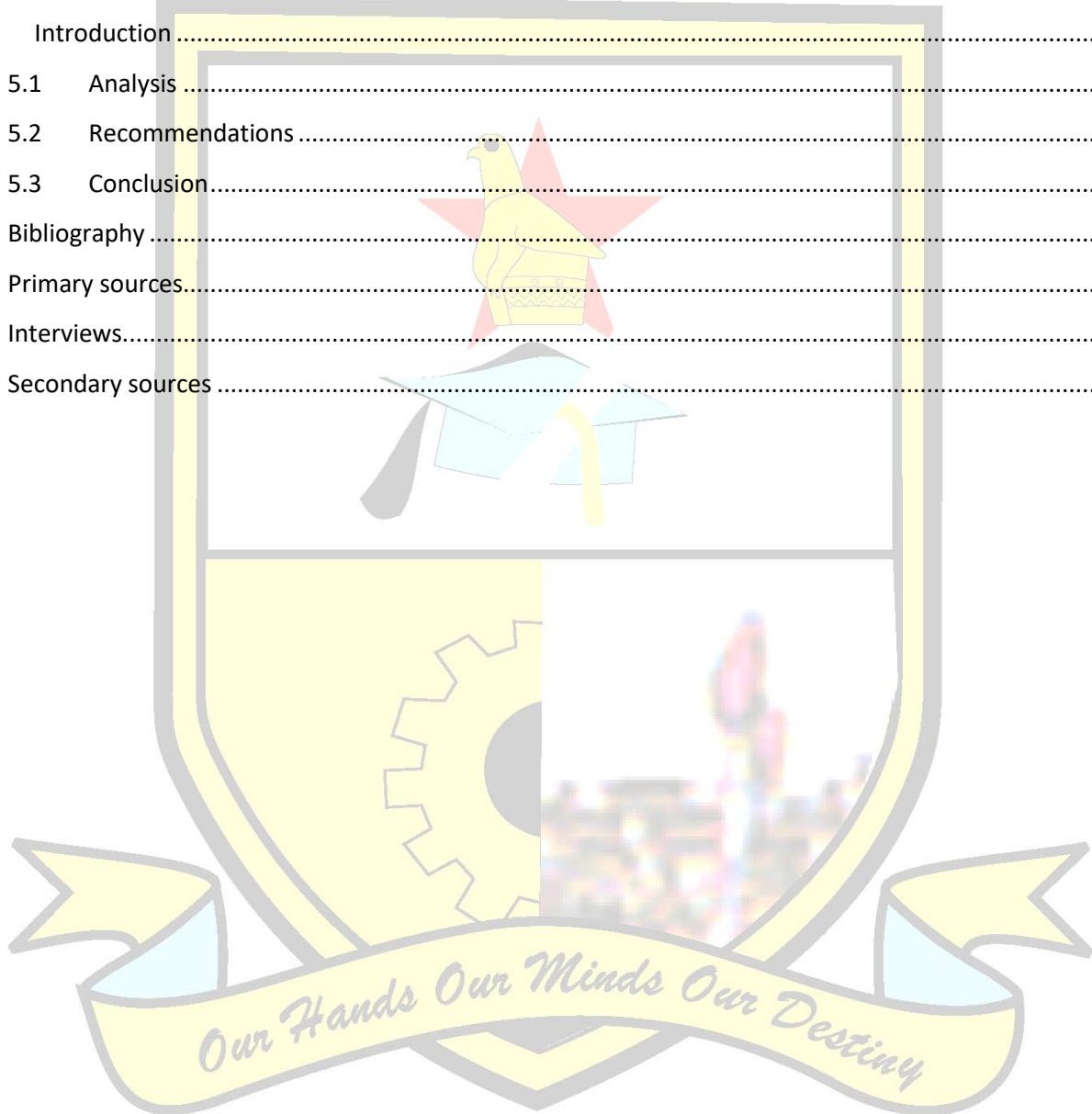


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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Without the involvement of women in most Churches, the life of the church would have died a natural death. Women constitute the majority in terms of numbers in churches (Chitando 2007:2). As such, whenever functions are organized at any local church people always turn to women for food this includes gathering, preparation and sharing of the food. Whenever there is some general cleaning to be undertaken at church premises, women are expected to do that including various other manual jobs. On the other hand, the majority of their male counterparts only come on Sundays, to sit and dictate on women how things should be done and at the same time three quarters of them take higher positions in churches that are numerically dominated by women.

1.2 Area of Investigation

This study falls in the precincts of Women in Religion taking cognizance of the silent roles that women in the Anglican Diocese of Harare are playing in the development of the Church and spreading of the gospel. For example, the women in the Anglican diocese of Harare have been influential in the development and renovation of the Bernard Mzeki shrine. They always take a leading role when it comes to the area of outreach. The same are influential when it comes to issues of finances. They contribute more in terms of church business. With all this effort from the dedicated women in the church, nothing is said to at least appreciate them. They toil day and night not only to support the church but also to look after their families and yet very little is said about them. The church which is supposed to be the voice of the voiceless is benefiting from the mothers and alas it is silent when it comes to issues of women ordination. The church here refers

to the male dominated leadership that governs the day to day running of the diocese. The men are so few in the church but they hold a lion's share when it comes to church leadership.

The study also seeks to contextualize the story in Luke 8:1-3 which says *"soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary called Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out and Johana the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward and Susanna and many others, who provided for them out of their means."* The above mentioned women supported Jesus' ministry and his disciples out of their own means. It will be also very important to note that the words women and mother's union will be used interchangeably in many cases.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Women constitute the majority of the people in Churches, yet they continue to play subservient, passive, docile and even servile roles. Chitando (2007:2) blames the church for continuing to reinforce the subordination of women to men. In the same light, Mangena (2009:22) also argues that, "in Zimbabwe women outnumber men demographically and yet very few of them occupy positions of political and economic influence, that is, very few of them have ministerial posts in government." The contribution of women has always been enormous. As it has always been the case, the Anglican Mother's Union of the Diocese of Harare has been the back bone of the Church. They have contributed a lot in various aspects in the growth, development and sustenance of the Church and its activities and also in supporting various ministries within the church set up using their own resources yet their input is never acknowledged.

Why are the efforts and contributions of women not celebrated? Have they not done enough to deserve honor? Can the contextualization of the story of Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna

and other unnamed women in Luke 8:1-3 be of any help in this study? Can the role that these women played be equated to what the Anglican Mother's Union are doing?

As such, this study examines how the story of these women in Luke 8:1-3 can be of any significance to what the Anglican Mother's Union (MU) in the Diocese of Harare is doing in this 21st century.

1.4 Justification

So much has been written on the plight and challenges of women. Tremendous strides have been made in the area of women in religion trying to uplift the status and images of women by fighting against marginalization, oppression and subordination of women in various spheres of life. Some theologians have written advocating the ordination of women, women to assume higher leadership roles in churches and in government, fighting against gender based violence and masculinities. But less has been done in this area of celebrating women for their works and exploits, contributions and support as if they have not done anything. Most works that have been written about women were written after their suffering and crying.

Simbarashe Munamati in his dissertation where he focused on the status of Ruwadzano women in the reformed Church narrowed his research to women in reformed church, so is Pedzisai Nyamudzuro who also focused on Women in the United Methodist church in Zimbabwe. The dissertations are reacting to the situations in their churches where women are being subordinated. This research goes further to celebrate what women in the Anglican diocese of Harare have done to the life of the church.

This study stands by women who are doing great things but very little is said about them. It is however, not demanding much but rather provoking why women remain unsung considering

their great support, active participation and contributions to the welfare of the clergy, orphans, widows, church and the community at large. The Mother's Union in the diocese of Harare has always been the back bone of the church through thick and thin but less has been done to recognize and appreciate their efforts and great works. Hence, this study would like to investigate why the case of women has been like that? This research can be of great significance since it can provide possible solutions to some issues like the ordination of women which have the capacity to cause a split within the Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa since dioceses are having mixed feelings on the matter. This kind of research can also be paramount for the growth and stability of the church especially in Harare where congregants are exposed to powerful women ministers from other denominations. Ultimately this research can bring awareness to the slow moving Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa because gender issues are topical and cannot be ignored especially in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

1.5.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to address the plight of women in the Anglican Church taking a cue from the story of the women in Luke 8:1-3 who were helping to support Jesus' ministry out of their own means and see if there are any similarities with what other women are doing today.

1.5.2 Objectives

The above aim will be achieved by pursuing the following objectives

1. To explore works and contributions of women made by the Anglican Mother's Union in the Diocese of Harare.
2. To investigate why women are not celebrated in the Anglican Church

3. To explore the cultural background of women in 1st Century Palestine.
4. To give recommendations and conclusion.

1.6 Methodology

The word methodology comes from the verb method. *The Reader's Digest Dictionary* states that the word comes from the *meth-hodos*, way, which is a mode of procedure, way or order of doing things (Tulloch 1992:23). It is a set system of procedure designed to help to yield the intended result. As such, this study uses the feminist approach, in order to tell and contextualize the story of disadvantaged and uncelebrated efforts of women and see if something can be done to change the situation. More so, data collection methods such as interviews and questionnaires were also used to get more information from the people.

1.7 Approaches

1.7.1 Feminist Approach

Morgan in Connolly (1999:42) argues that the feminist approach seeks nothing less than a critical transformation of existing theoretical perspectives through the introduction of gender as a primary category of analysis. She also adds that "Religious feminists are, as Anne Carr has observed, unity in the significant for the lives of contemporary life in general". Thus, Fulkerson (1994:13) argues that feminist theology allows women to tell their stories and to write theology from their own perspective.

Merits

Feminism as an approach addresses the meaning of human identity and wholeness at the very deepest level, drawing upon a wide range of interdisciplinary insights from anthropology, theology, sociology and philosophy.

Limitations

On the other hand, feminism as a method suffers from an inferiority complex which tends to accept that men are superior to women. It is also a reactionary method hence there are very high chances of compromising the objectivity and practicality of the research. Although knowing the weaknesses of this method it is important, much focus should be put on its strengths (Connolly 1999:42).

