

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

**TOWARDS TRANSFORMED GENDER RELATIONS FOR PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN AND MEN WITHIN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN
ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF MASVINGO SOUTH PROVINCE.**

BY

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**A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree
in Theology and Religious Studies**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any University for a degree.

Signature: -----

Date: -----

ABSTRACT

The dissertation explores transformed gender relations for personal development in The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ) of Masvingo South Province by investigating leadership history from its formation in 1909 to present.

Chapter 1 investigates the historical background of the problem, unequal representation of female church members in leadership positions and decision making boards. This tradition is against transformed gender relations between females and males in the church. This practice seems to be influenced by the Dutch Reformed Church Missionary approach, Shona Culture and the current Reformed Church in Zimbabwe structures. Tenets of Liberal feminism will be the main focus of this research. In addition to this, this chapter focuses on a brief history of the Reformed Church of Zimbabwe in general and then with special reference to Masvingo South Province of Zimbabwe.

Chapter 2 focuses on the effects of the Dutch Reformed Missionary approach, Shona culture and the current Reformed Church Structures on gender relations between women and men of The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province.

Chapter 3 presents the empirical part of the research. Male and female participation in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South is analysed through qualitative research methods.

Chapter 4 is anchored on strategies which the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province has to employ to attain transformed gender relations between females and males where spiritual and material development will be promoted. It picks up strategies towards gender sensitivity and equity, confronting organisational double standards and developing women friendly organisational culture.

The research proved that women and men are participating in all church leadership positions and decision making boards but men still enjoy a larger share at the expense of women who constitute more than 75% of church membership.

DEDICATION

To my wife Percy Munamati for her unwavering support and making a dream comes true by making it possible for me to study.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to God. He has sustained me over these past years of study and has taught me to have faith and trust in Him.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DRC DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

RCZ REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

REV REVEREND

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Abbreviations.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE	
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3 Aim and objectives.....	5
1.3.1 Specific objectives.....	5
1.4 Methodology.....	5
1.4.1 Feminist Theory-Liberal Feminism.....	5
1.4.2 Sampling procedure.....	6
1.4.2.1 Random Sampling.....	6
1.4.3 Data Collection.....	7
1.4.3.1 Questionnaires.....	7
1.4.3.2 Women’s Empowerment Framework.....	7

1.5 Justification of Study.....	8
1.6 Scope of Study.....	9
1.7 Literature Review.....	10
1.8 Limitations of Research.....	15
 CHAPTER TWO	
2 An exploration of factors hindering transformed gender relations.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Shona Culture.....	17
2.2.1 The Shona people.....	17
2.2.2 Historical Background of the Shona Culture.....	18
2.2.3 Family Organisation.....	19
2.2.4 Marriage rites.....	19
2.2.5 The duties of a father.....	21
2.2.6 The duties of a wife.....	21
2.2.7 The duties of the grandfather.....	22
2.2.8 Sons and Daughters.....	23
2.2.9 Polygamy.....	23
2.2.10 The Shona attitude towards women.....	24

2.3 Dutch Reformed Church Missionary Approach (1891-1977).....	26
---	-----------

2.4 Reformed Church in Zimbabwe Structures.....	27
--	-----------

CHAPTER THREE

3 Participation of Women and Men in the church.....	29
--	-----------

3.1 Introduction.....	29
------------------------------	-----------

3.2 Field Work Study.....	29
----------------------------------	-----------

3.2.1 Church membership according to gender.....	30
---	-----------

3.2.2 Leadership positions according to gender.....	30
--	-----------

3.2.3 Women’s participation in Decision Making.....	31
--	-----------

3.2.4 Spiritual Contribution of women in church.....	31
---	-----------

3.2.5 Material Contribution of women and men in church.....	32
--	-----------

3.2.5.1 Church Funds Contributions.....	32
--	-----------

3.2.5.2 Car Project Contributions.....	32
---	-----------

3.2.6 Evaluation.....	33
------------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Strategies for Transformed Gender Relations between women and men.....	34
---	-----------

4.1 Introduction.....	34
------------------------------	-----------

4.2 Strategies towards gender sensitivity and equity.....	34
--	-----------

4.3 Confronting organisational double standards.....	35
---	-----------

4.4 Developing a women friendly organisational structure.....	35
4.5 Areas for further research.....	37
4.6 Conclusion.....	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	40
ADDENDUM: STRUCTURE OF QUESTIONNAIRE.....	43

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background

The planting of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in 1891 was triggered by various factors: It was a product of African Christians of the Dutch Reformed Church in Zoutpansberg South Africa who preached the Gospel to the Shona people during their periodical hunting expeditions in Zimbabwe. The other factor is that this preaching of the Gospel to the Shona people was done by whites, coloureds and African missionaries. This was a unique combination given the racial discrimination scenario which South Africa was propagating for. In addition to this, this Zimbabwean mission was financially and spiritually supported by a group of women and two youth groups of the Stellenbosch congregation of the Cape Dutch Reformed Church (Van Der Merwe 1981).

The site of the first mission station of the Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe is on top of the mountain in Chief Mugabe's area. This is where the ox-wagon of the expedition led by Andrew Louw halted on the 9th of September, 1891. The place was chosen for the first mission station of the Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe because of the altitude for it would be less subject to malaria, a fairly dense population of the Shona people was living on the mountain and it was only 33km away from Fort Victoria which was developing into an urban area.

When members increased, the need for supervision and spiritual guidance also escalated prompting the establishment of new stations. Pamushana Mission was established in 1901. Berlin Missionary Society handed over Gutu, Chibi and Zimuto Missions to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1906. Jichidza Mission was established in 1908 and Chingombe Mission in Gutu and Nyajena in 1909. Alheit Mission was established in 1915 and Nyashanu in 1954.

Nyajena Mission was ministered to by Reverend W.J.Combrink. The first convert made by Andrew and his wife was a woman who was a diviner in 1901. Later that year, three adults were baptised. With time, membership grew because all students attending school were eventually converted; hence education was a forceful evangelisation tool used by the Dutch Reformed Church. This can be supported by the following table which shows the increase in numbers for catechumen members in schools, those confirmed as members and the total membership from 1915 to 1950.

