointed out that, “being involved in development by serving the poor is not a choice in terms of Christian doctrine”, but it is a Biblical order. This idea is true because in order for the followers of Jesus to serve Him, they must serve the poor. This dedication implies that the Christian way of life is not only spiritual action that is not related to the service of humanity but it is rather a practical command for social awareness and concern for humanity. James (1933) argued that whole people have been lifted to new levels materially, socially and spiritually, and stirred from their old tiredness. From this scholar’s point of view, it shows that the government did not do everything but the missions have always been in the forefront in this uplifting movement.

In its effort to apply its witnessing role in Manicaland, the United Methodist Church designed a curriculum of three pillars: religious, educational and industrial towards sustainable development. Goto (1968) reiterates that the first five years of school activities at Old Umtali

mission focused on religious and industrial subjects. It was arranged in such a way that every mission station besides a church structure, there were the following:

a. A school for educational programmes

A school was started by the missionaries at Old Umtali. For the United Methodist missionaries, education was very vital because it would make certain the success of their mission. For instance, it makes their work of evangelism easy because through education, the local people were indoctrinated and brainwashed to become stupid and submissive. By so doing, it persuaded the local people to do away with their own culture which was regarded as demonic. However, this was a blessing in disguise to indigenous people since it is this education that transforms their life religiously, socio-economically and politically. This is because through education they were able to read, analyse, interpret and give some argument from any given point of view. According to Zvobgo (1996), “for the missionaries education was a crucial tool of evangelization and also a means of training Christian leaders”. The education was considered as very significant and it was supported by Mr. Barack Obama, the USA President who said, “The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens”. President Barack Obama’s remarks to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on, 10/03/2009.<<http://www.nytimes.com.2009/03/10/us/politics/10text-obama.html>> (accessed April 14, 2011).

There was exceptional education for girls which was a form of empowering the girl-child with education because custom dictated that a woman was only made for procreation in marriage. As a result, according to indigenous people, sending a girl-child to school was considered as wastage of resources. Hence, during this period education was prioritised to boys only. Later a Girls’ school was started under the care of the Women’s Foreign Ministry (Zvobgo, 1996:73). The beginning of education for girls in Manicaland was at first not accepted. Most parents resisted because they feared that the educated girls would refuse to be married off to polygamists. Without doubt, education is very important if sustainable development is to take place. Reflecting on this history, one can conclude that education empowered girls since their rights were being suppressed by some African traditions. As a result of education, girls were able to make sound decisions on marriage issues rather than being victims of inherited and polygamous marriages which have deadly consequences of being infected with HIV/AIDS. Goto (1968) argued that missionaries also asked men and boys who were in schools to encourage their sisters and wives to come to the mission’s girl’s

school. On the same note, it can be appreciated that education played a positive role since boys were also able to influence their sisters to attend schools because they were able to analyse the pros and cons of the consequences of existing circumstances. With time, girls' enrolment at the Girls' school improved as more and more girls ran away from arranged marriages. The enrolment of these girls at Old Umtali mission school must be understood within the wider context of women empowerment. These girls took the first initiative to confront the Shona tradition of forced marriages. In this case, education became a liberating tool for these girls from the pangs of a culture that had for so long oppressed them.

At large, Goto (1968) argued that, "education persuaded the local people to reject what they were told because they were competent to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of given arguments". Hence, education is very instrumental and can transform the lives of people because it is a tool which challenges or fights against oppression and other unjust structures or unjust acts which in turn hinders the advancement of life. Eventually, mission education enlightened the indigenous people to seek their political, economic, social and religious rights in Southern Rhodesia. However, we cannot overlook the point that missionary education had some limitations. A typical example is that mission schools did not consider the interests of the indigenous people such as, valuing African culture and they did not allow the local people to efficiently develop their natural resources in the most interesting way of their choice.

b. Practical Work

Besides educational subjects, the United Methodist Church introduced practical subjects such as Agriculture, Building and Woodwork; these subjects were introduced for boys while girls were doing household training in subjects such as Needlework. Goto (1968) argued that, "the number of industrial subjects for male students had increased to include a blacksmith's workshop, along with courses in bricklaying and plastering". Female students training included how to properly grow vegetables, gardens and cornfields, housework, sewing, cooking and laundry, (Goto 1968). As work progressed at the Old Umtali mission farm, dairy cattle, pigs and Lucerne were introduced. Maize, beans, peanuts and vegetables were grown mostly for students' and society consumption. The school farm and an investigational station helped the mission to develop into a self sustaining institution. Goto (1968) further notes that sheep and goats were also introduced to provide extra meat for the mission community as well as providing a source of income.

c. Medical work

On the health field, the United Methodists prepared a massive contribution in the midst of communities in which their missions were established. Medical work was begun at Old Umtali Mission in 1906. Others were afterwards introduced and extended at Mutambara as well as Nyadiri. At Old Umtali Mission station, training of African nurses was introduced. Several Africans in the nearby areas of these mission stations benefited greatly from the treatment they received (Zvobgo, 1996). Those with several medical conditions were admitted in hospital after the building of such facilities. This shows a beneficial response to western methods of healing by Africans. Regardless of challenges encountered along the way, the United Methodists established one of the most excellent medical mission stations in Zimbabwe. Zvobgo (1996) argued that, “the health stations established in this era played a significant part in the fight against a number of the challenges of this millennium like HIV and AIDS”. As confirmed in (Matthew 4: 23), healing was an important part of the ministry of Jesus and this contributed to the initiation of medical services in 1902. According to Goto (1968), western health services offered immediate and observable results; the society trusted the missionaries enough to send their children to the mission schools where hygiene and sanitation were diligently taught.

2.5 THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MUTASA DISTRICT IN MUTARE: NYAKATSAPA CIRCUIT

The reason why the researcher has embarked on making the above mentioned circuit as a case study is because this particular group is a movement of the United Methodist Church; it is almost like a sub set of the United Methodist Churches at large. Furthermore, of all the established churches (*Mainline*) in Mutasa district, this place has got large numbers of people in attendance both members and non-members are benefiting from services offered by the church to the community at large. Since this is the researcher’s residing place, the researcher wants to know which activities the church is engaging in that attract large crowds and that promote sustainable development at community level. More so, the researcher chose this group because he knows most of the people there and this would be an advantage for easier tapping of information from members of the church.

The researcher is going to examine the brief history of Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa District in Manicaland, Mutare. Shortly after the establishment of Old Umtali, the missionaries there considered it important to develop a binding friendship with the dominant chief of that section by the time named Umtasa (James, 1933). Nyakatsapa circuit was established in 1907 by Reverend Shirley D. Coffin after having been granted the go-ahead by the then Chief Mutasa. Makunike (2010) argues that the successor of the old Chief Tendai Mutasa gladly opened the door to the establishment of Nyakatsapa circuit. The Nyakatsapa circuit over the years has been focused on evangelism, education, health and agriculture. It can be argued that achieving the above mentioned activities is to promote sustainable development. Makunike (2010) supported that the four arms of mission were to spread the gospel or good news, teaching literacy that is the ability to read and write, to improve good clean homes and raising better families, producing better crops and livestock.

Nyakatsapa has been the centre of many initiatives and has produced many luminaries both directly and indirectly. Very few in the United Methodist Church and within the community have not been touched through its activities such as its singing, especially of *Vabvuwi* (man's forum) on notable conventions held annually, the agricultural extension and training as well as its ministry. Nyagano (2010) added that a Shona language institute was once established at the place now taken up by the secondary school, a domestic science programme also used to run there. From the humble beginnings, the Nyakatsapa circuit now boasts a primary school, a secondary school and to mark the church's centenary of its ministry a computer laboratory has been built and officially opened.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapter has highlighted the history of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and Nyakatsapa circuit of Mutasa district; it is helpful for the researcher because it offers a basis upon which the researcher can clearly assess whether the area under study is still currently adhering to the core mission and objectives of the whole church which seem to be of relevance to sustainable development. It is apparent from the above account of history that the development that is being advocated for by the United Methodist Church is a holistic one since it addresses both spiritual and social needs of humanity. This is recognised

wherever they set up a mission station, it always constituted the following: a church, a school, a health centre, an agricultural centre and other services to meet people's immediate needs. The United Methodist Church missionaries did not only focus on what was happening on their mission stations, but they also fought against any social ill which in those days centred on destructive traditional practices such as polygamy, alcohol abuse as well as traditions and ceremonies that were considered not to be Christian. This concept for development was passed on to the Nyakatsapa circuit and must therefore be adhered to, maintained and applied accordingly in all transformative activities if the living standards of the people living in the communities of Mutasa district and beyond are to be uplifted. However, the activities done from history are mostly giving credit to missionary initiatives since they were the most dominant participants hence this might not be the present picture of what Nyakatsapa circuit is doing. Therefore, the next chapter is going to give a detailed analysis of what are the current resources available at Nyakatsapa circuit and how are they contributing to sustainable development.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING THE RELEVANCE OF NYAKATSAPA CHURCH RESOURCES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The foregoing chapter explored the history of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and that of the area under study. From the history, the recognised development approach of Nyakatsapa church (United Methodist Churches) is rendered a great acknowledgement to the missionary initiatives. Generally, populace agreed that these churches depend much on overseas church funding for them to sustain themselves. Maposa, (2013), argued that, “African governments are dependent on Western humanitarian support”. As a result of the dependence mentality and policies that create and perpetuate dependency, one can argue that Africa is poor and economically crippled because of the noted factors. On the other hand, to agree that Nyakatsapa church is dependent on overseas funding is not doing justice because overseas churches are no longer supporting the mainstream churches to date. A lot of existing achievements from the mainstream churches to date are largely due to initiatives of local people. From a theological viewpoint, people were never created to beg but to control and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:26). The actual fact is that local people are now missionaries in their own country. The local people have advanced and upgraded a lot; they have made remarkable achievements and do some initiatives without help and funding from overseas churches. The church is called to demonstrate the kingdom of God as a visible sign of his kingdom in the world. The church is called to be the salt and the light (Matthew 5:13-16). The church should influence situations for the better, preserve good things and bring healing. Therefore, this chapter is going to identify the available church resources of the area under study, discuss in detail the concept that church resources are relevant to sustainable development, how have been such resources instrumental in the delivery of health, education, improvements of human rights, community development and food relief services among others. Firstly, the researcher is going to define the terms resource and sustainable development, what is sustainable development from the Nyakatsapa circuit perspective.