1.7.2 Comparative Method

This is one of the common methods among different fields. Wieck (1999:42) says that, this method is mostly used in scientific, social, historical and religious studies. It was one of the prominent methods in the study of religion in the eighteenth century. Hence a discipline called comparative religions was established. In the history of biblical studies, this method was used in the Old Testament studies to compare ancient religions of the Near East with the Israelite religion (McMillan&Schumadier 2004:28). The method is also being used in New Testament studies and it is used in various ways such as distinguishing deuterio Pauline epistles from genuine Pauline epistles. Also, the synoptic problem started when the gospels were compared against each other. However, this method is paramount because the study is dealing with women from two distinct contexts, which are women from the Anglican diocese of Harare and women of the 1st century Palestine.

Limitations

Whenever people try to analogize something they are bound by their cultural, economic, political and religious conjecture as such, objectivity becomes impractical hence the method itself becomes more theoretical than practical. Be that as it may, the usefulness of the method is based on its strengths and not the weakness (McMillan&Schumadier 2004:28).

Merits

The method helps the researcher to come up with a clear and informed determination on the subject after a thorough comparison of diverse communities. It is consistently subjective to conclude on any matter basing on one aspect or text without comparison. The method also allows the researcher to come up with the best conclusion after wide consultation (McMillan&Schumadier 2004:28).

1.7.3 Methods of Data Collection

1.7.3.1 Interviews

C.N Nachmias and D. Nachmias (2000:156) define a personal interview as a face to face interpersonal role situation in which one interviewee asks respondents questions defined to obtain answers pertinent to the research hypothesis. This type of method is very key in this study because it extracts vital and necessary information to validate discoveries as it deals with people's personal views and opinions. Various people, individuals and groups within the Anglican Diocese of Harare both male and female were interviewed in order to get views on how and why women are unsung heroines in the Anglican Church. These interviews involve people from both low and high density suburb churches. Interviews brings credibility to any findings because people usually speak from their heart as the Holy Bible suggests "*For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks* (Matthew 12:34 NIV)"

Merit

Interviews help to get useful detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions. They also allow more detailed questions to be asked and help to achieve high response rate. More so, ambiguities can be clarified and incomplete questions followed (Russ-Eft&Preskill 2001:33).

Limitations

However, interviews can be very costly and time-consuming: setting up, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, feedback and report. More so, different interviewers may understand and transcribe interviews in different ways (Russ-Eft&Preskill 2001:33).

1.7.3.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was also used as a method of data and information collection from various people. E.R Babbie (2010:147) defines a questionnaire as a collection of questions. More so, social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp were also used.

Merits

A questionnaire is practical and also large amounts of information can be collected from large numbers of people in a short period of time and in a relatively cost effective way. It can also be carried out by the researcher or any number of people with limited affect to its validity and reliability.

Limitations

Questionnaire however, lack validity. There is no way of telling how truthful a respondent is being and also there is no way of telling how much thought a respondent has put in. Language can be a barrier in the communication of real issues on the ground, as such the study tried to use the understood and vernacular language of any interviewee.

1.8 Literature Review

In the quest of doing justice to the topic under study, relevant literature was used in this research to come up with the desired result. Some of the material that was used include stories of women and perceptions of various writers in relationship to uncelebrated women and the challenges they are facing. This literature is helpful in highlighting how women are viewed and treated in their Churches.

George Arthur Buttrick in his book *The Biblical Interpretations Volume VIII* (1952), argues that the book of Luke has generally been accepted to have been written by Luke who is believed also to be the author of Acts. The Book shades light on the life of the first century people of Palestine. While little is known about the ways in which justice and social life was administered during the time of Jesus, there seem to have been a point at which the writer of the Gospel intended to bring across issues relating to the position of women. This book is helpful in understanding the cultural setting and life of the people in the context of Jesus' era. It however, does not provide the cultural setting and life of the people in the 21st century as it limits itself to the first century Palestine. As such, this research provides an understanding of the cultural setting and life of this present era which is not discussed in this book.

Theresa Souga, *“The Christ-Event from the Viewpoint of African Women: A Catholic Perspective”* (1988). In this book the writer talks about Jesus and women throughout the Gospel. She indicates that Jesus bears a message of liberation for every human being and especially for those categories that are most disadvantaged and women are not spared in that category. Souga(1988) also argues that women were in a category that would attract Jesus’ attention. Hence, she postulates that women were very much involved and supported Jesus’ ministry. In addition, women are also involved in the birth of the church during the apostolic period (Souga 1988:25). “They go along with the apostles and play an important role in the life of the incipient church.”

Thus, in Acts 9:36, we read that in Joppa among the disciples was a woman named Tabitha, or Dorcas in Greek (Souga 1988:25).” The writer informs this researcher about the background of women during Jesus’ time and compare it with what is happening in the church today. However, whilst this book focuses and appreciates the involvement of women during Jesus’ era, this research will focus on the involvement of women in particular the Mother’s Union in the Anglican Diocese of Harare in the 21st century Zimbabwe.

Oduyoye M.A. in her book *Daughters of Anowa, African Women and Patriarchy* (1995) writes against the use of myths and gender stereo types that are used to perpetuate systems that oppress women. This study however will focus on church traditions that may be the cause of the oppression of women in the church and subsequently leading to their uncelebrated works. Oduyoye’s book is also helpfull the study in understanding that these traditions could be the reason why women are unsung heroines. However, as the shown by the title of this book, this study is going to bring it closer home and rephrase it as Anglican Mother’s Union and Patriarchy since the book has a Ghanaian context which is different from the one in question.

Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro in the book, *The Will to Rise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa* (1992), together with other women who wrote in this book are part of the “Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians” that is concerned about various aspects of life that affect women. This book also recognises the role of women in the development of the Christianity in Nigeria. M.A Oduyoye and M.R.A Kanyoro (1992:218) argue that “the role of women in the development of Christianity in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. The discrimination against the priesthood of women in some Nigerian churches, particularly the mission churches, is a carryover mentality which must be updated.” This book also indicates the will for women to rise although there is a lot of opposition against their will to rise. T. Okure in her article in this book has argued that Africa will not arise unless its womenfolk, the mothers and bearers of life, arise (Oduyoye and Kanyoro 1992:230). This book focuses on the church in Nigeria but this study will try to bring it closer home to Zimbabwe since nothing has been written that focuses directly to the church in Zimbabwe, particularly the Anglican Mother’s Union in the Diocese of Harare.

Bonnidell Clouse and Robert G. Clouse in the book, *Women in Ministry: Four Views* (1989) give a background of how women have travelled in order to break new grounds. They talk about four views namely; *traditional view, male leadership view, plural ministry view and egalitarian view*. These views are of great help because in one way or the other, these are generally the views that people hold about women in various ministries. Most importantly, it portrays positive images about women which will also be used as contributions that women have made as role models.

Dean Fleming in the book, *Contextualization on the New Testament: Partners for Theology and Missions*(2005), argues that while the audience of Luke was diverse, Luke’s aim is to bring good tidings to the marginalized, to which Jesus’ mission was for the salvation to all people. Thus,

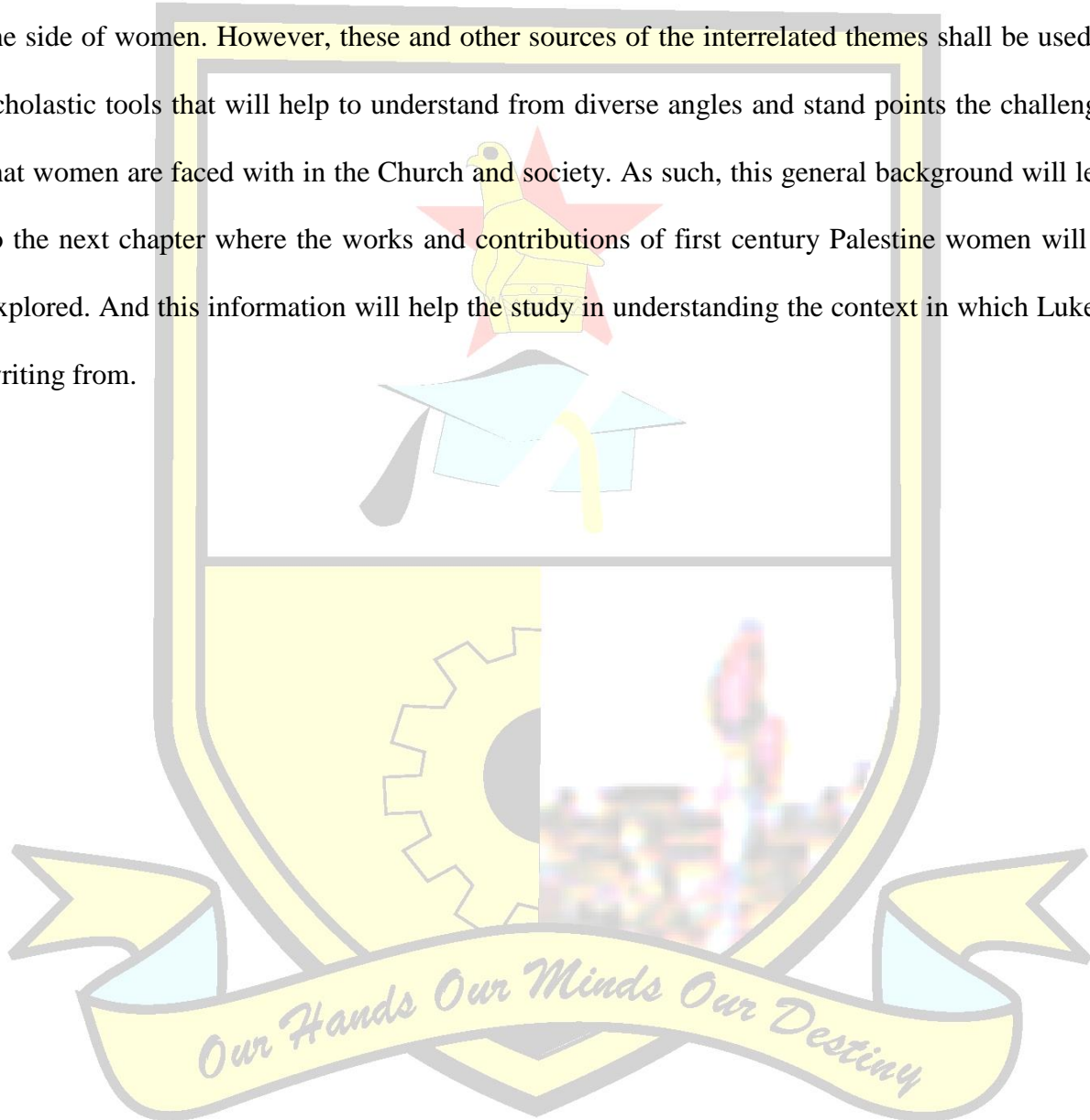
Luke does that by demonstrating the inclusiveness of God's saving plan by spotlighting Jesus compassion for various groups of people who were on the periphery of society; the poor and the oppressed, the sick and the lepers, sinners and tax-collectors, women and children, Samaritans and Gentiles (Fleming 2005:252). This book is helpful in this study since it highlights the various marginalized groups that Jesus was involved with and how they were treated.