YEAR	1915	1920	1925	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950
CATECHUMEN	691	1585	2102	5398	2527	3794	6569	7433
CONFIRMED	58	126	400	258	354	621	1247	1739
TOTAL	450	728	2031	3283	4490	6211	10 120	18 013

(Van Der Merwe 1981)

Since most of the evangelism was done in schools, all schools in Nyajena(Masvingo South Province) were established and controlled by the Dutch Reformed Church. As noted by Merwe (1981), mission education was expanding as shown by the increase in enrolment from 18 413 in 1950 to 32472 in 1952. Church governance and spiritual supervision was dominated by males. There were only male ministers and evangelists until the synod of year 2002 which voted for female ministers and evangelists. The following table shows numerical differences between male and female ordained ministers as well as ministers under training in 2012.

POSITION	MALES	FEMALES
Ordained ministers	70	6
Student ministers in 2012	25	5

(Hendriks,H. J. et al 2012)

The office of elders and deacons was also male dominated. Elders are responsible for supervising the conduct of church members as well as safeguarding church doctrine. The deacons are responsible for collecting church offerings and distributing them according to the needs. Both elders and deacons convene three times a year in the church council meeting chaired by a church minister.

Nyajena Congregation has more women than men in terms of membership but it is male dominated in terms of governance. Of the 2 464 confirmed members from 1982 up to 2013, females totalled 1 897 whilst males numbered only 567. In addition to this, of the twenty-five preaching posts, there was one elder and one deacon per preaching post totalling to 25 elders and 25 deacons for every two years and all these posts were exclusively held by males from 1981 to 1984. In addition to this, the congregation was run by male ministers namely Rev G. Murray (1981-1989), Rev E.G. Zirebwa (1990-1993), Rev J.T. Dhayimani (1994-1998), Rev K. Ruzvidzo (1999-2004), Rev B. Chikuku (2005-2010) and the current Rev S. Munamati (2011- to date). It is very apparent that the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe follows the Shona patriarchal system which endorses male domination in every facet of societal life.

Under normal Reformed Church procedures, church council meets three times a year. In essence; this implies the fact that over fifty males have deliberated upon key matters pertaining to Nyajena Congregation in Masvingo South and have participated in supreme church decisions from 1981 up to 1984 at the expense of the majority who are women. This scenario is not surprising because the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe had no single female minister until the first female minister Rev. Mubwandarikwa was ordained in 2007. According to RCZ procedures, elders and deacons serve for a maximum of two years and can be re-elected up to four years when they are to be relieved from their duties for one year (RCZ Constitution 2010). From 1891 when this church was established in Zimbabwe,

the above mentioned offices were reserved for men until the year 1984 when the supreme body revised the resolution.

In Nyajena Congregation of Masvingo South province, this new resolution was also implemented. However, during that time most women were reluctant to take up the posts fearing the existing inferiority complex and gender imbalance. This mentality still affects most women and it seems as if men are propagating it through passive resistance and stigmatising women.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has existed in Masvingo South province under the banner of Nyajena Congregation since 1909, but since then there has been no transformed gender relations aimed at developing both men and women. Currently, the Congregation has 792 members of which 598 are females whilst the remaining 194 are males. The Church council of elders and deacons is still male dominated and the congregation has never had a female minister since its inception in 1909.

Furthermore, the church has baptised and confirmed 2 464 members since 1981 of which 1 897 are females and only 567 are males. The important question that this study seeks to probe is: why is it that a congregation which is female dominated in terms of numbers is male dominated in terms of decision making? It is arguably clear that there is an imbalance in terms of gender relations and as such women are not fully participating in the church hierarchy which impacts negatively on their personal development.

It cannot be right that women, who are in the majority at 75.51% of Nyajena Congregation, continue to be viewed as second class citizens who have no voice. Although the church has realised the need for transformed gender relations particularly in view of the resolution to

open up ordination of women in 1984, the important question that this study seeks to probe is, what has the church done for women and the girl child to demonstrate its seriousness and commitment towards building a progressive, equal and prosperous church in a better world?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to ascertain why there is lack of transformed gender relations for personal development of women and men within the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in Masvingo South province.

1.3.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

This study aims to help the academic world and The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in Masvingo South Province to be able to:

- (1) Identify hindrances to transformed gender relations for personal development of men and women within The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province.
- (2) Analyse contributions of both women and men in the RCZ church.
- (3) Suggest strategies to facilitate young women's full participation in church activities gearing for personal development of both women and men.

1.4 METHODOLOGY:FRAME OF MIND: FEMINISM

1.4.1 FEMINIST THEORY-LIBERAL FEMINISM

Feminist theory is a discipline that attempts to describe, explain and analyse the conditions of women's lives (Kolmar, W.K and Bartkowski 2005). In addition to this, this theory proposes strategies for activism and action to ameliorate the conditions in which women live and work. The designation feminist is generally to denote those whose seek to eliminate women

subordination and marginalisation. Feminism has three basic forms namely: radical, conservative and liberal.

Liberal feminism as argued by Kolmar, W.K and Bartkowski (2005) stresses on equal rights for women, proportional representation and equal access of females and males, changing attitudes, women participation in public sphere, reorienting women into crucial decision making positions to foster an end to women discrimination. Haralambos, M and Holborn, M (2000) suggest that Liberal feminism enjoys greater support than the other perspectives for it is moderate and its views pose less of a challenge to existing values. They posit inequality as not in structures of society but in culture and attitudes of individuals and that is why the researcher took this theory for it is applicable to the research. The research seeks to forge a way forward in changing people's mind-sets and Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ) culture pertaining women in the RCZ of Masvingo South province.

The researcher is aware of two basic limitations of the feminist approach. Firstly, feminism revolves around its argument that scripture has a male-chauvinist bias which scholars like Gerald Brey took as an imposition of a false model on the Bible. Secondly, feminism proponents often take criticism personally. Despite these shortcomings, liberal feminists are right when they advocate for re-interpretation of certain Bible texts.

1.4.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

1.4.2.1 RANDOM SAMPLING

Random sampling was used in this research. Why sampling? Miles and Huberman (1994) posit that one cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything. The target group is the whole Reformed Church in Zimbabwe Congregation of Masvingo South Province (598 females and 194 males) and the sample/actual group consists of 78 people (59 females and 19

males) which constitute about 10% of the target group. Of the 598 women, 59 were randomly selected by picking numbers 1-59 out of the numbers 1 to 598. All the 59 women are selected from those in leadership positions like: elders, deaconesses, women's and girls' leagues groups at local and presbytery levels. In addition to this 19 men were again randomly selected from 194 men. Men who have picked numbers 1 to 19 out of numbers 1 to 194 were part of the sample group. The 19 men of the sample group were picked from men in leadership positions serving in men's and boys' leagues and those serving as elders and deacons at local level and presbytery level.