3.2 DEFINITION OF RESOURCE

According to the Oxford dictionary (2012), “resource is a stock or supply of material or assets, it can be an action or strategy adopted in adverse circumstances”. Generally, it can mean something that one can use to achieve an objective. Resources can be in variety forms such as raw materials, personnel, personal attributes or capabilities. From the noted definition of resource, undoubtedly it means that church resources can be in the form of assets, personnel (trained, committed and skilled), economic power (finance) among the others. Ter Haar (2005) argued that, “religious resources can be divided into four major categories, which can be applied to the entire religious traditions in the world and in their diverse importance. Religious ideas (what people truly believe) are one such category. Others are religious practices (ritual behaviour), religious organisation (how religious communities are formed and function), and religious or spiritual experiences (such as the subjective experience of inner change or transformation)”. All of these elements produce knowledge that could be beneficial to a community for development purposes. Several communities in Africa make spontaneous use of their religious resources in a variety of ways. Tiritto (2012:17) argued that, “the church and its resources (its people) have been overlooked in the provision of social services.” Hence, the agenda for the coming decade must consider efforts of the church so as to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development of a society in which principles of charity are again incorporated. Kretzmann and Mcknight (1989) identify local religious institutions such as the church, as one of the key assets in the community. This echoes Jesus’ challenge in the Sermon on the Mount for us to be the salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13). Jesus points out that if salt loses its saltiness “it is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot”. This means that if the church has nothing to do or give to the community around it, then it is of no value and there would not be a lot of grieving if it disappears. Salt without saltiness has no use.

3.3 THE NATURE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Within this study, an understanding of the nature of sustainable development has been influenced by the Brundtland Commission (1987) and Max-Neef (1991)’s definitions. According to the Brundtland Commission (1987), sustainable development is the “capacity to make development sustainable to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It can be noted from this definition that

sustainable development focuses on major issues such as peace, freedom, and fair distribution of resources. Max-Neef (1991:38) defines sustainable development from the capacity and ability of human beings. This definition entails that in order to promote sustainable development, the satisfaction of human needs is necessary if structured down to top. Therefore, it means there is no use of law or order; rather it must originate from the actions, creativeness and awareness of the marginalised group. This definition is against the banking approach in initiating development whereby the locals are viewed as objects. Instead, the marginalised and the affected people must take the leading role in development because they know the strengths and weaknesses of each individual among them. The above definitions give insight to the African society on how to promote effective sustainable development using the same conceptual framework. Therefore for development to be sustainable, it must be an occurrence that keeps going for a life time. Development can only be sustainable if it is initiated by the local people. The above definitions on sustainable development will reflect how the United Methodist Churches make a great effort of empowering its members, community in both material and spiritual matters. This understanding has shaped the current consideration of how the church resources can be useful in eliminating several prevailing issues in contemporary society which might hinder sustainable development. This chapter discusses in detail some examples of specific problems which are addressed by Nyakatsapa circuit as a representative of the United Methodist Churches and mainline churches in Zimbabwe. However, it should be noted that the biggest challenge lies in choosing the right forum that would reflect the church as “necessary” in sustainable development. The forum would likely to be a problem or a solution in the context.

3.4 NYAKATSAPA CHURCH’S PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is praxis in nature because its teachings emphasize doctrines supported by action for it to be real. This is supported biblically in James 2:14-16 on faith and action, “what good is it my brothers and sisters, if someone says they have faith but do not have works? Can that faith save them? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessity for the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. This means sustainable development must be

transformational and it must place God at the centre of issues like sickness, poverty, unemployment, political and social injustice and environment that affect the wellbeing of all humanity. August (2010) argued that, “through the participation of the affected persons, there is hope that things would change for the better”. God must take the centre stage because He is the creator of heaven and thereby the one who can sustain everything in it. God is the chief architect of true and pure development. This is true because with God nothing shall be impossible (Matt 19:26). Hence, in terms of development the church qualifies to be the agent of development because it is a mandate from God. The Church is also in touch with the majority of the people at grassroots level.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church considers sustainable development as a moral issue and as its responsibility because they have testimony to Christ’s charity, through works of justice and peace. Sustainable development is part and parcel of evangelism because Jesus Christ, who loves humanity, is also concerned with the whole person. This shows that sustainable development has to be at the service of human dignity, and it depends on the underlying system of morality. Hence church doctrines can make specific contribution since it is based on humanity creation in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), Such an assumption gives rise to the dishonoured dignity of the human person and gives rise on values of the natural moral norms. Unity calls the church to care for others because it is centralised by love, it also cares for the environment and the future generations. This implies that harmony is not a feeling of unclear compassion or little depth of suffering at the misfortunes of so many people both near and far. By so doing, the church is promoting sustainable development. It is true because determination commits oneself to the common good of all persons and every individual, this is supported by Mbiti (1969) who says, “I am what I am because of what we are since we are therefore I am what I am”, hence this means everyone is really responsible for all.

The disadvantaged must be given special attention in order to promote sustainable development. The poor and vulnerable must be given special attention in development. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is challenging unjust structures through making a deliberate option for the poor. By so doing, it stands as a voice for the voiceless, defending the defenceless and other social institutions that impact negatively on the poor. The church has challenged injustice and gives first preference to the poor. However, this raises an argument that by giving preference to the poor, it means pitting one group against another hence, it portrays inequality. Though, the idea behind is to empower and strengthen the whole community by assisting first those who are most vulnerable.

3.5 EXPLORING NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is made up of many members who are prepared and organised for active service which promotes sustainable development. Some of these members are mainly useful for labour- intensive initiatives. The church also has structures or buildings which provide a place for district members to meet and discuss on local prevailing issues. In times of crisis, the church buildings provide safe refuge (Blackman, 18). Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has a number of diverse resources; hence it is vital to assist individuals to recognize the value of these resources which may sometimes be overlooked. By creating awareness to members of the society about the available resources they possess, the church might be able to address problems in the community with a renewed confidence.

Below is the data collected using primary methods, from the interviews undertaken, the members of the church have identified vast categories of church resources within the church;

- Rev E. Makunike (a senior Pastor) pointed out that, “ *tine hupfumi hwevhu ratinoshandisa kusimudzira nzvimbo yedu nekuita mabhindauro akasiyana-siyana anosanganisira kupfuya mombe dzemukaka,kuchengeta huku pamwe nenguruve, tine zvekare nzizi dzinoyeredza mvura kuunza panzvimbo izvi zvakatoita kuti titenge mapombi anodhonzwa mvura kuunza padhuze*” (we have diverse natural resources which include land and water which sustain us in variety of projects such as dairy farming, poultry and piggery). These are natural resources that are very relevant in promoting sustainable development.
- Rev Mushavire adds that “*tine zvekare nhengo dzesangano dzine ruzivo nenjere uye vakazvipira kushanda nekuti vakadaniwa naMwari zvinobatsira mukusimudzira dunhu redu*”, (we have among our church members, people, who are knowledgeable, skilled, and they are very committed to serve the community).
- The financial department had the following to say, “*tine rubatsiro rwemari rwunosanganisira mikando uye tinokwanisawo kukwereteswa kubva kune mabhanga pamwe nerubatsiro runobva kuhurumende.*”(We have financial resources which include money, access to bank loans, local savings opportunity and government support).

- Rev Mudonhi emphasized that, *“tine zve munharaunda zvatinhazvo zvinosanganisira tsika nemagariro echitendero chedu, mabato akasiyana-siyana, uye vekunzewe vatinodyidzana nawo mune zvakasiyana- siyana”* (we have social resources which include culture, traditions, organisations, local groups, access to external networks and contacts).
- Rev Makunike (senior pastor) added that *“tine zvakare zvivakwa, midziyo, mapombi, motokari/michovha nemagetsi”* (we have physical resources which include buildings, tools, water pumps, vehicles and electrical power supply).
- Mr Manhiri (an elder) said that, *“tine chipo sesangano rekusimudzira vanhu mumweya tichivasimudzira nekuvasimbisa kuti vatendeke mukuita zvakana sezvo zviriizvo zvinotarisirwa na Jesu Kirisitu”* (we have spiritual resources that strengthen and encourage people to be faithful in their conduct and to guide them in doing what is good as expected by Jesus Christ). For Nyakatsapa United Methodist church, spiritual resources include belonging to a local church, having access to a Bible and enjoying the freedom of worship.

The above resources have unrecognised value in promoting sustainable development activities to help the poor in their communities. Therefore, from this background one can explore how these church resources are relevant in promoting sustainable development.

3.5.1 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING

According to Makunike (2007), Nyakatsapa circuit has a human resource of ordained clergy. These include trained leadership and lay people who are committed to serve the community. Such people have skills, are trained and have a calling and desire to serve people. According to the Oxford dictionary (2010), “resource is any action or strategy adopted in adverse circumstances, personal attributes and capabilities that sustain one in adverse circumstances”. This definition supports the idea that personnel in Nyakatsapa Church are a human resource which is very relevant to sustainable development. Skilled and trained personnel in the church are an instrumental tool for evangelism which in many ways promotes sustainable

development. Evangelism is considered by many people to be linked to one dimension of spiritual development which is only addressing the final destination of people. However, evangelism must address both the spiritual and physical world at the same time. According to Webster's Standard Dictionary (2006), to evangelise is to preach the gospel. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has the responsibility through evangelism in addressing social issues affecting the poor. The announcement of God's Kingdom of justice and peace demands the denunciation of all injustice and oppression, both personal and structural.