T.P, Mapuranga in her article "*Bargaining with Patriarchy? Women Pentecostal Leaders in Zimbabwe*" (2013), explains how women in Pentecostal Churches are bargaining with Patriarchy. She explains how women are finding their way to the helm of leadership in Pentecostal Churches. What we deduce from the writer is that there has been a remarkable improvement in Pentecostal Churches in terms of involving women leaders. They have opened avenues for women leadership positions as compared to old missionary churches as quite a substantial figure of female leaders are coming from Pentecostal Churches. This article helps in explaining how women behave before and after they ascend to positions of authority and see if they are not their own enemies. This study tries to bridge the gap by writing about the Mothers' Union since Mapuranga's article has been written focusing on how women in Pentecostal Churches are bargaining with patriarchy and not about the Anglican Women particularly in the Diocese of Harare.

In her chapter "Women, Myth and Reality" in the book, *The Second Sex* (1997) S, de Beauvoir argues that men fundamentally oppress women by characterizing them as the "other". This study however, tries to look into claims of de Beauvoir and see if they really contribute to the oppression of women as claimed by de Beauvoir. Her article also gives the researcher zeal to continue to search for answers to validate the claims she is making

1.9 Conclusion

Therefore, from these and other texts, this study intends to observe interrelatedness of the reactions and views of various women on their culture, environment and customs of the society after which one can appreciate why there is an outcry in the country as well as in churches from the side of women. However, these and other sources of the interrelated themes shall be used as scholastic tools that will help to understand from diverse angles and stand points the challenges that women are faced with in the Church and society. As such, this general background will lead to the next chapter where the works and contributions of first century Palestine women will be explored. And this information will help the study in understanding the context in which Luke is writing from.



CHAPTER TWO: THE WORKS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MOTHER'S UNION DIOCESE OF HARARE

2 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the general background of this study which includes the introduction, area of investigation, statement of the problem and justifying the reasons for writing this kind of paper. More so, aims and objectives, methodology and the type of literature that will be consulted were also dealt with in this first chapter. This chapter will now focus on the history of the mothers' union worldwide, and later focus on the Mothers' Union in the diocese of Harare and finally its contribution to the growth of the church in the diocese of Harare.

2.1 History of worldwide Anglican mother's union guild

The Anglican diocese of Harare MU Constitution defines MU as an Anglican Church Women's Organization of a Christian charitable nature founded by Mary Sumner in the United Kingdom in 1876. As such, it will be of great interest to trace the history of the Mother's Union (MU) in order to have a better understanding of what it really is.

2.1.1 Founder

According to the Winchester cathedral (2015), the founder of the worldwide Anglican Mothers' Union is Mary Sumner. She was born Mary Elizabeth Heywood in Swinton near Salford in 1828, Lancashire, and she was the third of four children. Her father was a banker and keen amateur historian and her mother was a woman of personal piety. Mary Heywood moved to Hertfordshire with her family in 1832. While in Rome concluding her education, she met George Sumner, the youngest son of the then Bishop of Winchester. They fell in love and were married on 26 July 1848, eighteen months after George's ordination as an Anglican cleric. They had three children:

Margaret, Louise and George; the latter became a well-known artist. In 1851, Rev. George Sumner received the living of Old Alresford, Hampshire, in his father's diocese. Sumner dedicated herself to raising her children and helping her husband in his ministry by providing music and Bible classes. After the formation and early growth of Mothers Union, George was appointed first Archdeacon of Winchester, then Bishop of Guildford, then a suffragan post within the Diocese of Winchester

In 1876, when her eldest daughter Margaret gave birth, she was reminded of how difficult she had found the burden of motherhood. Mary Sumner became concerned about the way in which local mothers related their Christian faith to family life. As a way of encouraging them, she called for a meeting of all the mothers in the parish and founded a small group called the Mothers' Union. This group was meant to offer mutual support to families. Her plan was to make it a worldwide organization, with millions of members. Her plan was also to see motherhood as a profession and as important as those of men, if not more. As such, her task involved calling women of all social classes to support one another.

2.1.2 First meeting and its spread throughout the world

The first meeting was held in Old Alresford Rectory in 1876. At that meeting she could not speak for herself, instead her husband had to speak for her and invite women to return the following week. Fortunately, at the second meeting Sumner had gathered enough courage to lead her own meeting and spoke boldly about the Mothers' Union guild. At this time the guild was still limited to Sumner's parish only hence, there was need to expand to other areas. However, in 1885, she was part of the audience that attended the Portsmouth Church Congress, which was some 20 miles from her home. The first Bishop of Newcastle, Ernest Wilberforce, had been

asked to address the women churchgoers. But, the bishop felt that he had very little to say to women and invited Sumner to speak instead. Although Sumner was nervous, it is said that she gave a passionate address about national morality and the importance of women's vocation as mothers to change the nation for the better. It was from this platform that a number of the women present went back to their parishes and founded mothers' meetings modeled on Sumner's pattern. Later on, the Bishop of Winchester, Edward Browne (2013) made the Mothers' Union a diocesan organization.

From that moment onwards the Mothers' Union concept spread rapidly to other dioceses and even beyond the United Kingdom borders. It began to record quite a significant number in its membership in various dioceses. Annual general meetings began in 1893, and the Mothers' Union Central Council was established three years later. Sumner was unanimously elected president, a post she held into her nineties. In 1897, during her Diamond Jubilee, Queen Victoria became patron of the Mothers' Union, giving it an unprecedented stamp of approval. The Mothers' Union set up branches throughout the British Empire, beginning in New Zealand, then Canada and India. Sumner lived to lead the Mothers' Union to act in rebuilding the heart of Britain after the First World War and saw the first Mothers' Union Conference of Overseas Workers in 1920 (www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/our-heritage/famous-people/mary-sumner-founder-of-mothers-union/). It was however, on 26 June 1920 that the MU was started in Zimbabwe. As such, the constitution of the Anglican diocese of Harare states that it is part of the Anglican Church of the Province of Africa Mother's Union which is thus affiliated to Mary Sumner House, London, United Kingdom. However, this information leads this research into the following section which is about the Anglican Diocese of Harare Mothers' Union.

2.2 The Anglican mother's union guild of the diocese of Harare

According to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* a guild is “an organized group of people who have joined together because they share the same job or interest” or an association of people with similar interests or pursuits. The MU is in the same manner a guild of women in the Anglican Church that was founded on the principles of Mary Sumner. Hence forth, guild, women and Mothers Union will be used interchangeably in this research.

2.2.1 Membership

For one to be enrolled fully into the Mother's Union guild, one must have undertaken lessons in accordance with the Diocesan syllabus for Mother's Union membership for at least a year (MU Constitution). Through these lessons one is taught the aims and objectives of the group so that she knows exactly what she is committing herself into before joining. Its membership includes married women, widows and single mothers. But, full membership is attained by wedded women and for single mothers; one has to be above the age of forty. It is also very paramount for the readers to know that within this bigger group of the Mothers Union in the Diocese of Harare there is another smaller group that is affiliated to the bigger one. The group is commonly known as Widows and Single Mothers or simply (WISMA). It is a group that was established to create a platform where widows and single mothers gather to discuss issues and challenges that affect them as single parents in that particular context, and also to come up with ideas of self-sustenance considering the economic challenges of raising the families as a single parent. They have times that they meet as a separate group and sometimes hold their own conferences though most of the time they meet with the rest of the women for their prayer meetings.

2.2.2 Mothers' union gatherings

In the diocese of Harare the women meet at least once a week either on Thursday (*kuchina*) or Friday depending on the community. For working mothers they meet on Saturdays when they are able to attend. Their meetings comprise Bible reading and preaching, reciting of aims and objectives and making a collection. They also give notices and updates on women's issues like babies born, sickness, funerals and any other program in the area.

2.2.3 Aims and objectives of the mothers' union

The guild is guided by its aims and objectives. These are guiding principles, or *modus operandi*. This is what is aimed at to be achieved and accomplished by all members of the guild. As such, these aims shall be to promote the advancement of Christian marriage, motherhood and family life in the spirit of their five objectives:

1. To uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and motherhood, and to promote their wider understanding.
2. To encourage mothers to bring up their children in the faith and the life of the Church.
3. To maintain a world-wide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
4. To promote conditions in the society favorable to stable family life and the protection of Children.
5. To help those whose family life is faced with adversity? (Mothers' Union Constitution 2009:2)

In addition, besides the aims and objectives that guide them, the Mothers Union guild of the diocese of Harare has also a prayer that acts as an intercession dedicated to all mothers, husbands and children.