1.4.3 DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaires and Women's Empowerment Framework were used to collect data.

1.4.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

The actual group of 78 participants answered a questionnaire from which data was collected. The questionnaire included questions about one's sex group, period served in church, posts held, meetings on church governance attended, conferences where both men and women participated, church projects which include both men and women and personal opinion on balanced participation of both women and men in church.

1.4.3.2 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (LONGWE) FRAMEWORK

Data was also collected using the Women's Empowerment (Longwe) framework which was developed by Sarah Hlupekile Longwe of Lusaka, Zambia. March, C et al (1999) posit that Longwe uses two tools looking at levels of equality and level of recognition of women's issues. The researcher opted to use these two tools in data collection for they focus on women's access, welfare, conscientisation, participation and control in communities and organisations like the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province of

Zimbabwe which is the main focus of this study. In addition to this, Longwe tools evaluate levels of recognition of women’s issues in communities as negative, neutral and positive. Negative level posit no mention of women’s issues, neutral level is conservative where women’s issues are recognised and positive level points to an improved condition of women relative to men as argued by March, et al (1999).

The following diagram shows Longwe’s Women Empowerment tool.

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT TOOL: LEVELS OF EQUALITY AND LEVEL OF RECOGNITION OF WOMEN’S ISSUES

Level of Equality	Church Funds Yes/No	Leadership Positions Yes/No	Decision Making Body Yes/No	Church Projects Yes/No	Level of recognition of Women’s issues Negative/Neutral/ Positive
Welfare					
Access					
Conscientisation					
Participation					
Control					

(March, et al 1999: 98)

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

There are various reasons why the researcher is involved in this research. Firstly, the researcher is serving as a minister of the church and congregation in the vicinity hence is actually involved with the people and has therefore been made alert to their plight for a balanced and transformed gender relation geared for individual development of both men and women.

Secondly, research has been undertaken in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe pertaining gender issues at national level but nothing or very little has been done at the local level like the one this researcher has embarked on. Thirdly, this research will be of paramount importance to the academic world, the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe leadership and members and specifically the church members (current and future ministers also) in Masvingo South Province.

Fourthly, the research will go a long way in transforming mind-sets of church members towards women's involvement in church at local, national and international levels.

Lastly, this research will help The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe to develop an appreciation of women who are the majority in the church.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research will be focussed only on the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe members of the Nyajena Congregation of Masvingo South province of Zimbabwe. In addition to this, the population will be 792 members of the church from which a target group of only 78 members will be randomly selected. Reverend Rangarirai Rutoro of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe has written on Lay leadership in RCZ in his doctoral thesis in 2009 which focussed on youth and women participation in church at national level but no one has pursued the area of transformed gender relations between men and women geared for personal development at a local level just like what this research is trying to do.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

This area focuses on views of specific scholars pertaining transformed gender relations between women and men.

Matope, et al (2011) in *Introduction to Gender Studies: A student guide*, posit gender as a reference to human traits linked by culture to each sex. This definition also supported by Haralambos and Holborn (2004). Here, it implies that males are socialised to be masculine whilst females are taught to be feminine. Furthermore, Matope, et al (2011) argues that gender starts when sex is known, is socially constructed, varies within and among cultures and is learnt. Gender is perpetuated by family, school, the peer group and mass media.

Current gender imbalances can be explained using the Feminist theory. Matope, N et al (2011) define feminism as a social and political movement that advocates for the rights of women and their equality with men in all spheres of life. They also view it as an ideology or a way of thinking that questions oppressive relations of men and women using women's perspectives. Furthermore, they suggest that feminism rose as a reaction to: functionalism which subordinated women, biological theories which took women's position as natural and dominant philosophies viewing women as less human than males. Feminism can be liberal, Marxist and or radical. Liberal feminists according to Matope, et al (2011), believe that gender inequality is produced by reduced access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources such as education and employment. Liberal feminists used dialogue to achieve their plight which is the reason why they are criticised by Marxist/socialists and radicals. Socialist/Marxist feminists view gender inequality as rooted in capitalism and its ownership of private property. In addition to this, socialist feminists advocate for a complete overthrow of the capitalist economy calling for a socialist revolution.

Radical feminists as argued by Matope, et al (2011), view gender inequality as caused by three major vehicles namely: patriarchy, gender socialisation and biology. This school of thought is for the struggle of women to get their own liberation, total rejection of gender roles, total restructuring of society, demand for women empowerment and challenging men's control and monopoly over production and use of knowledge argues Matope, et al (2011). Chris Beasley (1999) in her book entitled: *What is Feminism?* Suggests that most feminist thinkers regard feminism as different from the mainstream and views it as innovative, inventive and rebellious. In addition to this, she views feminism as: the inclusion/addition approach, a critique, reject and start again and finally as a deconstruction and transformation approach to mainstream thinking. In addition to this, Beasley, (1999) views feminism as different from traditional social and political thought with specific view points on issues like sexual difference where they posit for sameness, women as different and men, women as potential political allies and viewing women as better than men.

Beasley, (1999) views liberal, radical and Marxist/socialist feminisms as starters on the feminist menu. She further argues for other possibilities where she talks of Freudian feminists, Lacanian feminists and French feminists. Freudian feminists draw on the work of Sigmund Freud who views femininity as a result of penis envy. These view the priority of the mother hence other scholars such as Nancy Chodorow suggests that the feminist political agenda should be directed towards feminising men. In Freudian feminism, change in existing social arrangements is crucially a matter of intervening in psychological development.

Lacanian Feminists reworked Freudian psychoanalysis by employing the approach of French psycho-analyst, Jacques Lacan. To Lacan, the penis envy of Freud is the 'phallus' which is a symbol of that which is not-the-mother. The phallus provides the means by which the child learns that all is not one and the same. This knowledge helps the child to discover sexual difference and sexual position in relation to sexual difference and penetrates the

interconnecting world of mother-child. This phallus enables the child's entry into culture and society by the development of a self; hence all children become subjects through the operation of this regulatory principle. According to Lacan, 'civilisation' is the 'Law of the Father'. Lacan influences in the perspectives of feminists and marks a move away from the real world towards an abstract philosophical analysis of culture towards the symbolic-cultural meaning encoded in language.