The idea is that the true gospel must be reflected through the changed lives of individuals. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church declares the love of God through preaching without any bias, it shows the importance of love and has commitment to its demand of justice and peace. Hence this shows that the church has a mission from God to transform faith into deeds as supported by James 2:14f "faith without works is dead."

In fact, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church is God's tool for challenging the enemy (evil/devil) and bringing together of individuals who have separated and hurt others because these are the main sources of human conflict and suffering. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church upholds care for truthfulness of creation by condemning sinful abuse and the destruction of God's creation and to be involved in God's healing of broken relationships between creation and humanity. Hence the church has been called to the ministry of healing and reconciliation of broken human relationships and with God (2Cor. 5: 16–21).

It is important to acknowledge that personnel in Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church are a vital resource which through evangelism can be an instrument for promoting peace building and conflict prevention. According to Colossians 1:15-20, the mission of Jesus Christ is to transform every part of the cosmos – bringing healing, reconciliation, and lasting peace to every broken relationship in heaven and on earth. No argument can be raised against the fact that conflicts are a major hindrance to sustainable development because of its consequences. Therefore, approaches to sustainable development must take religious ideas into account in order to promote peace and resolve conflicts. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church promotes, encourages and trains participants in sound biblical values that are a guide for honesty and good discipline. For instance, the church values and respects that every human being is created in the image of God and this is supported biblically (Genesis 1 verse 27).

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church guards the community jealously against immoral practises such as murder and stealing; by so doing it avoids grave consequences such as loss

of life, property among others. Such negative acts may have far-reaching consequences but we should not overlook the results of such conflicts which eventually lead to death. Through death, individuals are left as orphans, widows among others. Hence, through countering actions that lead to immoral behaviour, eventually the church is promoting peace. As a result of peace, sustainable development may be achieved. An example of how conflict may be prevented; if a person is “born again in Christ”, one will take such an oath like never to kill or steal again because the acts are against God’s commandments (Osagie-Usman, 1994). It can be argued that such idioms of being born again are central within the church of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church and it promotes total wellbeing of a person. By so doing, the church’s social principles are respected and eventually peace is promoted and conflict is resolved or avoided.

At family level, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church noted that violence and abuse in many forms such as verbal, psychological, physical, sexual are harmful to the wellbeing of the human community and also in the sight of God. This is true because the consequences are inevitable conflicts. The church guards against such bad acts through provision of safe environments. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church offers counselling and support for the victims and avoids such situations if the problem is noted earlier. Generally, counselling ensures wellness, personal growth, career and other social ills that cause diseases, in other words counselling restores lost hope within a person. Casey (1996) argued that counsellors work in areas that involve relationships. However, counselling differs according to need but it might be concerned with development issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, helping in decision making, coping with crisis, developing insights and knowledge in different individuals and improving relationships. It has been noted that in this contemporary time, most cases of family violence are a result of infidelity practices which involve adulterous behaviours between married couples. Married couples are no longer faithful to each other and these are some of the causes of conflicts. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church is against such adultery practices by promoting fidelity within marriage. Therefore, the church rejects such bad actions of the abuser; it confirms that the person is in need of God’s redeeming love.

In Africa, no one can deny the fact that primarily the church has a gift of interacting with the spiritual world. However, (given a discourse to discuss how to promote peace), it may sound crazy if one suggests that spirituality has an important contribution to maintaining peace. The reason is because this feature of religion is hardly considered by peace building agencies due

to the fact that they are biased against its literal meaning. Nevertheless, the idea of spirituality has a lot to offer in eliminating and discouraging violence. In many wars at all levels, fighters usually seek for prayers and divine guidance which they believe to be channels of spiritual powers from the church. According to Ellis (2001), “these prayers offer guidance and protection to people who are engaged in war, the prayers make them effective in battle or protect them from injury or even death”. These prayers and sometimes fasting episodes exercise influence over the fighter positively because God will lead them and there is assurance of safety. Such attributes of spiritual power is recognised in Mutasa district through Pastors and other believers in Christ because the power is morally decisive since the supposed spiritual power can be used both to harm and to heal. In politics, the church mediates through prayers and fasting during elections in order to promote peace. Ordained people who are believed to possess spiritual power can be organisers of violence as well as potentially helping to resolve conflict. It is praiseworthy for diplomats, whether from the regional, national, global or any other recognized peacemaker, to include the most prominent religious figures in their programmes so as to promote sustainable development. The Netherlands Institute for International Relations, (2005) supports the idea that, “there is need to consider all religious authorities that is mainline and new religious movements that are flourishing in Africa”. Partnering with all of them in regular discourse of consultation and discussions on such challenges will yield sound results of progress.

3.5.2 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND POVERTY

Poverty is a major challenge that counters the advancement towards effective sustainable development; therefore it must be eliminated if people are to ensure development which is sustainable. Unfair distribution of resources has posed a major challenge in provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and other human necessities. Hence, in order to achieve sustainable development there is need to find ways to ensure a more equitable distribution of the resources. According to Chitando (2005), “poverty, lack of education, gender inequalities, poor health facilities, prostitution and unemployment contribute to the spread of HIV and AIDS”. As a result, people succumb to the excavating ravages of the HIV pandemic, the consequences of this is the rising numbers of orphans and widows who are left vulnerable and incapable to meet their desired basic needs for them to sustain in the future. Given such an existing reality, people will continue to become poor and

the poor will remain poor without any transformation and advancement of their life. Moreover, the rising technology, especially when accompanied by the exploitative economic practices makes many people poor and makes poverty self-perpetuating. In some cases such technology in an unjust society can give rise to unemployment. Bosch (1991: 434) puts it that, “poverty cannot be uprooted by providing technological knowhow to the poor people”. Conflict is another bedeviling effect leading to poverty in many societies; hence any important way to support the poor will be to work for peaceful solutions. From the previously mentioned definitions, it has been noted and explained that development is a process by which the poor and the vulnerable have the right to control their wellbeing. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church through its skilled and trained people addresses all unjust treatment of people and all exploitative structures that perpetuate poverty. August (2010: 38), puts it that sustainable development can be attained through putting God at the centre of problems such as sickness, poverty, unemployment, political and social injustices among other challenges that affect the wellbeing of humanity and there is hope that things would change for the better. God takes the middle stage for the reason that development belongs to Him and is the chief architect of true or real development because for with God, nothing shall be impossible (Luke 1:37). This means that there is no sustainable development that can take place without God.

Gort (1980b: 47 - 60) argued that, “the mission of the Christian church is to identify itself with the poor and the oppressed”. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has social resources which include culture and traditions which advocate that people are all equal before God (Genesis 12:7). Through these, the church supports the deprived and challenges the rich. In an attempt to challenge poverty, the church provides quality education, employment opportunities, medical care and implement some policies that cater for decent housing, radical revisions of welfare programs, work for peace in conflict area and efforts to protect creation’s integrity. The church also intervenes through funding school fees for some of the underprivileged children. The church also assists in provision of health services through its financial resources. The church recognizes that the long-term reduction of poverty must move beyond services to and employment for the poor.

The Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has a combination of natural resources such as land and water and physical resources such as tools, equipment, machines and vehicles. These resources are very instrumental in eliminating poverty. Through the mentioned resources, the church is involved in many initiative projects which equip members to be self

sustaining and it helps in creating job opportunities for others. By so doing, the church is playing a hand in eliminating poverty. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has a mission farm which is rich in diverse projects, these enrich people and it vitally contributes in eradicating poverty at large. The church runs a dairy farm with many cows and the milk is sold to the community and some is supplied to the national dairy board. It also runs a pig project, and a poultry project among others and these projects provide employment. Seymour (2002: 16) supported the idea that, “sustainability is a process by which a better life of a society is obtained, and implies creating an environment for better life through the provision of good services such as jobs, better education, health centres and food security for people”. Such projects are vital in countering the economic situation of unemployment. It provides employment for local people within Mutasa district through vast projects which needs labour. Johannes & Mans (2010: 368) argued that, “the poverty level in a country compels the church to play a crucial role including the critique of the dominant models of development along with a dedication to development centred on people, sustainable livelihoods”. Hence, the challenge and commitment are important so that they can fight against poverty. The church was called to serve the poor (August 2010: 47). As a result, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church is very instrumental in promoting sustainable development of humane living standards because in its development responsibility it promotes respect for those who are in need, regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, race and social status.

3.5.3 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND HEALTH

Health and well being is a very important aspect in almost every human society. In Africa, sickness is understood in two folds. From one point of view, illness can be caused by natural factors. Another point of view is that sickness is caused by evil spirits. Fabella and Surgitharjah (2000:189) supported that African spirituality should be understood as “cry for life, the power to resist death and its agents”. Shoko (2007) also argues that, “health and well being of people is paramount in every society”. This issue of good health and well-being is a subject central in Nyakatsapa United Methodist church. Health in general terms is a condition of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. John 10:10b says, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” This shows that health is the responsibility of each person to whom health has been entrusted. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church caters for both medical treatments (practical) as well as non medical treatment (spiritual).

In addressing human sickness and disease, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has a financial resource of money, access to loans, savings opportunities and sometimes government support which is a very powerful instrument relevant in meeting the health needs of the people. The church uses some of its finances to pay for medical bills for the sick especially the less privileged. The church has worked to raise some money towards payment for healthcare to those who are disadvantaged such as widows, orphans and elders. Through its many projects such as dairy farming, poultry and pig farming, the church has adequate financial base to cater for health facilities of the disadvantaged. This is important because the absence of adequate health delivery may in the long term result in the deaths of many people. Eventually, this will lead to the rise in the number of orphans, widows among others who probably may need support and will not be able to be independent. Such consequences may be far reaching, but for the development to be sustainable it needs to take into account such hindrance blocks so that the future needs are not compromised. Identifying the problem from beyond helps not to compromise the needs of the future generation. Therefore, through financial resources, the church is providing adequate health services.