2.2.4 The mothers' union prayer

Tenzi tizadze nemweya wako unoyera kuti tinatse kudaira kuna Jesu Kristu, nekumuda nemwoyo yedu yese. Suka mweya yedu muropa rako rinokosha. Tiite tivenge zvitadzo nekutiita tiyere mupfungwa dzedu nomumazwi nomumabasa. Tibatsire kuva vakadzi vanotendeka namadzimai anerudo .Tikomborerei isu nevese vari muGungano reMadzimai: Tisanganise pamwe murudo nemumunamoto, utidzidzise kudzidzisa vana vedu nzira yekudenga. Dira Mweya wako Unoyera pane varume vedu nevana vedu .Ita misha yedu ive misha yerunyararo nerudo, utiite tigare zvakadaro pasi pano kuzoti tigare nemi narini kudenga: pamusana paJesu Kristu Tenzi wedu, Amen.

The Prayer translated into English:

Lord fill us with your Holy Spirit to truly believe in Jesus Christ, and to love him whole heartedly. Wash our souls in your precious blood. Make us to hate sin and make us to be holy in thought, words and deeds. Help us to become faithful and loving women. Bless us and all those in the Mothers' Union: Gather us in love and in prayer, teach us to teach our children the way of heaven. Pour your spirit upon our husbands and our children. Make our homes to be peaceful homes, make us to stay that way forever on this earth so that we can be with you forever in heaven: for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The above prayer is very important to the Mothers' Union as it acts as an inspiration to all their endeavors. It also shows how indebted the mothers are to family life. However, it is through such prayers together with the aims and objectives that women are able to do or achieve some of the things that the Mothers Union in the diocese of Harare has been involved in. It is through their works and contributions that the church has survived. Thus, the next section of this research is going to explore works and contributions of the Mothers Union.

2.3 Works of the women in the mothers' union

This section is going to explore the activities and works that the Mothers Union in the diocese is involved in. In an interview with the Anglican Diocese of Harare bishop Chad Gandiya at his office on 8 April 2015, he acknowledged that this topic of women as unsung heroines speaks volumes about the Mothers Union. He spoke about various projects and programs that the mothers are doing in his capacity as the Chief Shepherd of the diocese. He indicated that without the support of the Mothers' Union, the diocese would be in a very difficult situation (Gandiya 2015). He further said that their income often comes from very small projects such as selling of tomatoes but it is through those smaller projects that greater things are achieved, they have many other commitments with their small incomes but they prioritise God's work (Gandiya 2015). Thus, he gave several examples of what they have been doing in the diocese and outside the Anglican Church of which some of the things are going to be discussed in this section.

2.3.1 Social contributions

2.3.1.1 Visiting the sick

Bishop Chad Gandiya pointed out that the contributions of the Mothers Union guild is not only materially but pastorally also. He further argued that women are more pastoral than men. He talked about the Pastoral Desk that has been established at the diocesan offices which is being spearheaded and facilitated by the Mothers Union. It deals with issues such as the dissemination of information about HIV and AIDS and also helps people living HIV and those living with disability. The bishop further pointed out some of the things that women do. For instance, he said

that women visit the sick in homes and hospitals. What the bishop said was confirmed by Mavis Madziva of St Luke's Mufakose Anglican Church in an interview on 7 July 2015. She explained that the Mothers Union usually contributes some things and visit the sick at home at least two people a week and on Fridays they normally visit those in hospitals. St Elizabeth Belvedere Mothers Union donated an undisclosed amount of money to their fellow member who had gone to India after being diagnosed of cancer. This gesture clearly showed that women really take their aims and objectives seriously.

The Holy Trinity Ruwa Mothers' union went to visit patients at Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre. According to Mrs Ancescaria Mushonga it was a day well spent (7 April 2015). They conducted prayers and Bible studies and reminded patients of God's love. The theme for the day was "with God all things are possible." After the prayers and Bible study they gave them some foodstuffs and toiletries.

2.3.1.2 Funerals

At funerals whether it is a man or a woman who has died, women are at the forefront doing many chores at the funeral. Women, unlike their male counterparts sleep overnight, something that men do not do even if it is their fellow man that would have died. Women do the cooking, serving the food and the washing of the dishes.

2.3.1.3 Family Life

Bishop Gandiya also talked about women's commitment to family life. He said that, "in terms of family life, there is a crisis but their commitment is to family life for example when you look at the contents of the prayer it promotes good and healthy family life (Gandiya 2015)." Especially

the part where it says: “*Dira Mweya wako Unoyera pane varume vedu nevana vedu. Ita misha yedu ive misha yerunyararo nerudo...*” (pour your Spirit upon our husbands and our children. Bring peace and love to our homes.) More so, their motto “Christian care for families” clearly shows their commitment to family life.

2.3.1.4 Maternal Health

The fifth Millennium Development Goal adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2000 was “Improving Maternal Health.” As such, the Mother’s Union of Harare has decided not to be left out but participate to make this goal a reality and being able to demonstrate the Christian Faith by transforming people’s lives and building stable families as stated in the Mothers Union Mission. However, the church realised the urgency of the need to help the needy expectant mothers who come to deliver at Health facilities at Clinics and even at Mission and Government Hospitals. Thus, in consultation with the Harare City Health Department, the Mothers’ Union Executive chose to start with Budiriro Polyclinic as a pilot project. The following donations were made;

- One Standing Type Blood Pressure Machine- (Aneroid Sphygmomanometer).
- One Foetal Doppler
- Five Baby Hampers (for the needy mothers). This donation was made for three months (July, August and September 2014) (Zimunya 2015).
- One Doughnut Ring Mattress
- Three Netstar Ambulance Service Vouchers for the needy mothers (one for every month) which was donated by the community Development Co-ordinator through the Mothers Union (MU Newsletter Dec 2014: 2).

This initiative was shared with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) *Mubatanidzwa* in Budiriro that they were invited to one of the Hampers' Donation Visit at the Clinic in October 2014.

2.4 Humanitarian

The Mothers' Union is also widely involved into humanitarian programs helping the less privileged, orphans, widows, those living with disability and the needy. According to Rev Dzikamai Mundenda the rector in an interview on 14 April 2015, Avondale Parish women helped a pregnant woman who needed to pay for a scan as there was complication on the baby's position in the womb. She was eventually admitted at St Annes Hospital and they paid all her hospital bills (Mundenda 2015).

St Paul's Marlborough invited female Prison Members to fellowship on the 25th July 2014. According to Mrs. Patience Sifelani (priest's wife) a group of ten inmates and prison officers visited the church. Mrs. Sisari who is a board member of the Prison Fellowship in Zimbabwe led the group. Mrs. P Sifelani confessed that it was humbling to listen to the confessions from the female inmates (2 March 2015). At the end of the fellowship program after sharing their stories, The Mothers Union then presented foodstuffs and toiletry hampers to the inmates.

Bindura Parish embarked on an outreach Programme on the 14th July 2014 to remember Clergy widows whose husbands had worked in this parish donating groceries. First it was Mrs. Tendaupenyu of Jumbo Mine Mazowe, Mrs. Chipudhla of Southerton, Mrs Chatukuta form Seke rural and Mrs Muzhingi in Old Mabvuku.

In Mangwende, St Clare's Church District, the Mothers' Union had been able to motivate Mothers' Union members to assist three Health Institutions in their area.

a) Church of Christ Waterloo Clinic – Candles, Matches and Soap

b) Dombwe Clinic – Candles, Matches and Soap

c) Nhowe Hospital - 10 Litres of Peanut butter

Reverend Kingstone Kajakata the priest in charge of St Clare Mangwende Church District in an interview reported that on all the visits, they would do some cleaning, collect water needed by different clinic wards and have fellowship with patients and workers (Kajakata 2015).

The St Martins' Hatfield Parish Mothers' Union also went to donate some goods in Chikwaka for the orphanage. *"Mai vangarega here kuchengeta mwana wavo; kana Mai vachirega, ini ndinokutondera"* "Can a mother fail to take care of her child; if a mother fails, I will remember you" is an Anglican Hymn 145:3 which inspires them daily and in most gatherings, attaching the deep meaning of these words. St. Martins Mothers' Union members shared that they now have an appreciation of this song after the visit they made to Shearley Cripps Orphanage St Johns' Chikwaka on 19 July 2014. They sang this song whilst donating some goods to the orphans at the orphanage, explained Mrs C Chiganze (28 March 2015). "There were emotional moments with the children" reflected Reverend T Manjengwa Rector of St Martin's Hatfield. During the visit the Mothers donated blankets, quilts/duvets and food for the children. Currently, the home looks after sixty three (63) children with ages ranging from 2 – 18 years old. We learnt that the children in the home are children like our own. They do need material support as well as to be loved, cared for, and to be protected. They need to be hugged, to be played with, and to have someone to talk to said Mrs C Chiganze.

2.4.1 Financial Contributions

Bishop Chad Gandiya whilst speaking to members of St Elizabeth of Hungary Belvedere on 11 April 2015 during a question and answer session said that “plan something with women consider it done but plan it with men it won’t take off forever”. He said this while responding to a question that had been raised about the developments at Bernard Mizeki Shrine. Speaking to Reverend Clifford Dzavo the Diocesan Secretary, he commended the good works that women are doing throughout the diocese in terms of development and funding the diocesan projects. C Dzavo said that women are always at the forefront in bailing the diocese out in financial issues. He acknowledged what the Mothers Union has done for the diocese with the Fathers having done nothing. He said the Mothers’ Union has helped in the purchase of church assets for example, the purchasing of Ruwa stands and wedding venue, the construction of toilets at Bernard Mizeki Shrine, the drilling and installation of boreholes at the Shrine also and construction of a pathway with steps on the mountain at the Shrine to allow pilgrims walk safely without being hurt as they go up and down on the mountain.

In Marondera, St Peter’s Dombotombo it was the Mothers’ Union that erected the Dura-wall at the church premises. At St James’ Mabvuku and St Paul’s Chinhoyi the mothers are also the ones who are credited for the purchase of furniture for their rectories (priest’s house). In almost all parishes, it is the Mothers’ Union that deals with issues of the priest’s welfare in terms of groceries.