French feminists accept Lacan but do not accept his positive affirmation of that masculine order as equivalent to civilisation or society in releasing the child from the stagnant primitivism of its symbolic link with the feminine (mother) argues Beasley, (1999). French feminists view the feminine as not merely construed as lack but as offering a rebellious cultural creativity. Furthermore, they perceive the marginality associated with the feminine as representing an opportunity for critical assessment of what is valued and legitimized in the Symbolic Order of Lacan. French Feminists refuse to specify the content of femininity since they view it as patriarchal imperatives which continually tell us what women are and must be.

Bell Hooks in Kolmar K.W and Bartkowski. F (2005) designates feminism as a transformational politic. How and why? Bell Hooks hastens to say that this world we live in is a world of crisis originating from sexual politics as contemporary feminist thinkers have suggested. Separation of female and male globally is a pointer to patriarchal domination. Feminism has to deconstruct and challenge the traditional view that man is the enemy and woman is the victim. In addition to this, the feminist effort to end patriarchal domination has to be of primary concern for it insists on the eradication of exploitation and oppression in the family context and in all other intimate relationships. Hooks sees it as a political movement which addresses the person-citing the need for transformation of self, of relationships so that we can act in a revolutionary manner, challenging and resisting domination, transforming the world outside the self. Here, Hooks is positing for individual and corporate transformation.

Furthermore, Hooks is opting for sharing of feminist thinking in small groups, integrating critical analysis with discussion of personal experience aimed at personal development.

Ester Rutoro in Hendriks, H.J et al (2012) suggests that gender justice can help communities achieve gender transformation. She traces gender justice as far back as 1946 United Nations' declaration against world-wide discrimination of women which was modified in 1967 with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW). She discusses of The African Charter on Human rights of 1981 which has a protocol on the rights of women. In addition to this, she brings in the picture of the Zimbabwean case at independence in 1980 taking a positive stands in addressing women's issues and problems.

Furthermore, she suggests that gender justice entails ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the state and in institutions like the church. She adds promotion of women's interests in social and economic policy. She comes down to gender justice in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe which has been neglected until 1984 when women were allowed to be elected as elders and in 2002 when women were allowed to train as ministers after a Rangarirai Rutoro and Wilbert Runyowa report entitled: *Resource Development and Women in Leadership positions in the Reformed church in Zimbabwe* was served before the General Synod. Ester sees Jesus Christ as the author of gender justice (John 8:2-11) for he welcomed women to his ministry (John 20:1-18) and the Holy Spirit fills all regardless of sex (Acts 1:14).

Haralambos and Holborn (2000) added black and postmodern feminism to the existing radical, Marxist/Socialist and liberal feminism. Furthermore, they posit that black feminism developed out of dissatisfaction with other types of feminism. Bell Hooks (1981) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990) support Haralambos, M and Holborn, M (2000) propounding that black women suffer from disadvantages because they are black. Here, each inequality reinforces

and multiplies each of the other inequalities. This black feminism is criticised for emphasising one difference (race/ethnic) at the expense of others (such as class and sexuality) and fails to address the oppression experienced by white women.

Furthermore, Haralambos and Holborn (2000) talk of post-modern feminism which postulates that woman's interests can be pursued by the use of language through deconstruction of male language and a masculine view of the world. They support works of Jaques Lacan, Jaques Derrida, Helene Cixous and Helen Haste. To Lacan, society consists of a symbolic order. The child develops in three phases namely: imaginary phase, mirror phase and oedpal phase. Derrida sees language as a self-contained system of signifiers whilst Cixous views language as male-dominated, phallogocentric and masculine. Critiques have suggested that post-modern feminism seems to: treat women as all alike, reduce inequality and oppression to differences in use of language, encourage awareness and an acceptance of differences (Haralambos and Holborn (2000)).

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

and engaging such with liberating and transformative praxis in order to encourage human flourishing furthering God's reign on earth.

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

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

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research was financially and socially limited. Financial resources have proved to be a major blow to this undertaking. The researcher failed to secure adequate funding of the research. If fully funded, the research would have engaged more women and men instead of a few who were involved.

Current untransformed gender relations between women and men barred the researcher from involving some men and women of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe in Masvingo South province.

However, the researcher made use of limited resources at his disposal to carry out the research. On the issue of existing untransformed gender relations between women and men, the researcher conducted lectures concerning gender balance before giving participants questionnaires.

CHAPTER TWO

AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS HINDERING TRANSFORMED GENDER RELATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies and discusses barriers to transformed gender relations between women and men of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province. Shona culture, missionary approach and existing Reformed Church structures have impacted negatively on renewed gender relations for personal development between women and men.

2.2 SHONA CULTURE

This part focuses on a brief history of the Shona culture extending to the notion Shona people, leadership among the Shona, the notion of family, marriage rites, duties of fathers and mothers, duties of the grandfather, relationship between sons and daughters, the aspect of polygamy and lastly how the Shona view women.

2.2.1 THE SHONA PEOPLE

Michael Gelfand (1973) has suggested that Shona people live in the land between the Zambezi and the Limpopo rivers and their land. In addition to this, Gelfand (1973) pointed to the Great Zimbabwe as the centre of this land for the Shona people. Shona people live in the north, south, east and west of Zimbabwe (Rutoro 2007). Shona people settled in this land since the tenth century according to Gelfand (1973). Shona people use this name because they speak one of the dialects linguists called the Shona cluster of Bantu languages. These are Karanga, Korekore, Zezuru, Ndaou and Manyika. Gelfand (1973) proposed that all Shona living in one chieftaincy are members of the same sub-clan. They share both the same totem and the same ceremonial greeting distinguishes them from the other members of the same

totem but with their own ceremonial greeting. “A large chieftaincy may have more than one district or ward (dunhu) and each district has a number of villages (musha). One village may also have several homesteads” (Gelfand 1999:5).

2.2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SHONA CULTURE

Bourdillon (1987) suggests that rural Shona communities are built around their patterns of kinship which he referred to as basically patrilineal meaning to say kinship through males is stressed over kinship through females. This is expressed in the inheritance of a name which Bourdillon posits to say when a Shona man or woman wishes to show respect to another, she or he uses traditional clan names inherited from that person’s father.

In addition to this, Bourdillon (1987) makes it clear that the position of women had deficiencies relative to that of men. These deficiencies, according to Bourdillon (1987), manifest on formal legal and ritual occasions. Examples include: a woman should bring a male relative to represent her and speak for her in a traditional court case, the funeral ritual of bringing home the spirit of the deceased and installing it among the guardians of the family is performed for elderly men and women within the traditional culture (Bourdillon 1987). Furthermore, spirits are considered to be in the male domain and traditional Shona family is normally headed by the father.