Besides helping with cash, the church also provides other essential services to those in dire need in hospitals and clinics. Such disadvantaged people in clinics or hospitals need clothing and the church uses its financial resources to meet such needs. Through its economic power, the church buys clothes and gives to children in orphanages, and the elders in care houses. Some of the clothes are donated by members of the church. It is very clear from this point that the financial resources of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church are very crucial in delivering good health service which is a basic need to every person. The church members pay compassion visits regularly and also provide some groceries to hospital patients.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has human resources such as skills and knowledge available and these people are very committed and willing to serve people. These people are experts and knowledgeable in health delivery service. Within Nyakatsapa United Methodist church, there is a health committee which is very essential and well equipped to meet the health needs of the community because it has individuals who are skilled and trained. As noted before, trained and skilled personnel who are members of the church can be one category of the church resources among others. The committee equips and provides the much needed information on health issues, for instance they provide valuable information and break the silence about the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The committee also educates people about

viral and infectious diseases. Usually before, such topics were not a subject matter to be discussed in church because it was believed that people who are HIV positive contracted it because they were adulterous and yet adultery is forbidden in the bible. These people were regarded as sinners cursed by God because of their evil deeds. However, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is against such discrimination and stereotypical treatment of the HIV infected. The skilled committee also provides lessons about balanced food and water expected from every individual. Considering the noted role of the health committee in the church, it is observed that the personnel in church is very committed and are willing to serve people. Sometimes they invite doctors to deliver health talks on subjects such as encouraging the use of condoms among youths and they also encourage members to get tested and for those living with HIV/AIDS are encouraged to take recommended drugs that suppress the virus.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church also offers spiritual healing which promotes total wellbeing of every individual. Spiritual healing involves the treatment of sickness which does not incorporate any medication; it is believed that certain sicknesses are caused by *mashave* or *madhimoni* (demonic/evil spirits) (Makunike 2010). In attending to such health problems, the treatment usually involves exorcism thus, *iwe mweya wakaipa. Iwe shave buda nezita raJesus* (literally, you evil spirit, come out in the name of Jesus). The healing is prominently engaged during mid week sessions every Wednesday in the church. Many people have given testimony of having received such healing through this therapeutic process even in the hospitals because they regularly conduct hospital visits meant for such service. Hence, the Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has a holistic healing approach because they attend to both medical and non medical healing depending on the nature of the diseases. Accordingly, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is mostly aware that a balanced mind must be inside a strong body which is healthy.

Through human resource, the skilled personnel in the church offer counselling services which are a very important aspect in delivering health services. The absence of counselling in diverse situations may result in inevitable stress, high blood pressure, depression, strokes, critical illness and eventually death. Counselling sessions are then conducted to restore the emotional and psychological make-up of the healed patient and other people in dire need. On one hand, it is a known fact that only people, who are fit in terms of health, can stand a better chance of gainful employment and become productive in performing work. On the other

hand, unhealthy workers constitute a liability in the workplace and so become a burden to society. This insight continues to be true in the conditions of so many people living with AIDS in work places. Therefore, counselling promotes total wellbeing of a person in a vast number of ways. Hence, it can be relevant to consider church resources as very necessary in promoting a sustaining development.

However, it is discouraging that other churches are against and avoid western medication in addressing illness, for instance in the Johanne Marange church, members are discouraged from using western medication but to rely on faith healing hence such type of healing is not holistic because within this group there is a notable alarming increase in the deaths of people especially the infants. However, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is holistic in its approach to healing; it has proved excellence in the area of health and well-being by recognising that sustainable development is possible in the sphere of good health. As a result, the Nyakatsapa United Methodist church does not support the myth that scientific medicine is not God's way of treatment. It practises the 'laying on of hands' on the patient as an effective therapy and adopts western medication through assisting with payments for medical fees and also charging affordable fees in their medical institutions. In fact, it is perceived that God grants humanity various methods of healing. This is how the Nyakatsapa United Methodist appreciates the clinical method of therapy.

3.5.4 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is an issue of concern throughout the world because of its devastating effects. Throughout the world, HIV is one of the major epidemics that have led to many deaths which inevitably left many people as orphans, widows and some as vulnerable in many ways. Hence, this is a topic of concern because its effects are a major barrier that hinders the effective achievements to sustainable development. Dube (2002) puts it across as follows, "the HIV epidemic is a serious crisis in the whole continent of Africa". This shows that, if by any chance the country managed to tackle this disease then sustainable development can be attained for the betterment of people. Maposa and Humbe (2012:22) argued that "Zimbabwe is a country that is brutally and severely weighed down by this

disease and only ranked after Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho in the Southern region”. Many different people, institutions and organizations are trying to assist on how to alleviate the pandemic. Due to the challenges, there are so many organisations together with the government striving with unbearable effort in order to make Zimbabwe free from HIV/AIDS.

The Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has human resources which constitute key stakeholders in an attempt to alleviate HIV and AIDS. However, the challenge prevailing in the churches in their attempt to fight against this disease is that some are accused of being the breeding and fertile ground for the disease mostly for their members. For instance, they are widely known for not discussing the subject in the church, use of condoms is not a topic in the church and yet adultery and premarital sex exists in the churches which increase the chances of spreading the diseases.

Chitando (2008) adds that, “the fact that women are considered mainly to be responsible for child bearing and caring for them, to have no say on sex decisions and to wait for men to support family and make major decisions has been among others, the one cause of the rise in the spread of this pandemic”. This shows that African societies are pro-masculine, patriarchal or male prejudiced. Such socially constructed gender inequalities have exposed women to HIV/AIDS. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church counters against such norms, they treat all persons as equal before God, Genesis 1: 29. Decision making is not a priority to man, within the church women secure high positions, for instance such as becoming female pastors, lay leaders and treasurers. It is apparent that gender inequality is a long term hindrance to sustainable development. However, through its social resources of culture and traditions, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church is gender balanced and there is no superiority complex between females and males. By so doing the church is promoting sustainable development.

Within Zimbabwe, the spreading of HIV/AIDS is accounted for by rules that make an environment conducive for the spread of the virus. For example, the youths are being exposed to pre-marital sex, lack of paternal advice and counselling. Much of the advice on the youth is coming from their peer groups which are not knowledgeable enough to make sound decisions, instead what they influence each other leads to vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Such a situation gives noticeable evidence of loose morals that exist within in a society. Hence, this lack of pure morals calls the Church to be part of the problem solving agents. The idea behind Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is that their social teaching discourages young boys and girls who are at a tender age from dating. Among youth

members, they also discourage premarital sex and emphasize on abstinence before marriage, for married couples they are encouraged to be faithful in marriages which is against infidelity practices. Given a scenario that a young man wants to marry, he should go through the church elders so as to receive counselling and to be given proper procedures to that effect. Usually, the church promotes Christian marriage in the form of a wedding. This secures a relationship because it is legally recognised. Such a marriage is different from Christian and customary marriage which is legalised. Usually non Christian and not customary type of marriage is vulnerable to infidelity and adultery which lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS because it involves engaging into sex with more than one partners.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has incorporated the role of what the indigenous people call “*vatete*” (paternal aunt), the aunties served the role as advisors whereby a young man informs the church elder that he is attracted to a particular girl(Mudonhi 2015). Theologically, this approach to marriage manifests the deep expression of agape (true love inspired by the almighty God). This kind of love is different to filial love which is usually motivated by carnal minds. According to Musoni (2013), this type of filial approach is a recipe for social disasters in families because it is associated with simplistic love that takes place at the market place. Its consequences are adultery, fornication, promiscuity, rape and forced marriages or early marriages. The above noted factors provide the social environment in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Of most interest, the inspiration of agape love makes the two lovers to discuss on the topic of HIV which may lead the two into HIV/AIDS or STI testing. The idea of testing shows the new spiritual perspective of love. As a result, the driving force of promoting such a relationship among youth is very important because it makes a great difference in the increase of social and moral foundation of a community. Eventually, if this is to be maintained and promoted, it discourages extra marital affairs and strengthens genuine fidelity for married couples. It is this exact feature which provides a practical approach in alleviating the spread of HIV/AIDS. Considering the noted contribution of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church, she is a typical example of being responsible in its effort to encourage zero tolerance in the levels or rate of HIV/AIDS infection.

In different circumstances, people living with HIV/AIDS often face discrimination if it is not rejection from family members, friends and various communities in which they work and interact. To a certain degree, some are not given the desired adequate health care service, especially towards the end of life when they are now critically ill. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church recognizes that every person was created in the image of God (Genesis

1:29), therefore they treat people living with HIV/AIDS with dignity and respect. As a biblical mandate of the church is to love and to restore the broken hearted, it is the responsibility of the church to minister to and with these individuals in their families regardless of how the disease was contracted. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church stands for the right of the infected and affected people and assists them so that they have access to adequate health service, employment opportunity, and full participation in public education and also in the church. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is actively involved in the prevention of the spread of AIDS by providing education to the community and also within the church. The Church is always available to provide counselling to the affected individuals and their families. The church also provides the health department with a platform to come and share some information in the church.

In the whole of Africa, it is widely known that individuals in need of healing are not only those with noticeable physical minor illness, but also persons who are suffering from invisible ailments that cannot be identified in clinical medicine such as mental problems including stress and depression. Hence, for healing to be holistic in nature, it must attend both to the spiritual as well as physical aspect of a person. Of most interest, this is a recognised role of Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church in health care. Therefore, spiritual ideas are a necessity and there is a need to put such spiritual ideas into health care policies. Above all, health constitutes an area in which the role of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church must be widely noted by the development experts, notably in the field of service delivery. Generally speaking, health and education constitute an area in which the role of the church has already been widely noted by development experts, notably in the field of service delivery.