On September 20, 2014 at Cresta Lodge, the Mothers’ Union hosted the High Tea Fundraising program which was aimed at raising funds for clergy and wives workshops. Mrs. Faith Gandiya the bishop’s wife expressed her happiness because the program was a success. It was well

attended according to her. Mrs. Lizzy Zimunya said that “we had a business pitch, fashion show, cake show, raffles, auction and prizes were won that included handbag, hampers and cash prize (Zimunya 2015)”. The bishop also talked about how the Mother’ Union has bailed them out on several occasions when they had no money to give as monthly stipends (money given to priests as salary) to clergy. He said that Mothers’ Union would give those stipends to priests from their Mothers’ Union account.

2.4.2 Other Contributions

Reverend C Dzavo also indicated that there are some other programs or activities that the Mothers’ Union is involved in. He talked about the CCMP- Church & Community Mobilization Process commonly known as *Umoja*. This was a program that the Mothers’ Union initiated in order to encourage self-sustenance projects to individuals, families, churches and communities using the available resources. This program has seen the birth of another program termed “Farming the God’s way” which encourages the use of natural methods of farming for example the use of organic manure instead of fertilizers. This has also seen various church groups and communities coming together and starting various projects such chicken projects in the case of All Soul Parish Karoi, market gardening in the case of Banket Parish and goat project in the case of Zimhindo and Mukarati communities of Mhondoro. When the Church is expecting visitors, church leaders turn to women for food gathering, preparing and sharing as if they are women’s visitors alone.

2.4.3 The Commitment and sacrifice of Women as a contribution

The bishop also acknowledged and appreciated the commitment and resilience of women during the Anglican Diocese of Harare time of ‘exile’. This is the time when members of the Anglican

Church were forced out of their churches by Former Anglican Diocese of Harare bishop Norbert Kunonga with the help of the police. For five years it was not easy for the members of the church but due to their commitment the church survived in those difficult times. Bishop Gandiya noted that women remained committed during the time of exile. “They were beaten, jailed and teargassed yet their commitment did not wither” (Gandiya 8 April 2015). It is during this period that Mrs. Jessica Mandeya of Murewa was murdered at the height of the church squabbles. Mrs. Jessica Mandeya was a sub-deacon (the one who would lead non Holy Communion services in the absence of a priest). As such, the church keys were kept at her house. She was threatened several times for failing to release the keys to the members of the Norbert Kunonga church (Dzavo Interview 2015). One day, she was found dead early in the morning in her house having been murdered by unknown people, the murder was attributed to the problems that were obtaining in the church. This woman sacrificed her life and as a result she was killed because of her dedication but not much is said and remembered about her death.

2.5 Conclusion

The above explorations clearly reflect the importance of the mothers’ union in the church. They usually go out of their way in order to make things happen wherever they are involved. This is truly reflected in the above discussed works, activities and contributions that are done by the Mothers’ union at local churches, diocesan level, families and communities. However, after having explored the works and contributions in this chapter, the next chapter will try to answer the question; Are women unsung heroines? If they are unsung, what could be the reasons and if they are sung heroines, in what ways?

CHAPTER THREE: UNSUNG HEROINES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MOTHERS' UNION.

3 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher delineated on the works and contributions of the Mothers' Union in the diocese of Harare. He observed that the Mothers' Union plays a pivotal role in the day to day affairs of the diocese. The chapter has also provided the basis upon which this chapter is going to discuss since it has provided information about the work that the Mothers' Union is involved in and its contribution to the work of God in the diocese of Harare. However, this chapter is mainly about the reasons why women are unsung considering all the works and contributions that they have made and also evaluate these claims. In this chapter, the researcher will attempt to give reasons to explain why women are not celebrated. He endeavors to make use of this information to establish recommendations that can be used to formulate sound conclusions to the discussion at hand.

3.1 Reasons why women are not celebrated

There are several reasons that are going to be discussed namely; Cultural and religious and socio-economic:

3.1.1 CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS

Culture plays a very crucial role in the life of Africans. There is a place for men and a place for women in the African culture. The place of men is the public sphere whilst the place for women

is at home. African culture, however, is highly patriarchal. Patriarchy can be defined as a hierarchical system of domination whereby men dominate and rule over women (Haralambos & Holborn 2007:112). Generally, women in churches usually play a subservient role to men. This attitude stems from the traditional African idea that a good woman is expected to be subservient to her husband in the family and community. One has to understand that in the African culture the place of women is the kitchen. As such it is very unfortunate that when the missionaries came they also enforced this idea of the domestication of women as observed by E Schmidt (1992:145) that “the Victorian ideal of virtuous wife, selfless mother and tidy, industrious, house keeper was the goal for which all African women should be taught to strive towards”. It is through this kind of socialization that women in the church suffer from. This is similar to the first century Jewish culture of honor and shame that stated that the honorable thing for a woman was to be at home rather than to be found in a public space which was doomed to be a shame.

Thus, in African Traditional Religion, women are supposed to be quiet even in matters that concern them. Bishop C Gandiya answering the question about what could be the reason for the unsung hero status of women, argued that; “one cannot run away from gender issues that from biblical times the very way which biblical writers wrote was all from a patriarchal stand point. We also never moved culturally, our culture is very similar to that of the Jews. So the place of women comes into play and so anything that has been done by a woman is not to be recognized to the same extent as something that has been done by a man and that’s what we inherited culturally. This is still why we do not ordain women. Personally, I think the arguments that people use, some of them have to do with our culture and we can easily jump to the conclusion that it is oppressive. We think we are being scriptural, yet it is a misunderstanding of the scriptures for instance that “*Women should keep silent in churches. For they are not permitted to*

...speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful to speak in church. (1Cor 14:³⁴⁻³⁵)” that actually contributes to them not being recognized”

These injustices are perpetrated on women and they suffer in silence in the name of culture and religion. This is most likely because, “Africans are notoriously religious’ as J, S Mbiti (1999) puts it. Thus, both African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity oppress women. In ATR women are supposed to be quiet even in matters that concern them. It is the duty of men to decide what women should do.

3.1.2 Socio-economic factors

This reason stems from the kind of socialization that the African girl is exposed to as she is growing M Haralambos and M Holborn (2007:98). They went on to outline how socialization in modern industrial societies shape the behavior of girls and boys from an early age. They argue that male and female children are exposed to diverse activities. For example, girls are particularly encouraged to become involved with domestic tasks. As girls and boys grow in the African context they are socialized differently. Girls are socialized or trained to become good mothers as they are growing up. As such, their place automatically becomes home where they are expected to be taking care of the children whilst boys are taught to be hunters and to provide for the family. This socialization obviously complicates the financial position of women as this obviously makes them to depend on the finances of their husbands. Mrs. Alice Munanairi in an interview argued that she overheard a certain man saying that they (men) are the ones who give women money to do whatever projects they do at church. She further argued that most of the time our husbands are the church wardens as such, whatever women do, men talk about it as if it

has been done by them (8 April 2015). In other words men claim glory for the things that they did not do. Haralambos and Holborn (2007:112) believed that paid employment remains a key structure in creating disadvantages for women.

3.1.3 Women as their own “enemy”

After having argued about all these other reasons, it is also paramount that this study draws people’s attention to one more important reason that might be the cause for women’s predicament. The assumption is that women might be the reason why they are not celebrated. This reason is coming from a background where women themselves have been fighting other women who would have been elevated to higher positions or those who may be aspiring to get into influential positions in Church, society and in politics. For instance, various affiliations of feminists such as liberal, radical and black feminists are themselves not in agreement in terms of their ideologies. As such, this section will look at what women in church and those in politics do against each other.

3.1.4 Women in Church

Considering that women outnumber men numerically in churches as argued by Chitando (2007:2), one expects women to dominate the positions that require being voted into that particular position. Particularly, positions such as Churchwarden which refers to a person (man or woman) having control or authority in the administration of the Church. *Acts of the Diocese of Harare CPCA, 1975*, states that “every churchwarden shall be a communicant member of the Vestry (council of representatives assembled to discuss parish or church business) of the ecclesiastical division (or church) above the age of 21years”. The provision is given that at every parish there shall be two wardens and two deputies. But that is not the case with women of these

days, as the majority of them seem not to be comfortable with having their female counterparts as their leaders. Men are most of the time churchwardens after they have been voted in by women who are the majority.

From an observation, it seems women want men to always dominate them and be led by them. For example, when issues about the ordination for women are raised or being discussed in the Anglican Diocese of Harare, the majority of women are against it, they are not comfortable about it. Speaking to one woman by the name Judith Ganyau a member of the mothers' union at the Cathedral in Harare, I asked her about her personal opinion about the ordination of women in the Anglican Church and she said: *“hazviite zviye, mukadzi kuita misa? Zvimwe hazvingoite zvenyu father, isu takango jaira vafundisi vechirume kwete vechidzimai uye, zvakangonaka mamiriro azvakaita”*. (it's not proper, a woman leading Mass (Holy Communion)? Some things are not just possible father, we are used to male priests not female priests, and we are content with the status quo) (2 April 2015). Her opinion clearly explains how some women in Church have been responsible for their not being celebrated. In August 2008, at Arundel School in Mount Pleasant where the Anglican diocese of Harare Synod was held, the issue of ordaining women was raised by one clergyman, surprisingly, as the deliberations were going on, the majority of women who stood up to share their opinions about this issue were very much against it. This was an indication that women are sometimes their own barriers.

3.1.5 Women in Politics

It is common knowledge that at one point Zimbabwe had one woman vice president. That was a great achievement in a country that is characterized by high patriarchal systems. She was the first

woman ever in this country since independence to become the second in command of the head of state and government. But what happened to that? She was removed from that position by fellow women. Fellow women got into some provincial tour campaigning for her removal from that position and now we are back to where we were before. As such, the country has two male vice presidents.