Nida (1954) concurs with Daneel (1971) that Shona society begins with the hut, headed by the family head, the neighbourhood and its head, the region and its head and the Chiefdom headed by the chief. Tracing the Shona power structures Kanyongo and Onyango (1991) support Daneel (1971) to suggest that men have the final decision in all family decisions.

2.2.3 FAMILY ORGANISATION

In Shona culture, family organisation includes both family power and family authority. Daneel, M.L (1971) expounds authority as a person's position that attracts one's respect from peers. Power is derived from one's power over available economic resources. Family power and authority are determinants of decision and authority circles. Men dictate and finalise the pace of daily life whilst women can make some proposals. In a typical Shona set up, the father is the head even though sometimes he might have an inferior economic status in that family or society. As supported by Nida (1954), men dominate land inheritance and all traditional rites.

2.2.4 MARRIAGE RITES

“A husband must provide his wife and children with food, clothes and his sons also with bride wealth. The woman belongs to her husband but when she is ill he must inform her father” (Gelfand 1973:29). In addition to this, a husband has the right to take over all his children in the event of divorce and after his death, all his children belong to his cognates. Furthermore, Gelfand (1992) adds that, if divorced the wife returns to her father. The payment of bride wealth empowers the husband with the right of mastery over his wife and if she does something wrong, he may take it upon himself to beat her. If the husband fails to provide his wife and children with food, clothing, schooling and other needs, the wife has grounds to sue for divorce.

If the wife wishes to sell much of her farm or garden produce, she must seek permission from her husband. Should the husband refuse to allow her to sell or exchange her produce, she must comply with his demand. Gelfand (1973) further argues that, the husband can sell family goats and cattle in consultation with his wife. The husband and wife cannot own

property jointly- what is theirs is his. Whatever a woman possesses belongs to him except the cow which she receives when her daughter marries and any property she might have earned if she happened to be a witch doctor as this power of healing was given to her by her ancestral spirits. Gelfand (1992) propounds that no wife can enter into a contract to acquire property, nor can she incur a debt on behalf of her husband. No agreement she might wish to make is binding. In addition to this, if her husband dies, she is inherited by one of his brothers who becomes her spokesman. If she refuses to marry again, her father can make any agreement on her behalf. When she is too old, her eldest son looks after her. She remains at the village of her deceased husband and even keeps the cattle of her previous marriage but she cannot make a contract on her own, this has to be entered into by her eldest son provided he is married. Both the husband and wife care for the children but the wife's responsibilities in this area are vital. The wife controls the children, directs them, teaches them good manners and punishes them.

According to Gelfand (1973), the Shona mother is deeply attached to her children and tries at all costs never to desert them. A girl remains under her control and direct influence until she marries. A boy spends more time with his father after he reaches the age of about seven argues Gelfand (1973). Nevertheless the mother can direct her son until he marries. When the father is brought food at the men's meeting place (dare) by his wife or daughters, this includes enough for his sons. However, if the father is not present as argued by Gelfand (1973), the boys may eat in the living room. Work to be done in the fields by the sons or daughters may be directed by either the mother or the father and the children comply with their demands.

2.2.5 THE DUTIES OF A FATHER

Gelfand (1973) argues that the father is responsible for the good behaviour of the children. Though the wife does most of the beating of the children, the husband controls both the former and the latter. The father looks after the cattle and attends to the cattle pen. In addition to this, the father inspanns the oxen when they are required for work. He repairs the huts and houses and together with the wife and children, work in the fields and garden. He is responsible for the purchase of clothes for his wife and children. He cannot be punished for ill- treating his children for he has the right to punish them.

2.2.6 THE DUTIES OF A WIFE

Michael Gelfand (1973) argues that the wife is responsible for the care of the home, cleaning it, collecting water and stamping the grain. She looks after her husband and the children the way expected of a mother. She has to provide washing water for her husband and washes the household clothes. She must tend the fields, store the crops and cook food for her family. Whenever she wishes to do something in the home which is not ordinarily under her jurisdiction, she must first ask for permission from her husband. A husband too, is expected to discuss with his wife any new venture he wishes to undertake.

Furthermore, a wife cannot dispose of her earnings without her husband's consent. A husband can sell his wife's property without her permission but the local court would declare him wrong and must replace it. If a wife leaves her husband, all her property belongs to him. When she is at the village of his parents, a good wife has to bring washing water to her husband's relatives and sweeps the whole yard (Gelfand 1992).

2.2.7 THE DUTIES OF THE GRANDFATHER

The grandfather is the overall advisor of the family on all matters. Gelfand (1973) points out that he and his wife instruct the children to work hard in the fields and they also instruct sons to look after the cattle and love one another. The children are also taught to behave by their grandparents.

All disagreements in the family are to be settled down by the grandfather. The grandmother can only join such discussions if she is invited by her husband to help him. The grandfather handles all internal family quarrels alone. Gelfand (1973) further argues that the grandfather commands both boys and girls never to commit adultery after marriage, nor to have sexual relationships before marriage. When a girl approaches marriageable age, her grandmother helps her with sexual information and what her would be husband expects of her.

When the grandfather believes he is about to die, he instructs his children about the disposal of his cattle and reminds his eldest son to take care of his mother and the whole family. His eldest son assumes the position of the grandfather after his death. In addition to this, the grandfather ensures that proper tradition is maintained. He teaches children to respect their parents and is the most authoritative person on sex issues. There is barrier between a child and his parents but this does not exist with the grandparents to whom questions may be directed on a much friendlier note (Gelfand 1973). A female child usually stays a long period with her grandparents but the male remains a shorter period with them as it is feared that he will become soft through over-kindness and love.

2.2.8 SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Gelfand (1973) is very clear to say that a boy must be respected by his sisters even if he is younger than they are. Girls are bound to respect their eldest brother because when their father dies, his name is transferred to the eldest son and never to a girl child. The eldest son is unique because he is regarded as the father-in-law of the man who marries his sister. The son-in-law must accord due respect to the new father-in-law even though he might be still a boy.

After his father's death, Gelfand (1973) further argues that the eldest son assumes responsibility over his sisters and becomes their protector. If the grand-father is still alive in the village, it is common for the grandsons to eat with him but their wives eat individually with their children in their own huts. The grandfather washes his hands and begins to eat and his sons eat with him from the same plate. Again, the grandfather is the first to retire from the men's meeting place. When beer is given at the village, the grandfather receives the first pot and then calls his sons to share it with him.