3.5.5 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development is yet an additional aspect to reveal the extent to which Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is vital in the Mutasa district in the discourse of community development. The fact is that community development is reflected in every facet of individual life. Within the community, there are disadvantaged people who testify their being alive through the appreciable role of Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church. It is not all, but the church identified few disadvantaged children who are under their care. The future plan lies in

sustaining human life through the expression of the whole gospel Jesus preached which emphasises the concern of people in dire need and to make their life manageable as children of God. Jesus said, “For I was hungered, and you gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink...” (Matthew 25: 43). Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church engages in a number of fund raising activities to meet the values of responsibility and to equip and introduce love among youth as a way to look after orphans. The approach is meant to help orphans through cash or kind. Youth Evangelism ministry of Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has been trained to help children in dire need through alms giving. They created an organised system which involve collecting money in a *tswanda* (small basket). Makunike (2010). At the end of the session, this *tswanda* (small basket) will then be handed to the youth treasurer every Sunday to do proper counting. This money will be used to pay, for instance; school fees, accommodation, clothes and food for orphans depending on the amount available. For that reason, the doctrine of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is relevant to express the degree to which mainline churches are responsible to people in dire need irrespective of age, denomination, class and level of education. It has to be noted that community development which is fashioned by Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is modelled on the ministry of Jesus Christ which was characterised by the virtues of compassionate love for the less privileged members of society (John 5:2-9, John 6:1-13). The Apostle Paul also links this community development, thus: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is that which looks after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1: 27). This passage is cited to explain that helpful religion is significant if it practically helps others in dire need.

Nyakatsapa church uses its social resources of culture and traditions which are followed within the church, it is called for social teaching and to put things into practise (faith without work is dead James 2 verses 14-16). Unity calls to care for others, the surroundings and future generations. Kindness towards the suffering, anyone who is suffering from any kind of misfortune both near and far is catered for at Nyakatsapa United Methodist church. Unshaken and persevering determination of dedication of oneself to common good, the church is responsible for every individual. The poor and disadvantaged are given unique attention in promoting development. The church accords primacy of option for the poor; speaks for the voiceless, it assesses policies and social institutions on their impact to the poor. Nevertheless, having an option for the poor does not imply that the church only focuses on one group whilst neglecting the other, instead it strengthens the entire society by supporting those who are the

mainly vulnerable. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church responds to the needs of every brother and sister, however persons with greatest needs have to be given greatest attention. Proverbs 22 verse 9-11 succinctly puts it across, "... a generous man will always be blessed for sharing his food with the poor."

The community provides the potential for supporting human beings into the fullness of their humanity. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church takes responsibility to innovate, sponsor, and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church becomes a primary agent in training and supporting holistic programs that help the poor provide economically for themselves, their families and their communities. This is achieved through its diverse projects such as dairy farming, poultry and pig farming which provide employment for many local people. The primary duty for the church is the gospel with an understanding that all persons are important because they are human beings created by God and loved through and by Jesus Christ and not for the reason that they have merited importance.

Moreover, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church does not encourage divorce; the church's argument is that God's plan is for lifelong and faithful marriage. For that reason, the church offers solid premarital, marital, and post-marital counselling in order to produce and safeguard strong marriages. However, in cases when a married couple are separated beyond reunion, even after thoughtful consideration and counsel, break up in marriage is an undesirable option in the midst of brokenness. It recommends that methods of mediation be used to minimize the adversarial nature and faultfinding that are often part of our current judicial processes. The reason is because of the upsetting emotional, spiritual, and economic consequences of divorce for all involved, understanding that women and especially children are disproportionately impacted by such burdens. The point noted is that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has human resources of skilled and trained members who resolve and avoid such conflicts through their counselling services and social principles. By so doing, it counters against divorces this may eventually lead to vulnerability of children and disunity of family. Eventually this may hinder the progress of development.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church advocates equality between people, according to scripture the common humanity of male and female, both have equal worth in the eyes of God. The church is against the notion that one gender is superior to another, that one gender must struggle against another, and that members of one gender may receive love, power, and

esteem only at the expense of another. The church rejects the idea that God made individuals as incomplete fragments, made whole only in union with another. Therefore, the church calls upon women and men alike to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete and to respect the wholeness of others. Hence, opportunities and freedom to love and be loved, to seek and receive justice, and to practice that ethical self-determination is for every individual.

3.5.6 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GENDER AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women empowerment is a critical area and Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is central as a facilitator of changing society through the setting free of women. The term empowerment is generally understood in diverse dimensions. From one point, empowerment can be referred to as the increasing of the spiritual, political, social, education, gender and economic strength of individuals and the community. Bush and Folger (1994) have defined empowerment as, “restoration to individual of a sense of his/her own value and strength of his/her own capacity to handle life’s problems”. The mentioned definitions are considered with high esteem in view of the status of women in Africa. The reason is because in every patriarchal society in Africa, women are disadvantaged and deprived of their several rights in diverse fields of life. Their access to various forms of development, alongside even property rights, inheritance laws, higher level of education is still farfetched, (<http://gencen.isp.msu.edu>). Chitando (2008:17) adds that, “throughout history, women have faced serious challenges under these oppressive hard patriarchal systems”.

Gender differences can be justly addressed through evangelism in the church. Within Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church, gender issues are addressed. Notably, there are recognised female Pastors, some if not many secure high posts such as district superintendent if it is at district level. For instance, currently Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has two Pastors, one is a female and the other is a male. The issue of gender equality is justified biblically because in genesis the bible proclaims that we are all created in the image of God (Genesis 1 verse 27). Hence the issue of superiority or inferiority complex

between females and males is not a subject of discussion because it is justly addressed in the church.

Through trained and skilled personnel, the church advocates women empowerment as well as rights of women. This is supported by Bellagamba (1992) who adds that, “the duty of the church is to help people who are unjustly treated, persecuted, oppressed by internal and external forces, to liberate themselves, to experience the liberation, the salvation and the redemption brought by Christ.”

3.5.7 NYAKATSAPA UNITED MTHODIST CHURCH AND EDUCATION

The researcher has noted a close relation linking education and the role of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church in bringing about development through the construction of schools. Haralambos (2008) adds that, “it is a true fact and well known extensively by a number of existing educationist and sociologist that development in society can be highly achieved if persons are educated to some identifiable levels”. This insight was agreed upon and supported by a number of modern theologians and some other scholars on development. The few of some of the terrible problems that counter development are civil wars, poverty, HIV/AIDS, corruption, rape, unequal distribution of resources and so on. Chitando (2009) expressed in great grief that “Africa has been raped, brutalized and marginalised in the global systems” (www.dkagencies.com/doc/...). In an attempt to offer a solution to the noted challenges, Chitando (2009) adds that, “Africa is capable, able and the responsibility lies in her hands for it to be transformed”. The similar view is confirmed by Martino (2005) who claims that no one can save the African continent from destruction without the internal partnership of Africans themselves. This implies that true development should be initiated by the general masses that are affected for it to sustainable.

An argument has been raised from the public sphere of influence that the type of education inherited from colonial masters did not empower the local people in relation to sustainable development. Instead, the colonial education only produced caretakers of other people’s property, hence it shows that, “colonial education has limitation inside other limitations” (Rodney, 1972). To be more comprehensive, it must be recognised that sustainable development is established in a situation where universal values like honesty, integrity, respect, creativity are promoted and inculcated. Rather than developing young intelligent

trouble makers, who are violent at times, students in Nyakatsapa primary and high school are taught moral related lessons just like at University level. This is meant to introduce the basic values of humanness.

It is within this background that Chitando (2010) pointed out that, “The local curriculum must be revisited so that education becomes relevant to societies rather than remaining a world of theorising”. Based on Chitando’s idea, it can be noted that to be educated is one thing and to be relevant in society is another thing because one can be an educated person yet not relevant in the society especially based on one’s moral values. This means education can only meaningfully contribute to the existential problems such as poverty, AIDS, and unemployment, there is need to ensure that practical courses are included in the curriculum. By so doing, graduates have the necessary tools for self reliance which enhance sustainable development in their localities. The eradication of poverty, provision of good healthcare, economic empowerment and the right to property ownership can be a dream comes true if government and the church partners in aligning their policies curricula in a way that people benefit directly. Nyakatsapa United Methodist argues that every person has the right to education. It believes that the responsibility for education of the young rests with the family, faith communities, and the government (North 1990).

In society, this function can best be fulfilled through public policies that ensure access for all persons to free public elementary and secondary schools and to post-secondary schools of their choice. Persons should not be precluded by financial barriers from access to church-related and other independent institutions of higher education.

In the education system, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church also advanced the mission secondary school to a boarding and high school; built a computer laboratory without external support but from its own funding (Makunike 2010). The other contributing issue is that the fees are fairly affordable for many parents/guardians on account that they are not working. This is different to government schools whereby the school fees cannot be afforded by many parents/guardians who are not working. Therefore, it means the absence of these mission schools would have created a fertile ground for private schools to those parents who can afford and left other children as the vulnerable. Eventually a lot of children will be left roaming the streets and indulging in illicit activities. Hence, considering such a situation, it hinders holistic promotion of sustainable development. This being the state of affairs there is

need for the church and its resources to get involved in sustainable development in order to improve lives.

Besides affordable charges of school fees by church institutions, the church also assists in the paying of fees up to University level. The church pays school fees for orphans and other disadvantaged children. By so doing, the church is using its resources to promote sustainable development.

3.5.8 NYAKATSAP UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND NETWORKING

Moving from the historical background, the question that can be asked is how religious networks could contribute to development. It must be noted that religious networks are not a simple replacement for an effective system of government; rather they must be considered as very important. The reason is that, such networks are worth to consider as primary implementers of development plans. However, if religious networks are alone, they do not amount to the fundamental rethinking of development policy that is being advocated for. Strategies in development that take the spiritual dimension of a community can yield highly effective results. Cordaidetal (2006) gives an illustrative example by supporting faith based organisations at grassroots level, not regarding them as service delivery only but also confirming them in positive aspects of their spiritual vision.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has a wide network which makes it more vibrant and very relevant to sustainable development. The church has links with other organisations in the community through church members, and in the course of working with other groups in carrying out community initiatives. There are also links with the wider church through denominations and Christian alliances. Membership of networks facilitates learning. In some cases they hold conferences which are denominational and interdenominational. During these gatherings, members share joys, successes and failures as a result this motivates and strengthens different individuals. Such networks even create opportunities for others in the form of employment, business opportunities and other investments. More so, the church has established networks through the church's institutions, for instance, Africa University is a United Methodist Church institution however, in terms of student enrolment and employee recruitment, it is not denominational, rather it accommodates every individual who qualifies from the whole of Africa. By so doing the platform creates wider networks within the country and even abroad.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the unrecognised value of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church resources in promoting sustainable development which is effective. These include its personnel in the church, farm land, financial resources, its culture and traditions among others. These diverse resources have been used effectively and efficiently in facilitating big initiatives such as dairy farming, poultry, and piggery projects among others. These initiatives and activities have raised money to fund health and education delivery services, cultures and traditions in the church have empowered women, advocated for equality, human rights among many other things.