The News Day of 18 November 2014, under the headline *I have evidence against Mujuru*, shows how the former female vice president was toppled from the second most powerful position in the country by fellow women. In that newspaper, the first lady Grace Mugabe sensationally claimed that she had video and audio recordings where Vice-President Joyce Mujuru was captured speaking ill against the first family. This information was shared whilst addressing about one thousand college students and party youths at her Mazowe Children's Home. Grace Mugabe said she always wondered why Mugabe (the President) was not keen on kicking Mujuru out of office given the overwhelming evidence they had amassed against her (News Day 2014:2). This period has also seen the passing of votes of no confidence to the then Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Dr Olivia Muchena and several other members (men and women) of Zimbabwe African Nation Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). This study however is not concerned about what were the causes of those problems but it is worried about the way women were responsible for disempowering themselves thereby creating some more space for men to rule over them. These campaigns made women to lose the vice president seat they had gained by giving it back to men.

3.1.6 The failure of the church to address gender issues

The Anglican Diocese of Harare falls under the Church of Province of Central. The Church of the province of central Africa comprises of four countries which are Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia and Malawi. The head of the province is the Most Reverend Albert Chama who happens to be the Archbishop of the said province. The province is governed using the Canons (a constitution) in the canons there is a clear picture of gender insensitiveness. What are enshrined in the canons are patriarchal views which at the end of the day venerate men more than women. Furthermore diocese further has a constitution which guides it. The acts are crafted such that they are in line with the Canons; as such the Acts of the diocese of Harare resembles to a larger extent the Canons. Gender issues are not addressed. One cannot pin point a clause which talks about women emancipation in the Acts. This is where the church has failed or has further silenced women. In most cases the church has referred to scripture and doctrine when dealing with issues of gender. In those cases, the male counterparts will use this to silence women in church.

However, this study will not do justice if it fails to point out what the church has done so far as a way of celebrating and recognizing what the Mothers' Union has done in the Diocese of Harare. As such, the following section is going to look at efforts made by the church towards celebrating the works and contributions of women in the Church:

3.2 Women as sung heroines

This section will show the efforts being made by the church as ways of celebrating the women, their works and contributions in the Anglican Diocese of Harare:

3.2.1 Women as churchwardens

Although one may argue that women are unsung heroines in the Anglican Diocese of Harare, it can also be noted that women have been also given a chance to be Churchwardens in Churches as a way of recognizing and celebrating women and their works. As defined earlier in this chapter, becoming a churchwarden is the highest position any lay person (man/woman) in the Anglican Church can achieve. Bishop C Gandiya highlighted that the diocesan leadership has made strides so far in making sure that women are recognized and celebrated in the church. For instance, the Bishop informed that for many years, women did not have voting rights at Synod (the highest decision making board of the diocese). As such, they would come as observers whilst men made decisions on their behalf. From this background one may argue that the church is moving in the right direction considering that even women can now become churchwardens and councilors thereby also making decisions as well as leading them.

Speaking to Reverend Kudakwashe Madzime, the priest in charge of St Augustine's Anglican Church in Kuwadzana Extension, Harare, he argued that women are being celebrated although not enough. In his view for women to become churchwardens it's a great recognition. He further indicated that this year in his church both the two churchwardens are women and out of 18 members of his council, 11 of them are women. Thus, for him becoming churchwardens for women is a sign that the church is moving towards the right direction in as far as the celebration of women, their works and contributions are concerned, especially considering the patriarchal systems of male dominance that characterizes the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Harare (Madzime interview 7/4/15). Mrs. F Gandiya, the Bishop's wife, also commented that, being a woman churchwarden is an affirming position for women because it proves that women have a recognized input in the church.

3.2.2 Women as sub deacons

Generally a sub-deacon is a lay person who assists the priest in conducting Holy Communion or Mass. These sub deacons are responsible for saying or leading morning as well as evening prayers in the absence of the priest and sometimes lead funeral services if there is any. In most of the churches, this is one area that is dominated by women. In rural areas where priests visit at least once a month, these women run the churches on behalf of the priest. This is something that goes contrary to the long held tradition that women should learn in silence. Reverend Maxwell Mangwende of St James' Anglican Mabvuku stated that generally, women tend to be committed in doing this job, they enjoy being in the sanctuary and they are always available even when mass is said during the mid-week (3 April 2015). By assuming such leadership roles, this shows that at least there are some areas where women are also being celebrated through the assumption of such leadership positions.

3.2.3 Women at diocesan leadership hierarchy

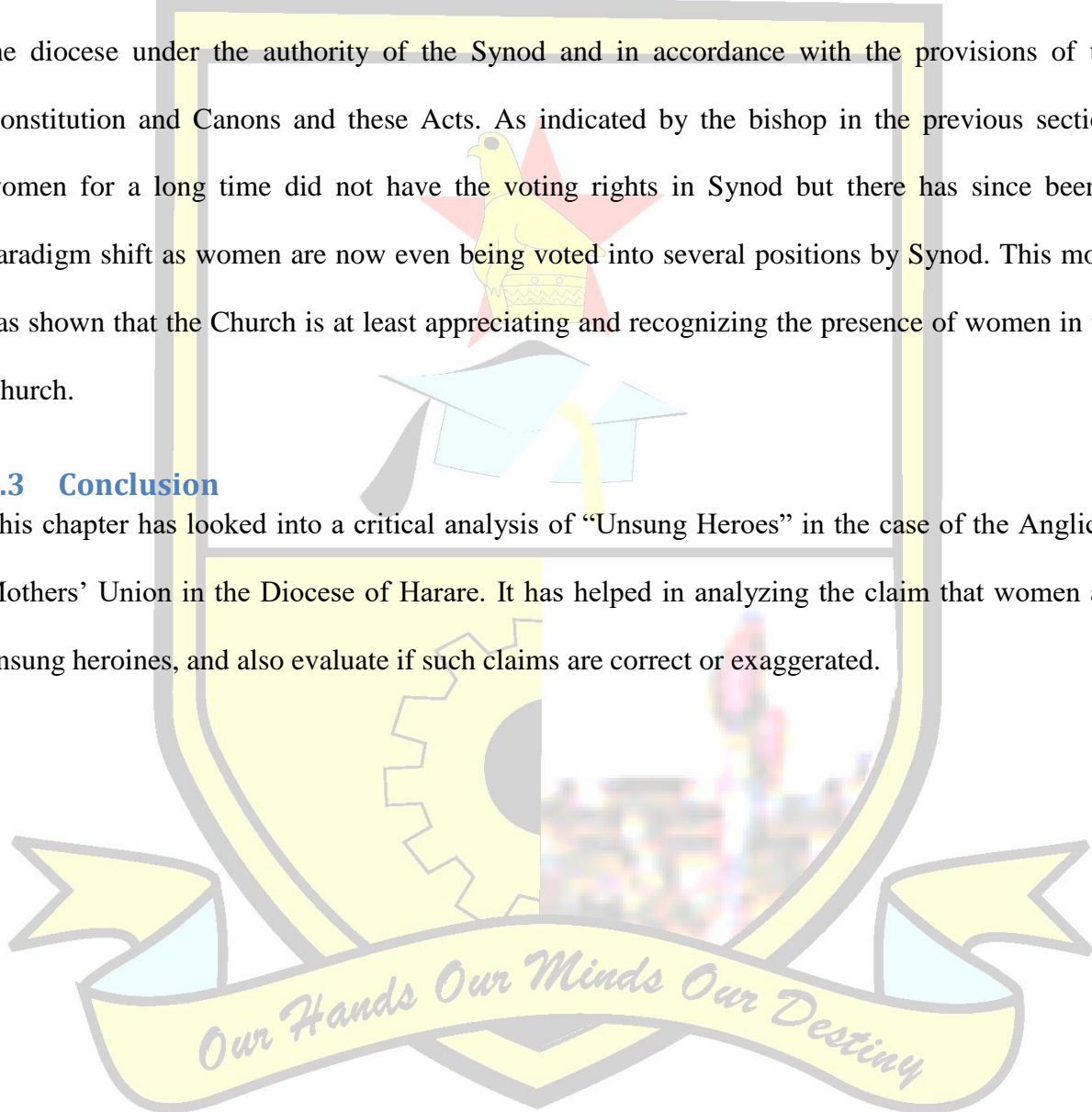
Women have also been able to rise onto other positions of authority and influence at the Diocesan level. For instance, women have managed to be part of the Diocesan Trustees. According to the Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa (ACPCA) (1969:15);

Every Diocesan Synod, or Diocesan Trustees Board appointed by such Synod, shall be a Body authorized to exercise on behalf of the Provincial Synod, the powers designated in these Articles of the Constitution, and in the several Clauses of Schedule C annexed thereto, in respect to property given or acquired for the benefit of the Church in that Diocese.

The Chairperson of the Trustees Board is the bishop and currently the one deputizing the bishop is a woman Mrs. Fides Mazhawidza. Women have also been voted as members of the Standing Committee which is also referred to as Synod in Session. The Acts of the Diocese of Mashonaland (1974:27) state that the Standing committee shall carry out the administration of the diocese under the authority of the Synod and in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Canons and these Acts. As indicated by the bishop in the previous section, women for a long time did not have the voting rights in Synod but there has since been a paradigm shift as women are now even being voted into several positions by Synod. This move has shown that the Church is at least appreciating and recognizing the presence of women in the Church.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has looked into a critical analysis of “Unsung Heroes” in the case of the Anglican Mothers’ Union in the Diocese of Harare. It has helped in analyzing the claim that women are unsung heroines, and also evaluate if such claims are correct or exaggerated.



CHAPTER FOUR: LUKE 8 AS A STANDARD TO REHABILITATE THE IMAGE AND PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH.

4 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed several reasons why women are not celebrated. This chapter will focus on the position of women in the first century as this is the bedrock of the research. The chapter also seeks to discuss their religious, cultural and socio economic positions that shaped the norms of the society. The focus shall also be put on the Gospel of Luke whose interest on women brings on a new twist on the way women are viewed. The conclusion will then summarize the findings so as to understand the reasons of the wonderful exploits that are not esteemed and celebrated. Since this research falls in the area of women in religion, it shall not delve in the date and authorship debates. As such, the following section will go straight into gender and gender roles in the first century Palestine.