2.2.9 POLYGAMY

“Polygamy is a way of life with the Shona and the practice exemplifies the survival imperative that calls for many children and a big family group.” (Gelfand 1973:176) The great upholder of this tradition is the Shona chief. Once a man is appointed a chief among the Shona people, he starts to add another wife to his family for this is a vital Shona feature chiefs have to propagate amongst their people.

Another reason why polygamy was promoted amongst the Shona people was that of defense mechanism against attack. Morally, polygamy allows men to release their sexual pleasures within instead of having to move outside his family which might stir conflict with other men. To the Shona people, monogamy encourages adultery. If a wife is breast feeding, her husband

is not permitted to have sexual relations with her. Therefore, during this time a man may want another woman. Furthermore, Gelfand (1973) hastens to say that if a wife is barren a husband may seek another wife and also if a wife has passed her menopause a husband may seek another wife.

Polygamy comes when a man acquires another wife in the event of the death of his elder brother where he is expected to inherit the deceased's wife. In addition to this, polygamy is also promoted by wealth which attracts women. Men with many children are well off and enjoy the feeling of safety in numbers argues Gelfand (1973). A husband must be careful to avoid creating jealousy through favouritism and must be able to sexually satisfy all his wives. The usual practice is for the husband to spend a week with each wife in rotation.

2.2.10 SHONA ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN

A typical Shona woman is not highly considered as a man, she is very much under the man's thumb and must obey the man's every behest (Gelfand 1973). In Shona eyes, the male is considered undoubtedly superior in certain aspects but not in everything. The difference in the position of men and women probably springs from their psychological and physical make-up. The nature and strength of a man results in the desire to protect the woman and her make-up obliges her to seek his protection. She is proud that her man sits outside at the men's meeting place, exposed to possible danger and ready to protect her. The Karanga people, who constitute most of the Masvingo South province, believe that a man should never be killed in his house arguing to say that a man must always be ready to fight outside in the open. Furthermore, Gelfand (1973) argues that a man who is drinking beer in his house should sit near the door so he can rush out at the slightest warning of danger. When they are walking along a road the man walks in front of his wife. Usually the most senior man leads the way

unless he is too old, when he takes up a position in the rear. If three people are walking; the senior man walks in front, the most junior in the middle and the oldest in the rear. A son walking with his mother must lead the way so that if the latter wishes to relieve herself on the journey she can do so without any embarrassment. Another reason given for women to walk behind is that if they walk in front, men might be tempted by the swaying of their hips. Gelfand argues that only women who are witches can walk in front of men for they fear nothing.

The position of women among the Shona is linked with the marriage institution. The hoe (badza) is the symbol of union or marriage in which the husband and wife are bound together. It symbolises a united effort in which the pair work together in the fields. There is no sense of subordination which exists between wife and husband. The wife is part of the family, a co-partner in a unit. She dares not to lay a finger on her husband although he may beat her. She cannot take him to the local court unless there is unfair, excessive and repeated punishment. Gelfand adds that: a local court will not approve of a beating which is so severe as to cause an injury. As the woman is completely dependent on her husband, she has to respect him.

When children grow up in a village: the boys develop separately from the girls and parents do not encourage the two opposite sexes to mix. The desire for separation of sexes is the recognition of the very strong sex impulse which may exist in man argues Gelfand (1992). When an unmarried girl falls pregnant, an explanation is sought not for the girl's concern but for the harmony of the community to be restored. In paternity dispute, the local court accepts the girl's word against that of the man. It is believed that if she tells a lie, her conscience would be disturbed and a difficult labour would ensue, or if the child will be born alive, it would refuse to suckle. When a wife is sick, the husband must inform her father so that both

the men can consult a diviner. If the wife dies, the husband may not bury her unless her father is present in order that her spirit will be at peace with her father's family. A man protects his wife and she pays respect because of his support. He becomes her guardian and she belongs to him in the same way as his children do.

2.3 DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSIONARY APPROACH (1891-1977)

The researcher envisaged that the missionary approach used by the Dutch Reformed Church when it evangelised in Zimbabwe had long term effects on leadership structures of the then Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province. The mission work done by Andrew Louw who was by then not yet an ordained minister was controlled by the Mission Board in South Africa (Van der Merwe, 1981). This tradition was passed on and is still crippling the smooth running of the church even today. Andrew Louw was the spokesperson of this Mission Board until his retirement in 1937.

From 1891, Missionary work in Zimbabwe was serviced by ordained male ministers from the DRC (Cape). The Mission Board formed a Mission Council of male white clergy to help with the work of the local growing church. This Council made rules for church discipline and delegated local ministers to appoint supervisors. Ministers worked with elders to exercise discipline in line with the rules laid down by the Mission Council.

The first Congregation for the Shona people was established at Morgenster Mission and others were born out of Morgenster. Missionaries at Morgenster Mission supervised and controlled all new mission stations. When administration tasks increased the Mission Council approved formation of Presbytery and church councils in the year 1918 (Van Der Merwe, 1981). Church council was headed by a male missionary with male deacons and elders whilst

the Presbytery Council was constituted by a male missionary in charge of a mission station or congregation and a male elder from each congregation. It has to be noted that this hierarchical system was purely male dominated. They borrowed from the Shona culture which stipulated that no woman will be allowed to preside at any court or council. In 1925, training of evangelists was initiated followed by training of male black ministers which took off in 1936 (Cronje, 1982). Although the mission work of the RCZ was initiated by women of Stellenbosch Congregation in South Africa no woman was trained as an evangelist or minister up to the year 2002. From 1909 to 1977, no woman participated in RCZ church leadership structures (Van der Merwe (1981).

2.4 REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE STRUCTURES

Stability of congregations was disturbed by the liberation struggle which ended sometime in 1979 culminating to 18 April 1980 as Independence Day for Zimbabwe. There was a full handover of all church properties and leadership to the natives. This uneven ground gave rise to the 1980 synod which was aimed at calming down the waves of war in people's minds.

In 1981, another Synod was held to elect new leadership which was purely native. When this was done, Cronje (1982) observed that no woman was elected into this new leadership. The natives inherited the missionary approach which was gender biased taking women as subjects of male domination. Women requested to be involved in Church leadership but their plight was turned down.