CHAPTER 4

NYAKATSAPA COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS FORMIDABLE ASSETS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to create awareness among community members that will help them to note and understand the role they play through the church in every development program taking place in their communities. The role of the church is worth to acknowledge, both the church and the community members must be motivated on their role in promoting sustainable development. Poverty has posed a theological challenge to the church as a primary agent for sustainable development. Therefore, the church continues to take part in reducing the burden of the poor and to restore the capacity to function among those who are deprived and not working. This clearly shows that church leaders are not informed of the development work they are undertaking. It can be noted that the prevailing challenges that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is addressing in order to promote sustainable development are also the same the same challenges that development workers are facing in Zimbabwe to date. Again, the techniques and participation methods being used by churches, except for prayers and fasting, supports the development work, hence in some cases the church only needs to be supported through training for them to be very knowledgeable. The use of the spiritual resources such as prayer and fasting by church leaders as a way to counter social challenges is supported with their background and teachings from the bible. The only challenge is that it takes a different route from the principles of development work which believes that problems start off from the individual and his/her environment. They consider the problems as coming from the evil spirits and Satan is identified as the main cause of problems for the individual and the society.

4.2 THE NEED FOR NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO BE INVOLVED IN DEMONSTRATING THE GOSPEL

God does not only expect the Christian to pray in tongues only, rather He wants to see a gospel proclaimed and accompanied by the deeds. Thus, theory must work hand in glove with praxis; therefore the Christian must contribute to the community through demonstrating their

gospel. God's mission is not singular in nature because it does not meet one need of a person; rather it is holistic in the sense that it is concerned with people's essential needs, both spiritually and materially. This is scripturally supported in Psalms 146:7-9 which says God must be given thanks and praise because He provides rain, makes grass to grow and provide food also. This passage of scripture supports the idea that God is concerned with the community's needs. Hence, if God is concerned with the society, it means He is in opposition to all the people who are responsible for injustice and those who dominate at the expense of the sufferers. This does not imply that God is biased towards the poor and gives them a special advantage. Instead, it implies that God is for all people despite the status of being poor or rich. However in this contemporary world, there is a biased conception of the rich and the powerful people which tend to justify their wrong doing. Hence, God's action is seen as an opposite bias to the noted notion which is unjust. The nature of God is reflected in the person of Jesus Christ who exhibited compassion for the poor and the sick (Matthew 4:23; 14:14). This implies that God expects the church to challenge and show care for the oppressed. As a result, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church demonstrates the gospel through action because they care for everyone around in the whole community despite their race, sex, denomination and whether one is a believer or not a believer. This is supported by Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan who cares for the stranger (Luke 10:25-27).

4.3 THE ROLE OF NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS VERY CLOSE TO POOR PEOPLE

The church is an important institution that exists in a community because it is ever present and also due to the fact that it does not exist in a community to make profit but to do the mission of God. The notably interesting part is that it consists of poor people who are sometimes regarded as objects. Since the church is always available and is in the midst of such a vulnerable group, it means that the church has the capacity to empower, support and to restore their confidence so that they regain their abilities which are undermined within themselves. This means that the church is hand in glove with the most general and

undermined minority group within the society. Hence, the church is well placed in terms of identifying different strengths and talents among the local people. It is definitely not a challenge for the church to develop, equip and empower such people. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church does not stand in isolation, it benefits from links with other people and organisations in the society because its membership represents an example of a community. What has been mentioned above is very important if people are to promote a holistic sustainable development. The main problem which poses a challenge to agents of development is that they used the banking approach in trying to transform the lives of the poor. Using this approach, they view poor people as objects who are not capable to do things themselves, hence by so doing they overlook the contributions of the poor. This means that the poor must be taken as subjects whereby we learn from them and improve their ideas, skills, talents and gifts so that in future they do not depend on anybody because they would have been equipped to sustain themselves. Van der Watt et al (2005) agreed that, “sustainable development can only be attained if we consider the capacity that every person has to contribute and determine one’s future”. Therefore what is important is to develop the capacity within the people in order for them to meet their needs through valuing them with dignity and respect. In actual sense if one is poor, it does not imply that such a person has no value and has nothing to offer that can contribute to the wellbeing of others. Hence, for development to be sustainable it must be initiated by the disadvantaged people because they know the strengths and weaknesses of every member within the society. What is important is to identify the diverse talents, gifts and capabilities of these people and develop them so that they become useful for people to sustain themselves. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church effectively promotes sustainable development through its emphasis that people’s qualities and interaction must not be ignored. Korten (1990) adds that, “people in the community must be trusted, and respected, and their skills, abilities, potential and values appreciated as well”. He further noted that the development strategy must incorporate the values of justice; sustainability and to include everyone for it be effectively achieved.

4.3.2 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS PERMANENT AND EVER PRESENT

Usually, development agents do not permanently exist in a community, they come for a specific objective within a specific period of time. This is different to a church within a

community, it exists for the populace in the community and its presence is permanent. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is a very reliable primary agent in initiating development because it is always present. Therefore, the church has established long lasting relationships. This enables them to know every poor person within the community, their weaknesses and their strengths. The church knows every widow, orphan, stranger, elders and thereby its availability makes it a proper primary agent in promoting sustainable development. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is permanent and present, since it was established it is always available for the people. Therefore, it can play an important role in eradicating poverty and vulnerability. For example it is able to counter poverty because it knows everything and it is able to find the root cause of poverty and other things which challenge the progress of sustainable development. Van der Watt (2005) says that in order to achieve sustainable development, “it is important to take into consideration the availability and all presence of the church by making it the basis and agent of development”. Since Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is permanent and ever present therefore it knows everyone in the community that is the believers and non believers and it must not discriminate the non believers but it must act as the salt of the earth or the light to the darkness. By so doing, the church is attending to all people in the sense that it embraces everybody despite their social or gender status; the church considers the sick, poor, rich, young, old, men and poor. Even Jesus during his ministry, He was all loving and did not segregate, he included all people regardless the fact that one was Jew, Gentile, tax collectors, sinners among other things. By so doing the church represents God and this is what Nyakatsapa United Methodist is doing to date.

4.3.3 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS COMPASIONATE

It is a known feature that the church usually engages in the delivery of relief supplies to poor people in time of need so as to restore them from stress. Such a practise is a norm and it is reflected within Nyakatsapa United Methodist church. The church is very interested and dedicated to deal with structures that provide fertile ground to breed poverty. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church noted that if anything causing poverty is not eliminated to set people free from poverty, then charity and relief assistance will continuously flow but only succeeding in making individuals totally dependent unable to resolve anything but perpetuating poverty. Hence, this gives an insight that charity and relief must be occasional and not always if people are developed to be self sustaining.

A standard example of a good compassionate act conducted can be learnt from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church in promoting sustainable development, values individuals who are in need, despite their religious beliefs, gender, race, social status, etc. According to Neff (2003), many organisations have failed to promote effective sustainable development because they lack compassion; some do it for gain or profit. Anyone who is concerned with development programs must note that treating the poor with compassionate heart makes a big difference to them. The reason is that compassion can change the level of care and advance the lives of the poor.

4.3.4 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS A COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

Advocacy is not a new topic in the context of many church and faith organisations. The Oxford dictionary (2012) defines the term as someone who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy, or someone who pleads on behalf of someone. This definition supports the position of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church because it stands for the community and all the members in it, in simple terms it is the voice of the voiceless. It has been acknowledged long back that advocacy is a vital and useful role of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church if not all churches. This function was basically derived or found in the mission of Jesus Christ to the poor (Luke 4:18). Jesus shows kindness for persons with different kinds of needs such as disability, illness and lack of knowledge and those being unfairly treated. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church resembles this by presenting a willing heart to assist individuals and meeting people's needs.

In its effort to promote sustainable development, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is an active and useful voice of advocacy for the underprivileged persons because it speaks in opposition to all causes and the result of lack, and any evils of poverty. As an advocate, Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church has provided material support to the poor. Orobator (2005: 198, 200) puts it that, the church effectively achieves its role of advocacy by stating that the other role of advocacy that the church can also effectively play is that, "of providing spiritual guidance and statements that report on the state of poverty and to note the mission of the church in such situations".

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church also encourages others to partner and assist in improving water supply, health care and education. Through advancing literacy skills,

people's self confidence is raised. Individuals at youthful stages often face peer pressure to make use of drugs or to engage in unlawful activities such as sex for monetary reasons. Through advocacy role of the church, many of them were transformed and discovered dialogue and support groups useful in considering their option. However the task of advocacy is not easy to come by, therefore Nyakatsapa United Methodist church does not work in isolation, but with other churches and local organisations. This unity can be at all levels; for instance at local, regional and international levels. The main idea is to extend the Christian commitment with the poor and to influence leaders of the rich and poor countries to fulfil their public promise to achieve sustainable development.

4.3.5 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HAS DIVERSE RESOURCES

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church contains a lot of members who were created and organised for active service, such people are very committed and devoted to serve people. In addition, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has buildings which provide a place for community members to meet to discuss local issues. Some of these buildings are used to discuss educational issues within the community, marriage ceremonies are held there so as to encourage others on ideal marriages. The church building also provides safe refuge for people who have been abused and others who are victims of oppressive structures, (Blackman, 18). The church has diverse types of resources which are very influential in promoting sustainable resources. These include economic power, skilled and trained people, land, spiritual resources among the others.