4.1 Gender and gender roles

According to Malina (1981:51) the Mediterranean worldview was such that almost everything in society was defined by gender. Not only were people recognised as male and female, but also were the categories of space, time, nature and God. Both children and their parents were evaluated in terms of gender. And since this was a patriarchal society, the father represented the head of the house and acted on behalf of the family in public sphere. On the other hand, Malina (1981:51) further says that, anything that related to the internal functions of the family was female in nature and therefore the mother's domain and this included things like the kitchen, non-jural relations, milk goats and other household animals, chicken, unmarried daughters, and resident daughters in law, and boys until they were old enough to be with the father.

One has to understand that in this kind of society women had their own roles, but Osiek and Balch (1997:40) argued that according to feminist scholars from the 20th and 21st centuries, women were essentially viewed as “other” and, as a result, they were degraded and subordinated to some degree (Penner 2011:51). Nevertheless, this might not have been how men viewed women or how women viewed themselves within the first century. As Osiek and Balch in (Penner 2011:51) state with regard to Palestine, that it is impossible to refute the fact that, “women constitute approximately half of all evenly distributed status groups and classes, and because the intimate interaction of males and females is essential for the continuation of the group, women cannot be seen by males as totally other (Penner 2011:51).” However, according to this society’s understanding of gender and gender roles “equality” is irrelevant; only a man of comparable social status and education could be the equal of another man, and likewise for women (Osiek and Balch 1997:41) as quoted by Kimberly Penner (2011:51). As such, the above argument shall lead to the roles and treatment of women in first century Palestine.

4.2 Roles and treatment of women in first century Palestine

One needs to understand that it is not easy to get information about women in the first century Palestine since it was a society which was highly patriarchal. However, it is clear that gender roles within first century Judaism were affected both by the larger Greco-Roman cultural forces as well as Jewish religious traditions. As such, this section will look at the roles and treatment of women in Palestine.

Our Hands Our Minds Our Destiny

4.3 Women of Luke 8:1-3

This chapter of the Gospel presents us with the women in question and their exploits. K Penner (2011:50) argues that the purpose in each of the following sections regarding the individually named women in Luke 8:2-3 is to unravel as much information as possible about their historical characters and their roles within the narrative of Luke's gospel. It is particularly important to keep social location in mind in order to understand both what it meant for the women to leave their homes to follow Jesus and also, what possible sources of economic means they had out of which they provided for Jesus and the Twelve (Penner 2011:50).

4.3.1 Women as economic providers

The positioning of Luke 8:1-3 is such that it introduces women as economic providers for Jesus and the Twelve early disciples in Jesus' ministry, prior to the sending of the Twelve and the Seventy-Two. In their role as providers the women modeled the kind of faith and hospitality that the Twelve and the Seventy-Two disciples of Jesus are instructed to rely on when they enter a town with no provisions of their own (9:3-4; 10:4-7) (Penner 2011:55). In this case, Jesus sends the twelve disciples and Seventy-Two disciples to evangelize and instructs them not to carry anything with them be it money or food, hoping to depend on those people whom they were going to evangelize to provide for their provision. It is through such people as the women we find in Luke 8:1-3 (Mary, Susanna and Joana) that the Jesus' ministry was successful. The women are thus recognized as important supporters of Jesus' ministry at a time when this does not always come easily for example Luke 4:29 say *"And rose up and thrust him out of the city and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him*

headlong and Luke 9:5 which also says *and whosoever will not receive you when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them*). K Penner (2011:50) further argues that this kind of support system is also modeled in the book of Acts in which traveling apostles depended on the hospitality of other believers wherever they go (e.g. Acts 13; 16; 17). The work of the Kingdom thus depends on the complete trust of some on God's provision for their needs, and the hospitality of others to meet those needs. Each role presents its own challenges and models faith in Jesus the Messiah (Penner 2011:50).

4.3.2 Women as disciples

The servant hood that the women in 8:1-3 display through their ongoing financial contributions should thus be viewed as an act of discipleship, despite the fact that the women are not explicitly called "disciples." The women in Luke 8:2-3 Mary Magdalene, Susanna and Joanna are models of Jesus' teaching in this passage. Firstly, they acted counter-culturally as wealthy patrons or benefactors who gave of their resources, but do not expect something in return. There is no simultaneous exchange of resources (Penner 2011:64). Secondly, unlike a relationship between patrons and clients, which is unequal, the women did not view themselves as senior or better to Jesus and the Twelve but as those people wanted to support the work of Jesus and his disciples. Thirdly, the first two points denote that honor is no longer the result of self-reliance, social standing, or wealth for the women. But rather, servant hood is considered honorable and a characteristic of discipleship, as is indicated by the fact that these women are remembered by name for the service that they provide for Jesus and the Twelve. Penner (2011:55) also argues that there is no reason why Joanna could not have supported Jesus' ministry and his disciples out of her means as a first century patron would have. Yet in 8:1-3 the role of patron is revised. The women, Joanna for certain, act as economic providers for Jesus and the Twelve, but do not

propagate a relationship between un-equals for the purpose of self-glorification (Penner 2011:55).

4.3.3 Women as travelers with Jesus and their sacrifice

In Luke's narrative, women are also presented as travelers with Jesus. There are among the disciples who travelled with Jesus "through every city and village" as he moved around proclaiming and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1) (Penner 2011:67). As Marshall (1978:315) states, "there can be no doubt that the motif in Luke 8:2 is historical, for it is firmly fixed in the tradition (Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49, 55; 24:6, 10; Acts 1:14)." What is important about these women travelling with Jesus and his disciples is about the sacrifice that they made. They left their families and followed Jesus as he moved around preaching. According to the first century Mediterranean world view it was considered shameful for women to be found in public spheres as it was considered the space for men. It was even more shameful for married women to be found moving around with men. Thus, an individual's identity and honor were tied to that of the group, specifically to his or her kin says Esler (1995:142). Of course it is also of paramount importance to note that the honorable thing to do for women was to confine themselves in the homes rather than being found in public areas and also moving with men. As such, for married women such as Joana the wife of Chuza "braved public condemnation by leaving their husbands to follow Jesus (Sim 1989:52)."

However, it is with this background that one should understand the sacrifices that these women made leaving their households thereby exposing themselves to shame. More so, the sacrifice of women clearly exemplifies the kind of disciple that Jesus taught. In Luke 14:26 and 18:29-30 Jesus states that in order to be one of his followers a person must hate his own father and mother

and wife and children and brother and sisters and even his own life. Although Luke excludes “husbands” as those persons whom a disciple must leave in order to follow Jesus, women travelling with Jesus really show how important and committed women were in Jesus’ ministry. The point about women as travelers stresses the sacrifice and commitment which we continue to witness even today in the Anglican Diocese of Harare’s Mothers’ Union.

4.4 Gender and gender roles

According to Malina (1981:51) the Mediterranean worldview was such that almost everything in society was defined by gender. Not only were people recognised as male and female, but also were the categories of space, time, nature and God. Both children and their parents were evaluated in terms of gender. And since this was a patriarchal society, the father represented the head of the house and acted on behalf of the family in the public sphere. On the other hand, Malina (1981:51) further says that, anything that related to the internal functions of the family was female in nature and therefore the mother’s domain and this included things like the kitchen, non-jural relations, milk goats and other household animals, chicken, unmarried daughters, and resident daughters in law, and boys until they were old enough to be with the father.

One has to understand that in this kind of society women had their own roles, but, Osiek and Balch (1997:40) argued that according to feminist scholars from the 20th and 21st centuries, women were essentially viewed as “other” and, as a result, they were degraded and subordinated to some degree (Penner 2011:51). Nevertheless, this might not have been how men viewed women or how women viewed themselves within the first century. As Osiek and Balch in (Penner 2011:51) state with regard to Palestine, that it is impossible to refute the fact that, “women constitute approximately half of all evenly distributed status groups and classes, and

because the intimate interaction of males and females is essential for the continuation of the group, women cannot be seen by males as totally other (Penner 2011:51).” However, according to this society’s understanding of gender and gender roles “equality” is irrelevant; only a man of comparable social status and education could be the equal of another man, and likewise for women (Osiek and Balch 1997:41) as quoted by Kimberly Penner (2011:51). As such, the above argument shall lead to the roles and treatment of women in first century Palestine.

4.5 Roles and treatment of women in first century Palestine

One needs to understand that it is not easy to get information about women in the first century Palestine since it was a society which was highly patriarchal. However, it is clear that gender roles within first century Judaism were affected both by the larger Greco-Roman cultural forces as well as Jewish religious traditions. As such, this section will look at the roles and treatment of women in Palestine.

4.5.1 Women as house keepers

Penner (2011: argues that the role of women in Jewish Palestine was primarily restricted to the household. Penner (2011:56) goes on to say that “the family was the exclusive sphere of influence for Jewish women in the first century A.D.” It is given that in the household a woman’s duties included those of, “grinding flour, baking bread, washing clothes, breast-feeding the children for eighteen to twenty-four months, making beds, working with wool, and washing her husband’s face, hands, and feet (Penner 2011:56).” It is further postulated that the number of duties a woman was required to perform depended on how wealthy she was or how many servants she had (Penner 2011:57). Thus, in the case of a woman being unmarried, Penner (2011:57) argues that she would then execute these roles within the home of her father, or likely another male relative.