The 1984 Synod, saw the tabling again of the women's 1981 issue and it was finally resolved that women can be elected as deacons, elders and be trained as ministers (Synod, 1984:631/21). Most males doubted women involvement citing capability and training of

women as ministers never took off since it was not the norm within the Shona culture and during the white missionary period for women to be groomed for leadership roles. Church leadership was religiously, economically and politically influenced. Reconciliation policy advocated by the Zimbabwean government in 1980 fostered a peaceful atmosphere advocating for men and women to work together (Weiss 1994). Women started to train as teachers, nurses, etc. Independence created a religious freedom for both men and women without any discrimination in worship services. In the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, more congregations were formed creating need for more ministers and church elders to cater for the spiritual needs of the people. This new phenomenon created more opportunities for women to assume positions in the church (Synod Minutes, 1986:774/26).

Women struggled to be recognised and given leadership opportunities which were by then enjoyed by males only. It has to be noted that the women's input and their appeals for women's participation in church leadership at the 1978 and 1981 Synod bore fruit in 1984 Synod which accepted that females can only be chosen as elders and deaconesses.

CHAPTER THREE

PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTION OF FEMALES AND MALES IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE OF MASVINGO SOUTH PROVINCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 explored hindrances to women participation in leadership positions in The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province. It focussed on three major obstacles namely: Shona culture, Dutch Reformed Church missionary approach and current Reformed Church in Zimbabwe structures. Transformed gender relations between women and men are hindered by the already mentioned trends.

This chapter examines women and men's contributions to church life in Masvingo South province in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. To achieve the purpose of this chapter the researcher will make use of questionnaires and Longwe's women empowerment tool.

Since, this research is anchored on transformed gender relations between women and men fostering personal development, scholars like Adeney (2005) advocate for input of both parties: women and men.

3.2 FIELD WORK STUDY

The following questions were asked during field work research in order to establish the relationship and participation of women and men in the church. Which group is bigger than the other in your church: women or men? Do we have more or less women in leadership positions in your church? Do we have more or less men in leadership positions in your church? Do women participate in decision making? Who contribute more spiritually and materially in your church: men or women? The researcher also focussed attention on

women's welfare, access, conscientisation, participation and control of church funds, positions, decision making and church projects.

To obtain answers to above mentioned questions, fifty-nine females and nineteen males answered a questionnaire and some data was collected using the Longwe women empowerment tool. Of the seventy-eight church members who were selected to answer questionnaires, all are current church elders and deacons/deaconesses serving in the current church council of The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province. The age range for both sexes was between 18-80 years. The chapter will be concluded by an evaluation of all field work findings.

3.2.1 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ACCORDING TO GENDER

All the 59 women and 19 men involved in answering the questionnaire agreed to the fact that there are more women than men in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province. This is supported by church registers which show that by 31 December 2013, of the 792 members the church had, 598 were female and 194 were males.

3.2.2 LEADERSHIP POSITIONS ACCORDING TO GENDER

All 59 women agreed to the fact that there are more men than women in leadership positions in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of the Masvingo South province. Furthermore, all the 19 males who answered the questionnaire agreed to the fact that there are more men than women in leadership positions in church. The important question that needs to be answered is: why is it that there are more women than men in church in terms of numbers but more men than women are in leadership positions? This may be because of Shona culture, church's missionary approach and current church structures seem to favour men more than women in leadership positions. Phiri (2000) supports this scenario positing that women seem

to have internalised the prejudice against them to the extent that they do not seek to change even if church regulations have given them the starting point from which they can pursue their interests.

3.2.3 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

All the 78 members in the sample agreed to the fact that women do participate in decision making of the church but their contributions are limited by their number in the decision making boards. This limited participation affects their welfare, access to resources, conscientisation on how the church is run, participation at all levels and control of the church.

3.2.4 SPIRITUAL CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN CHURCH

All the 78 responses agreed that since there are more women than men in church, consequently women participate and contribute more than men spiritually.

The women's league has 403 members and it meets three times a year for a three day spiritual conference. More women than men participate in the three Holy Communion Sessions held by the Congregation every year. In addition to this, more women than men attend prayer warriors' conferences which are held three times a year by the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province.

In addition to this, 195 girls congregate three times a year for a girls' league conference. These same girls attend Holy Communion Sessions held three times a year by the congregation. Furthermore, these same 195 girls participate in Prayer Warriors' Conferences which are held three times a year by the congregation of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province. Only 154 men participate in men's league conference held three times a year, attend three Holy Communion sessions held by the congregation and only a

handful of them attend prayer warrior's conferences held three times a year by the congregation.

Furthermore, only 40 boys attend Holy Communion Sessions, prayer warriors' conferences and boys' league conferences held by the Reformed church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province.

3.2.5 MATERIAL CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN CHURCH.

This part of the research stresses on how much women and contributed to the church financially. The researcher looks at overall church funds for 2013 and 2013 Car project which the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province embarked on to buy the current congregation Car.

3.2.5.1 CHURCH FUNDS CONTRIBUTIONS

Of the \$25 670.00 The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South managed to raise for church running, women contributed \$ 19 890. 00 whilst men only raised the remaining \$5 780.00.

Women under the prayer warriors' group also managed to fund one child who is now doing Form 3 at Makoho Secondary School. They provide for her food, clothes, school stationery and school uniform. They have pledged to help the child up to Form 4.

3.2.5.2 CAR PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province managed to acquire a 4x4 Nissan Navara Twin Cab at a cost of \$13 000.00. Male church members managed to raise only \$2 970.00 whilst women contributed a huge amount of \$10 030.00. It is therefore very

apparent from the above information that women have contributed more than men in terms of finance to the church.

3.2.6 EVALUATION

A closer examination of the figures reveals that 100% of the 78 members who answered the questionnaire agreed to the fact that Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province has more women than men in terms of membership and has more men than women in leadership positions.

Women have 75.5% chances of spiritual participation and contribution as compared to men who only have 24.5% chances. It can be clearly noted that since there are more women than men in the church, more women than men will be present at different church meetings and conferences.

100% responded for more men than women in leadership positions positing the fact that the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province does not incorporate women in leadership positions because of Shona Culture, Dutch Reformed Church missionary approach and current Reformed Church in Zimbabwe structures.

Furthermore, women contributed 77, 5% of the 2013 budget and 77% of the 2013 Car fund project whilst men contributed 22, 5% and 23% respectively. In retrospect, women participated only 12% in decisions made in 2013 whilst men enjoyed 88% contribution in all decisions documented in the same year. Women have limited access and control to church resources although they are the ones who would have contributed a larger share compared to men.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMED GENDER RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN WITHIN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE OF MASVINGO SOUTH PROVINCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three has clearly illustrated the disparities in terms of women's material and spiritual contribution and as compared to their participation in leadership and decision making within the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province of Zimbabwe. It has underlined the fact that: since women are the majority in terms of church membership, therefore they and should consist the majority of membership within the committees that decide on issues to do with access to resources and control in terms of church governance.