4.3.6 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HAS BIBLICAL FORMATION OF VALUES

In promoting sustainable development activities, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has equipped people with sound biblical values that encourage honesty, support transparency, promotes discipline, fidelity in marriages, discourages premarital sex among youth and promotes abstinence. All these promoted moral values reflect humanness. By so doing, it promotes peace, justice and counters discrimination. The church also helps people to realize

the fruits of their labour, hence promoting hard work. The typical example is that of Jesus Christ who was a carpenter, hence they encourage hard work as portrayed in the bible, even God worked so hard in creating the heaven and earth to an extent that He rested on the seventh day. They also encourage people to give unto others in need because money and assets are not worthy of praise, but to glorify God, serve God and support themselves and their families. Such biblical models of leadership can help to building the capacity of everyone who participates in the development initiatives. Therefore, sustainable development with sound biblical material can be the most effective in achieving sustainability.

4.3.7 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS RELIANCE ON PRAYER

Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13, he instructs them on the importance of acknowledging God's rule and reign in heaven and on earth. The reason behind prayer is that when one prays, God will always respond through the provision of the requested needs such as basic physical, social, spiritual and economic needs. For instance, in the daily Lord's Prayer it is mentioned that, "give us our daily bread", this is a request that is important and all people make it, however it is mostly important to those living in poverty. The Nyakatsapa United Methodist church can teach, model, and encourage prayer as part of their promotion of economic development activities.

The church does intercessory prayers on issues that hinder peace which is very viable in promoting sustainable development. For instance, the church can pray against violence, poverty and starvation. In politics they pray for peaceful and harmonised elections. There are a lot of testimonies of healing from sickness through prayers and restoration of health. This implies that prayer is very important in promoting sustainable development.

4.3.8 IMPROVING AND ADVANCING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The researcher concurs with the general statement which says, 'information is force' and 'ignorance has no resistance'. By advancing education, this will help in creating human assets which in the long run advances sustainable development.

Within the community of Nyakatsapa, there are no government owned schools; the schools that dominate were constructed by missionaries. Subsequently, on the foundation of these schools, much credit is given to missionary activities and there is a lot of accomplishments and headway started by Nyakatsapa United Methodist church without financing from missionary churches abroad. A case in point is Nyakatsapa United Methodist church which expanded the mission school to a boarding and high school; furthermore, they assembled a computer research centre without relying on overseas church funding. The other important contribution is that the school fees are genuinely moderate particularly for some community members who are struggling to make ends meet. The affordable school fees make it possible for them to afford sending their children to school. This is distinctive to government schools whereby the school expenses can't be managed by numerous community members who are struggling to subsist. Consequently, if these mission schools were not there, it would have provided fertile ground for the flourishing of private schools which would only be accessed by few children whose parents can afford the cost and leaving most youngsters with no access to school. This would result in a lot of youngsters being left to roam the streets and engaging in illegal activities. Henceforth considering such a circumstance, it impedes the promotion of sustainable development. This being the situation there is requirement for the church and its resources to get included in economical advancement keeping in mind the end goal to enhance lives.

In addition, other than reasonable charges of school fees by church institutions, the church additionally helps with the paying of fees up to University level. The congregation pays school fees for some orphans and other disadvantaged kids. By so doing, the church is utilizing its assets to advance sustainable development.

4.3.9 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is an extra element of ability development and alludes to the practice through which individuals are empowered to distinguish and address their own particular issues. Capacity development is the procedure of creating and strengthening the recognised skills of the local individuals, their senses and capacities for them to stay alive, adjust, and thrive in the quick changing world. Subsequently, the churches as the agents for improvement should venture to empower less privileged individuals by helping them to use sound judgment, letting their voices be listened to, and helping them to become agents of progress in their own

particular community. The first president of Tanzania Dr Julius Mwalimu Nyerere (Interview with Alliance Magazine on 01/06/1998) once said: "... we don't create individuals, yet individuals create themselves..." The researcher agrees with this insight on the grounds that genuine change comes to fruition through enabled individuals (Bate 2003: 110). As existing situations change, people are capable of adjusting because it is not possible to remain unchanged.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has empowered people in many recognised ways. The church has empowered the community through its various projects such as dairy farming, poultry, pig rearing among others. Within the church, there are master farmers who are specialised in such projects. These individuals bring their knowledge to the church members and the community on their successes, failures and how they have managed in such ventures. Their advice and knowledgeable contributions have inspired a lot of individuals within the community. Eventually, different people have ventured into such projects and they testify the joy of success in their initiatives. People have been empowered through this education, some have the knowledge and the skill but they have no access to resources. As a church, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church provides resources to such people so that they can initiate their self sustaining projects. Besides start up cash, some were given pigs, cattle among other things so that they can do it on their own and develop their projects.

Moreover, women within Mutasa District were empowered by Nyakatsapa United Methodist church. Within the community, women are doing admirable work of sewing. There is a group of women who sew clothes. These people are united with the same talent of sewing. This group of women includes those who are underprivileged such as widows, single mothers and other talented women. Through this self sustaining project, many have testified the joys of success and they witnessed the presence and hands of God in their endeavour.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church's techniques for strengthening are multi-dimensional; some other individuals have been enabled by these initiatives. Burkey (1993: 50) clarifies that, "human development suggests the advancement of fearlessness, pride, activity, inventiveness, obligation and participation". The church equips the community with this participatory approach so that these underestimated people can lead themselves to advancement through self-assurance. For example, the individuals who are living with HIV/AIDS were marginalised. However, this is no longer the norm within this church. Rather, individuals living with HIV/AIDS are treated equally with those who are HIV

negative and they are also assigned leadership roles with the goal that they lead other individuals in the church. This approach did not benefit the individuals who are outside but rather it reflects how they value such groups of individuals in the community. In the long run, it is a depiction of how these individuals are significant in the public sphere and to indicate who should take part in advancing sustainable development.

4.3.10 NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH STANDS FOR JUSTICE

The point of justice involves a major part in the sacred texts of the bible. Therefore, it is relied upon to be practised and lived by God's people. Schultz (1997: 838) clarifies that, “the explanation behind this is on account of God requested justice among the Israelites”. Justice was not based on human law code, other than on God Himself. Scott (1980: 155) says that, “Martin Luther the reformer remarked that the greatest issue of our time is social justice in a worldwide context”. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church acts as the voice of the voiceless being in the community, the church speaks up on behalf of the powerless. The church empowers the underestimated individuals to represent themselves against injustice which leads to poverty. Justice is the strongest point of the main prophets of the Old Testament, and a repeated subject all through the last prophets.

A suggestion has been made by Davis (2006: 22) that, “the repetition of this theme by the prophets was one means of giving emphasis to it”. In Ps 61: 9, it is written that the Lord who loves justice could not listen to Israel’s worship and prayers because they lacked these attributes. For this reason, this attribute is a fundamental condition for individuals that belong to God because they are supposed to emulate their God. Bosch (1991: 434) gives a strong emphasis that, “poverty can only be uprooted by removing all causes of injustice”.

Poor people have rights in God’s eyes that extend beyond what humanity may effect. Fairness is one of the attributes of God, and demands that the poor receive equality as others. “The Law and the Prophets strongly points to the role of political authorities in taking care of the needs of the poor” (Wright 2004: 179). The Bible recognises justice as of fundamental importance for the whole human being (Van der Walt 2005: 69). There are many areas in Mutasa district where justice is denied. For instance, some churches still reinforce a superiority complex between the males and females. However, within Nyakatsapa United Methodist church they believe that every person is created equal and one should maintain

justice at the most. There can be no tangible results of development in poor people's lives not until the root causes of injustice are seriously addressed.

4.4 THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE NYAKATSAPA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Bosch (1991: 378) states that, "the position of the local church in the community would play a major role in affirming the dignity of poor people and helping them to meet their own social needs". This view is accepted by Koegelenberg (1995: 1) saying that, "the local church is the basic unit of the Christian society as it has the potential for speedy, effective community mobilisation and influence". For that reason, leaving out the Nyakatsapa United Methodist church in matters of sustainable development becomes practically impossible to do successful holistic ministry. The reason is because the church must show the love of God to the community and therefore they must be involved in development.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church expresses the true existence of its activities and this qualifies it as the primary agent for development. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church must be involved in sustainable development because for a long time from its history it has been involved in matters of development. Moreover, the other reason is that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church already has structures in place that are useful and they can facilitate developmental programmes.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has not left it up to the government and other organisations to do development programmes but it considers development as an order for mission. The encouraging thing about the whole situation of Mutasa district is that people have the enthusiasm to enhance their livelihood. However, in some cases the church lacks adequate resources and moral support from the government and other development agents, this incapacitates them. Regardless of having inadequate resources for development, the church and its community people are utilising every effort within their reach to promote sustainable development. This could suggest that any organisation that would like to promote sustainable development in the future should engage the local people as they are a viable resource and are able to determine every individual's capacities and abilities that necessitate effective sustainable development.