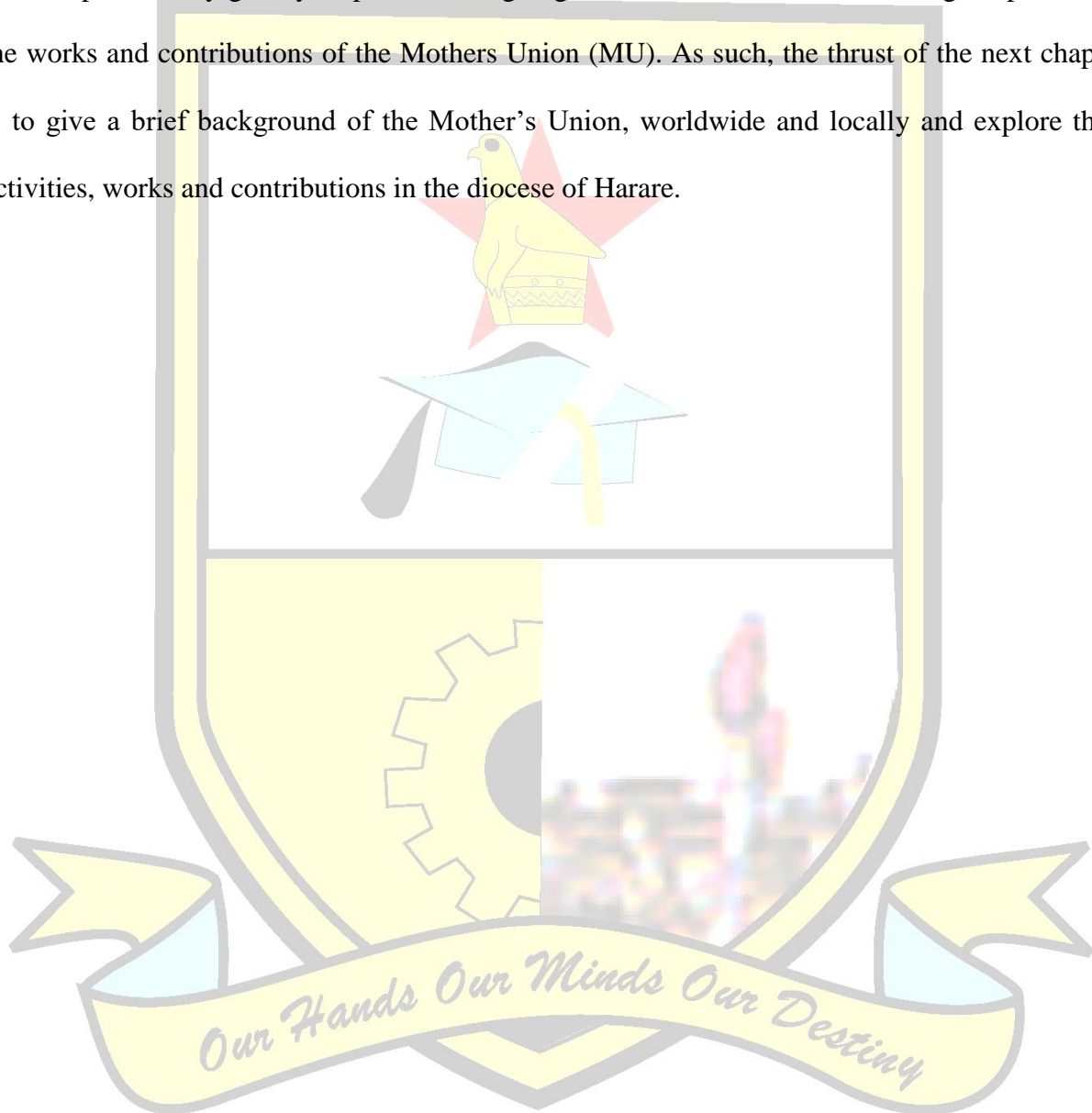
4.5.2 Women as income producers

Certain tasks that a woman performed within her house could become a profession for her to produce income. Proverbs 31:24 suggests that women worked outside the household to earn money, stating that a woman of noble character “*makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes*”. Tal Ilan (1996:187) points out that in rabbinic sources, rulings are made concerning women who sell garments, which they made from linen in Galilee. Interestingly, this notion controverts the rabbinical world view at that time since a woman selling garments publicly would have to come into contact with her customers, which was deemed not appropriate according to the Torah. The historical value of rabbinic sources for shedding light on this period of history has thus been questioned due to their gender bias. As a result, they function best as Tal Ilan (1996:186) uses them in her work on Jewish women living in Greco-Roman Palestine, which is primarily to identify the attitudes of men toward women in rabbinical documents, while at the same time acknowledging that they may not reflect accurately the experiences of women in the first century.

4.6 Conclusion

It is evident from the above deliberations that women play a very crucial role in Luke’s narrative. Thus, the various references to women throughout Luke’s gospel demonstrate Jesus’ concern to extend God’s mercy to women as well as to men and also Luke’s perceptivity to Jesus’ radical withdrawal from the social conventions of his time (Keck 1995:24). Luke’s depiction of Jesus’ relationship with the women in 8:1-3 illustrates this phenomenon that these women are significant members of Jesus’ community of followers. Utter mostly, they are also revered within the narrative as those people who receive the good news, grasp hold, and remain by Jesus’ side

as committed witnesses to the crucifixion, burial and resurrection. In this way, they continue to serve as role models for Luke's community of early Christians (Penner 2011:67). The above section discussed the works and contributions of Mary, Susanna and Joana, which will be used in next chapter as they greatly inspire what is going to be discussed in the following chapter about the works and contributions of the Mothers Union (MU). As such, the thrust of the next chapter is to give a brief background of the Mother's Union, worldwide and locally and explore their activities, works and contributions in the diocese of Harare.



CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5 Introduction

The previous chapter has dealt with women in first century Palestine which is the *sitz im leben* (life setting) of Luke 8:1-3. This was done by employing the historical method. It gave us a reflection on the treatment of women and their contributions in the ministry of Jesus and his disciples as well as in society. It is with that background that this chapter will come closer home as it seeks to give an analysis, recommendations and conclusion to the research, hoping this research will help those in the leadership of the Anglican diocese of Harare to do something so as to address the imbalances found in the church based on gender.

5.1 Analysis

There is evidence that the Anglican Diocese of Harare Mothers' Union is the back bone of the church, as they are involved in a lot of activities within the diocese ranging from, religious, social, as well as economic welfare of the church. It is public knowledge throughout the diocese that without these women the church would be in a difficult situation as was alluded to by Bishop Chad Gandiya. Like the women in Luke 8:1-3, who supported Jesus' ministry out of their own means, the Anglican Diocese of Harare Mothers' Union has done equally the same in helping the bishop and all clergy under him. The Mothers' Union has done enormously well in every aspect of the ministry of the church yet patriarchy and male dominance has killed the celebration of their works and contributions. It is very worrying that women continue to suffer at the hands of men. For this research, failing to recognize and celebrate the works and contributions of women is tantamount to oppression. Women are the cause why the churches have survived up to this point due to their commitment, sacrifice, works and contributions. This

research argues that for women to be churchwardens, sub deacons, standing committee and Synod members and to have voting rights in Synod it's not enough when women are still being denied the chance to be ordained as priests and deacons in the Anglican Diocese of Harare. Women as "sung heroines" entails removing all the bias, gender inequalities, prejudices and patriarchy in the church so that there is equality and equal opportunities to all in the Anglican Diocese of Harare.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The Church must push seriously to consider women for female ordination since it is a grey area that the Anglican Diocese of Harare is lagging behind.
2. The Church must shun the sociological barriers that limit the celebration of women to by empowering them to stand up for leadership positions within the Church without fear, prejudice or bias.
3. The Church must also appreciate the works of women in the day to day running of church activities and to stand up as the voice of women in matters related to gender violence. As such, both parties men and women must join hands and sing a song that celebrate the works and contributions that the women are doing in families, church and society. Women must learn to sing a song for themselves than to wait for others to sing it for them.
4. The Church must also learn to talk about women before they are victims. For example, the habit has been that of talking about women after they have already suffered from rape, domestic violence and other issues that affect women. This study calls for the celebration of women for what they do and the contributions they make without prejudice, bias, fear or favor.

5. The church must enshrine in the Acts of the diocese an act which stipulates that in every ecclesiastical division there must be a woman churchwarden, because currently those women elected as churchwardens are as a result of a gender sensitive church not that it is written anywhere.

5.3 Conclusion

The first chapter dealt with the introduction, area of investigation, statement of the problem and justifying the reasons for undertaking this study. It also presented the aims and objectives of the study, and the methods and the type of literature that were consulted in order to come up with the desired result. The second chapter explored the works and contributions of women in 1st century Palestine which is the *sits im leben* (life setting) of the gospel according to St Luke. The chapter informs us about how women (Mary Magdalene, Joana and Sussana) in that particular context were themselves involved in helping Jesus' ministry and his disciples out of their own means. It informs us also how courageous these women were considering the patriarchal system that they were living in, as it was considered shame for women to be found walking around with men. But these women these women managed to break the cultural barriers that prohibited them from getting into public spheres that were reserved only for men thereby challenging the existing systems, sacrificing their honor by subjecting themselves to shameful and found their way to help Jesus' ministry out of their own means.

The second chapter explored the activities, works and contributions of the Mothers' Union in the Anglican Diocese of Harare. It presented the background of how the Mothers Union was formed and its founder. It also outlined information about various activities, works and contributions that the Mothers' Union is involved in throughout the Diocese of Harare. Like women in Luke 8:1-3,

it is very clear that they are the back bone of the church, hence without their involvement the church would die a natural death.

The third chapter gave a critical analysis of the “Unsung Heroines” of the Mothers’ Union. This chapter investigated the reasons why women are unsung and also looked at ways the church has employed as a measure in celebrating and recognizing their works and contributions in the Church. For instance, women becoming Churchwardens and sub deacons

After exploring the cultural background of women in first century Palestine in the fourth chapter the following are the discoveries: Women have always played a pivotal role in the ministry of Jesus exemplified by monetary support and material support, moral and their presence as disciples. This can spell out that their presence and support impacted Jesus’ ministry and probably without them his ministry would not have flourished that much. They have also immensely contributed to the life of the church and it’s up keep


In conclusion, in many traditional African societies, the reason for women not to be celebrated is sociological. Hence, in this 21st century, the church can shoulder the responsibility of elevating women to higher positions and take the central role while placing the needs of women first. From the reading of Luke 8:1-3, it is clear that the writer is trying to elevate the status of women to be custodians of love, peace and harmony in the church and society.

Our Hands Our Minds Our Destiny

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