This Chapter is anchored on strategies which the researcher suggests can be employed by the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province. Macdonald, M et al (1997) have suggested use of organisational specific strategies towards gender sensitivity and equity, ways to deal with resistance to this change, how to confront organisational double standards, developing a woman-friendly organisational culture and affirmative action as en routes to transformed gender relations between men and women in any organisational structure. In addition to this, Chitando and Chirongoma (2012) have suggested implementation of redemptive masculinities across the spectrum to achieve transformed gender relations.

4.2 STRATEGIES TOWARDS GENDER SENSITIVITY AND EQUITY

How can any organisation strategise toward achievement of transformed gender relations between women and men? Macdonald et al (1997) have proposed revisiting the church's mission statement and objectives, stakeholder analysis of current situation, policy formulation (gender policy document), strategic planning , training, budget allocation, devising and

implementing gender equality and evaluation mechanisms. The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province has to revise its mission statement and objectives and make sure that they are realigned to achieve transformed gender relations. This can be achieved through all stake holder consultation where all church members are represented. This stakeholder meeting will assess the current situation and opt for new policy formulation, produce a working strategic document aiming at training of all leaders to foster implementation of gender sensitive mechanisms in the church.

When new ideas are introduced, naturally there arises some resistance. People are bound to ask, why should we do it? Where will we find time? Is this gender business really necessary? Macdonald et al (1997). How can this resistance be confronted? There is need for clarification by gender experts and an exploration of people's fears and doubts sincerely and seriously.

4.3 CONFRONTING ORGANISATIONAL DOUBLE STANDARDS

In the 1984 Synod of The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe it was resolved that women can be elected as deaconesses and elders, but the same church in Masvingo South Province is refusing to implement this decision. Policy is there on paper but it is not implemented on the ground- this is a problem of double standard and false dichotomy in the eyes of Macdonald, et al (1997). There is need to promote gender fairness in the church and this must go hand in hand with home practice.

4.4 DEVELOPING A WOMAN FRIENDLY ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province should challenge male dominance to make it woman friendly. There is need for women to move as freely and comfortably in the organisational medium as man do, argue Macdonald et al (1997). The

church structures and functions must be transformed in such a way that women enjoy the freedom and affirmation that they own the place. To achieve this, an organisational culture and structures of mutual support for women need to be built, so that women can feel they are not isolated individuals but instead realise that they are a potentially powerful group. In addition to this, the Reformed church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province needs to set up a women's group or develop an existing one (women's league), allocate physical space, hold seminars on gender issues.

Furthermore, there is need for the church to have a proper and up-to-date knowledge and information about church regulations and a critical analysis from a gender perspective of current church rules and procedures as propounded by Macdonald et al (1997).

There is need for an affirmative action policy so as to enable women to rise up the ladder and get into the congregation's top management. There is need to improve from 0% women in top management of the church 1891-1984 to more than 50% women in top management of the church. This can be achieved if all members of the church deliberately commit to working with practical time-frames and goals aiming to reach a target that can be achieved and will be evaluated on a regular basis. For instance, there must be a clear strategy to reach a certain target by year 2015 and these must be reviewed and analysed on an annual basis until the desired target has been reached. There is a real need to address and redress the masculine component and gross gender disparities within the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province top management's Church Council and its executive. Church Council involves the current minister, church secretary, vice secretary, treasurer and deacons/deaconesses and elders for all congregational preaching posts. Council executive encompasses the current minister, council secretary, vice secretary and treasurer (RCZ Constitution, 2010). The current council executive is 100% male dominated and church

council is 60% male dominated. There is need for a paradigm shift in church leadership and governance.

Chitando and Chirongoma (2012) have opted for the use of redemptive masculinities to achieve transformed gender relations. The church has to nurture redemptive and liberating masculinities in the face of gender imbalances. When women cry, men must cry also. What pains women must do likewise to men? Chitando and Chirongoma (2012) employ biblical text of John 11:35 when Jesus wept. Here, Jesus wept in solidarity with Martha and other relatives in clear demonstration of his feelings. Men of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo south province have to show their feelings and cry with women in their pain of discrimination.

4.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher has realised other areas which might have enriched this study and can be employed as further research proposals. Firstly, the researcher thinks unbalanced gender relations between men and women in church has more to it than the Shona culture, Dutch Reformed Church missionary approach and current RCZ structures which constituted such causes in this research, there is need to look at modernity and post-modernity, economic, educational , political and health situation of Zimbabwe.

In addition to this, one can also focus on the development aspect. Looking at what is development? What is corporate and personal development? Furthermore, one can pursue issues that hinder development and correlate them with what the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province is doing.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1 of this study, the researcher explored and analysed membership and leadership structures of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province of Zimbabwe. The research was concerned about unequal representation and participation of women in decision making boards of their church. The researcher aimed at finding out why women who constitute more than 75% of the church are side-lined when it comes to decision making. The purpose of the study was to trace the historical situation which led to the current structures and practice in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province.

Chapter 2 discussed hindrances to transformed gender relations between men and women of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province. Shona culture, the Dutch Reformed Church Missionary approach and current Reformed Church structures were analysed as major factors contributing to the present situation of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province.

Chapter 3 dealt with the present situation in terms of gender relations between women and men of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province. Empirical investigations in this chapter were based on cultural bias towards women, Dutch Reformed Church Missionary approach and the current Reformed Church in Zimbabwe's "modus operandi." A sample of 59 women and 19 men was used and an analysis followed.

The results of the empirical analysis proved that there are more women than men in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South Province who participate more than men spiritually and materially.

Chapter 4 proposed a redress of the current situation of Reformed Church in Zimbabwe of Masvingo South province by creating a women friendly organisational culture in the church,

confronting church's organisational double standards and employing all-stakeholders' strategies towards gender equity and sensitivity. When these recommendations are enforced in the church, they will promote creation of transformed gender relations between women and men aimed at personal development of all church members.

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ADDENDUM: STRUCTURE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your sex? Female.....Male.....
2. For how long have you been in this church?
3. Are you in church leadership?
4. Which group is bigger than the other in your church? Women or men
5. Do you have more women/men in leadership positions in your church? Women or men
6. Do women participate in decision making boards of your church?
7. Who participate more than the other in your church both spiritually and materially?
Women or men
8. What can be done in your church to pave way for more female church leaders?