4.5 POSSIBLE CHALLENGES THAT CAN HINDER THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NYAKATSAPA

Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church might face possible challenges if it does not take into consideration the need for training of Pastors and other members who are facilitating activities which promotes sustainable development. Although they have achieved tremendous activities, they still need to be trained so that they become knowledgeable enough in the discourse of sustainable development and social work. This helps in countering of future failures towards promoting sustainable development. Training also helps the Church to incorporate both traditional and current methods so as to come up with a sound approach that can promote holistic sustainable development.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher has revealed the role played by community members through the church in every development programme taking place in their communities. It can be argued that some of the efforts by the organisations of development have failed to adequately promote holistic sustainable development because of applying wrong approaches. However, it is believed that meaningful development undertakes to address the holistic needs of an individual person as well as the community in a qualitative and quantitative manner. God's directives throughout the Scriptures have both God-focussed (vertical) and human-focussed (horizontal) dimensions that are inseparable. This kind of development needs only the church to administer it given the fact that it is the approved and accepted agent for transformational development because it has the mandate from God the owner of Mission (*Missio Dei*) to whom all creation belongs. However, the church should not only be committed to fulfilling the vertical dimension, but also the horizontal, because any failure to fulfil both is disobedience against God.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is called to do development work and it has realised that it is mandatory to challenge conditions like poverty that hinders sustainable development and its effect on human life. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is aggressively taking the challenge of promoting sustainable development, but now it is the time.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION, CONCLUSION & FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Factors that hinder the success of promoting sustainable development cannot be denied to have existed in the history of humanity. People have lived with the challenge of poverty, violence, injustice, inequality, conflict, discrimination among others things that suppress sustainable development. The believing and the non believing communities have faced the challenges stated above. The scripture confirmed that the poor will always be in existence, therefore we must always support those who are in need, (Deut. 15: 11). A typical example is the case whereby some children failed to get the opportunity of going to school due to the death of their parents resulting in them being left with no one to cater for their wellbeing.

The main worry now is to challenge the rising level of poverty, discrimination, injustice, inequality, lack of education, poor health service among other existential issues that limit progress of development. The rise of such problems was fairly low in the past; the issue was not a hot topic to each and every individual as it is today. However in the contemporary society, poverty has become a burning topic and how to effectively eradicate poverty in order to promote sustainable development. The problem why this challenge is remaining unresolved is because the approach being used towards development is not holistic in the sense that it did not take into consideration the contribution of religious ideas in such development issues.

This research has shown how the resources of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church are relevant in addressing existential needs such as poverty, violence, illiteracy, gender issues, poor health, and dependency syndrome among others so as to promote a holistic and effective sustainable development for the better advancement of life. The research was set in the context of sustainable development through the recognised achievements made by Nyakatsapa United Methodist church using its resources in advancing the community within Mutasa district. By noting such remarkable contributions by the church, it can be motivated and be appreciated on their tremendous role towards uplifting the life of the poor. Such an impact of the church must be recognised at all levels that is, locally and nationally. From a

biblical point of view, God can not only be witnessed in the worship place, rather, God should be even more present in the surrounding community.

5.2 EVALUATION

The Nyakatsapa United Methodist mission from over hundred years of its history of its effort has been focusing on four arms of its gospel which include Evangelism, Education, Health and Agriculture. However, to date Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has been a centre of many initiatives and has produced many luminaries both directly and indirectly through the use of its church resources. By so doing, the church encourages holy living, educating God's people and the community at large for personal growth and community service to the glory of God.

The emphasis of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church mission effort expresses what it is in existence for. Hence, the church's missionary aim is complimented by what Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is currently doing, endeavours are not far from what has been applied by Nyakatsapa mission. In reality Nyakatsapa United Methodist church should therefore be appreciated and recognised for all its efforts. This will motivate it to keep up the good work, engaging in these remarkable development initiatives. The church has engaged so much in the community activities through its visionary mindset of being innovative and creative using its available resources. By so doing it gives its endless effort in addressing injustice, education, gender inequality, health among others. It is unfortunate that there is no coordination with other development agents or organisation because they consider the church as responsible for the role of spiritual growth only; hence it underestimates other roles made by the church. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is no longer depending on overseas church funding as it was one hundred years ago. They do their activities and initiatives using the resources available within the church. They are responsible for every encounter such as what to do, how to do it, and the reason to do it when engaging in any activity and initiatives. The church's network base also enables it to accept those who are willing to fund and partner in the mission of community development. With this type of approach, holistic development is definitely made successful.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church is well known by many people as one of the churches whose clergy take the preaching of the gospel with seriousness. Very few in Mutasa district and the surrounding community have not been touched by the Nyakatsapa United Methodist

church through its singing especially of *Vabvuwi* (man's forum), the notable convention held annually in the Mutasa district, the agriculture extension and training as well as its ministry. Therefore, the same praise is being given to it in the area of community development which is sustainable because the church is qualifying its mission efforts. The researcher is convinced that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church's approach is very holistic because of the influential role it is playing in advancing the people's lives. To date, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has played a major role in promoting sustainable development. Therefore, the church must be recognised, appreciated and motivated so that it continues to get involved in tremendous work in promoting sustainable development.

Nyakatsapa United Methodist church was the second mission centre to be established after Old Mtali mission among all other United Methodist Churches in Zimbabwe. Hence, it is the largest church in the country and its impact can extend beyond Mutasa district. Therefore, as it takes such a position in promoting sustainable development with other churches spread all over the country, its contribution to community, national and international development would equally cover a wide area and be appreciated by many poor, marginalised people and other development agents.

Even though the church may face challenges of funding in development activities, however it is doing its best to raise the necessary finances through projects and other church resources. What is very important is that the church leaders must explain very well to people on anything that they want to introduce so that they have the same vision and mindset, this will make it possible for them to work towards achieving the same goal. It is true that, where there is a will, there is always a way.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher sought to highlight the relevance of Nyakatsapa United Methodist Church resources in facilitating and promoting development. Such an approach is biblically based; hence the challenges of corruption, discrimination and justice among others are rarely encountered. Therefore the church must be considered as the primary agent in promoting development.

The research has managed to address the following questions which are important to the role of Nyakatsapa church in promoting sustainable development:

i. What message does the history of the United Methodist Church portray about poverty and sustainable development?

ii. How are Nyakatsapa United Methodist church resources relevant and compatible with the Biblical perspective of development that enhance a meaningful and sustainable development for the poor and marginalised?

In summary, it was suggested that poverty, injustices, inequality, poor health, violence among other things is a real and existing challenge to the survival of humanity in every community. However, Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has a high rate of success in alleviating the noted challenges to a greater extent. Therefore, in order to effectively promote sustainable development, it must be possible with the involvement of the churches and by using the biblical method for development because it is holistic and morally grounded.

Having reached this point of the research, the researcher is now in a good position to end by noting that the set questions and objectives have adequately been met. The research was based in the context of the poor and marginalised people who have been equipped and developed through the activities and initiatives of Nyakatsapa United Methodist church. Therefore, this indicated that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church or every church has the commission to advance the living standard of everyone. The communities of Mutasa district are testimonies to the tremendous achievements made by Nyakatsapa United Methodist church through activities and initiatives produced from its vast resources within the church. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church needs to be appreciated, motivated and recognised because it carries the message that will influence other churches, development agents, every person and the whole country so that they can carry on with the move or pass on the stick to every community to promote a holistic approach in sustainable development.

Sustainable development that is being advocated for Nyakatsapa United Methodist church attends to spiritual, social and material needs of every humanity. This is morally guided by biblical standards which are authenticated and therefore it is rare to see corruption, discrimination, injustices among others in venturing into this vision. This has been an approach noted from the history of the United Methodist Churches and was adopted by the missionary groups who initiated mission work in Zimbabwe starting from Manicaland province. From the history, the United Methodist Church had a holistic approach; its strategy was that wherever they set up a mission station, it was established together with the

following: a church, a school, a health centre, an agricultural centre and other services to meet people's immediate needs.

The United Methodist Church missionaries did not concentrate only on what was taking place on their mission stations; however they also had concern in addressing opposition to all societal poor health which in those days was centred on dangerous cultural practices such as polygamy, alcohol abuse, inheritance as well as traditions and ceremonies that were considered not to be Christian. This concept for development was passed on to the Nyakatsapa United Methodist church and other United Methodist Churches in Zimbabwe. Hence the churches must therefore adhere, maintain and apply accordingly in all transformative activities so that the living standards of the people in the country wide and beyond are to be uplifted. However, it is undeniable that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church has gone beyond maintaining the missionary approach to sustainable development because it has advanced, initiated and has been so creative through using its own resources without support or funding from mother or overseas churches. Hence, this means that Nyakatsapa United Methodist church cannot influence individuals to be dependent on donors; instead it equips people to become independent through developing their talents, gifts, skills and the available resources.

5. 4 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher makes the following desirable recommendations to Nyakatsapa United Methodist church for consideration so that they can be part of the social teaching for the church:

- i. The Nyakatsapa United Methodist church should keep on adhering, maintaining and applying its policy on social responsibility so that it is rightfully in the vision and mission efforts of the church and to keep on applying this in people's daily life.
- ii. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church must keep on encouraging its members, especially those who are materially privileged to realise their call and be committed to save and put aside any amount of money every month so that it is utilized for initiating and creating more projects and activities that can greatly benefit the marginalised and less privileged people and surrounding community, capacitating them to become independent and self sustaining rather than creating a dependency syndrome.

iii. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church must always review its activities for progress and advancement sake, this should include an assessment of local needs and members' skills, talents, gifts in identifying wider perceptions of the local church and local needs they may need to continue addressing.

iv. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church must continue supporting and encouraging activities done by people in community organisations whilst at the same time making it more easier with communication and increasing networking with other development organisations.

v. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church should always encourage individuals to conduct discussion forums based on biblical teaching which encourages them to engage in community services.

vi. Nyakatsapa United Methodist church must create a pool of funds and partner with external funders to sustain their activities in the community.

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APPENDICES

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These questions are directed to religious circles and those individuals with religious background.

1. What do you understand by the term sustainable development?
2. What types of resources are available in your Church?
3. What are the major duties of the Church in its ministry?
4. What do you think are the element that constitutes sustainable development?
5. What do you think the Church has to offer for the advancement of human life through dealing with social needs within your community?
6. How have been Church resources instrumental in the delivery of health, education, improvements of human rights, community development and food relief services?
7. What activities is the church doing in order to promote sustainable development?
8. What do you think are the factors leading to the failure to the achievement of sustainable development?
9. What challenges are you facing in doing your activities that are very influential to sustainable development?
10. Is the Church partnering with other agents or social worker in achieving activities which promote sustainable development?
11. How are the Church handling challenges such as refugees, war victims, and poverty, education and health issues?
12. Is the Church informed about the development work they are undertaking?