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FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THE RISE AND PHENOMENAL GROWTH OF SAMUEL MUTENDI'S

ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE SHANGWE AREA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Mberengwa Norman (R125603H) solemnly, declare that this study is a result of my own. To the best of my knowledge this paper has never been issued to any university or published for any degree program at any institution. All materials used in the research are acknowledged and cited in the study reference appendices.

Signature.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife Sibusisiwe ,my parents Mr. and Mrs. Mberengwa and my future child, Tanaka. I also dedicate it to the ZCC congregation at Defe and to all *Shangwe* and the *Madheruka* people in Gokwe.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADRA Adventist Development Relief Agency.

AIC African Initiated/Instituted/Indigenous/Instituted / International churches.

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

ATR African Traditional Religion.

DRC Dutch Reformed Church.

HIV Human Immune Virus.

SDA Seventh-Day Adventist.

ZCC Zion Christian Church.

ABSTRACT

The research is grounded on an academic exploration of the rise and phenomenal growth of Samuel Mutendi's Zion Christian Church in the Shangwe area. The research was stimulated by the puzzling rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC which has led to the decline of mainline churches; a situation that has led to speculations that the ZCC is using magic charms to get converts. The research examines the factors which contributed to the rise of ZCC in the Shangwe area. A typology which was sought to clarify the factors dichotomized the factors into political, psychological, pneumatological, economic, cosmological, numinological, organizational, liturgical, and sociological dimensions. The background of the area under study was explored at great length.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCING THE STUDY.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The research is grounded on the rise and phenomenal growth of Samuel Mutendi's Zion Christian Church in the Shangwe area. The Shangwe area is a remote area that is found in the North-Western part of Zimbabwe in Gokwe District. Gokwe District is found in the Midlands province. The name "Shangwe" is no longer commonly used to refer to this area since after the advent of the *Madheruka* people and white settlers, the Shangwe area became part of Gokwe District. The Shangwe area is important in the history of the Zion Christian Church because it became a refuge for Samuel Mutendi after his expulsion from Masvingo by the Rhodesian colonial administrators, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Duma Chiefs. Another reason why the Shangwe area is important to the ZCC is the establishment of the ZCC shrine at Defe –Dopota where their founder, Samuel Mutendi was laid to rest.

From an axiological point of view, religion is humanity's inherent and inescapable vocation. This vocation is not an ontological possibility, but a historical reality. Despite the fact that religion is intrinsic in human life, it is sometimes viewed with suspicion. This is the problem that the ZCC have faced in the Shangwe area.

The rise and phenomenal growth of the ZCC in the Shangwe area is paradoxical; a mind-boggling phenomenon. The growth of ZCC is controversial because some members of both the Pentecostal and mainline churches have questioned this rapid rise of ZCC to the extent of accusing ZCC for using magic to allure converts. Chinanga(2010) quotes one of the Pentecostal Church leaders claiming that the growth of the ZCC is attributed to the magic rod, "*mapumhangozi*" which Samuel Mutendi was given by Engenas Legkanyane while Mutendi was a labour migrant and a member of Legkanyane's Zionist Church in South Africa. The Pentecostal leader goes on saying that this rod is responsible for the miracles performed in ZCC thus leading to the growth of the church.

In some cases, it has been claimed that the ZCC uses water that has been used to wash the body of Samuel Mutendi which is believed to have been embalmed and put under safe custody at the ZCC shrine at Defe-Dopota.

While not undermining the fact that several scholars have written much on ZCC and African Initiated Churches, it must be made clear that no research has been carried specifically on the rise of ZCC in the Shangwe area. However despite this view, their researches will be useful in this thesis. Daneel (1970) postulates that Samuel Mutendi Zionist Church has its headquarters in Bikita Reserve. By the time of Daneel's research, the church constituted a membership of about ten thousand people across Rhodesia. Daneel (1970) argues that the Zion Christian Church recruited its members mainly due to its healing activities.

Chitando(2014) traces the emergency and growth of the Zion Christian Church to the power of the Holy Spirit right from the time when Bishop Samuel Mutendi first launched the church at Gumunyu in Bikita. Chitando(2014) argues that when Samuel Mutendi delivered his sermon which was based on Luke chapter 3, many people were filled with 'awe and reverence.'

Daneel (1987) sheds light on the growth of ZCC by stating that Mutendi was viewed as a Christ-like figure and because of that view, he acquired many followers who even expected Mutendi to resurrect after death, just as Jesus did.

Various views have been postulated concerning the growth of the Zion Christian Church in Zimbabwe, but no hypothesis can satisfactorily explain the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area. It is from such an observation that the researcher has decided to embark on a research on the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area.

1.1 STAMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The growth and development of the Zion Christian Church among the Shangwe people is so puzzling that the majority of mainline churches have been left with more questions than answers. Despite all the efforts made by mainline churches demonizing ZCC, it is more surprising that the ZCC has increased in its membership while in contrast mainline churches are declining. The research therefore seeks to find out factors that have led to the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC and the reasons why mainline churches have declined in the Shangwe area.

1.3 AIM

The aim of this research is to explore the rise and the phenomenal growth of Mutendi's ZCC and the decline of mainline churches in the Shangwe area .

1.4 OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the Shangwe political system, their ways of survival and the cosmological structure.
- 2 To trace the rise, development and the reasons for the rapid phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area.
- 3 To discuss the reasons for the decline of mainline churches. .

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The researcher shall use the phenomenological and comparative approaches in this research. The Phenomenological method is essential in the study of religions hence it shall be used in examining the Zion Christian Church and mainline churches. The comparative approach will be essential in comparing various methods of evangelisation between ZCC and mainline churches in the Shangwe area.

1.5.1 Phenomenological approach.

Phenomenological approach aims to explain the religious phenomena from the perspective of the religion itself. It is based on the premise that religion must manifest itself. Cox (2006.) traces phenomenology of religion to the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) Phenomenology of religion involves *epoche*, empathetic interpolation and the eidetic intuition. The term *epoche* was used by Husserl to mean suspension of all judgments associated with what he called the natural attitude towards other things or phenomena. It seeks to uncover phenomena in an objective manner. This method is important in the study of religions because it suspends bias that a researcher may have and reduces the problems that may be caused by pre-conceived ideas. However the method is difficult to apply since it difficult to suspend value judgement and it is subjected to reductionism.

1.5.2 Comparative approach

Since phenomenological approach cannot operate alone, the researcher will also use a comparative approach in comparing ZCC and mainline churches. The comparative method is important because it tries to give a balanced view on the reasons behind the success of ZCC and the failure of mainline churches. However, just like the phenomenological

approach, the comparative approach is not free from bias because it is difficult to give a balanced view during the process of comparing.

1.5.3 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher will use various research instruments in data collection. Questionnaires and interviews shall be employed in data collection, though to some extent observations of the phenomena may be used during participatory research.

1.5.3.1 Questionnaires

The researcher shall use questionnaires because the method is convenient to the respondents and efficient in time saving. Simple questions shall be distributed in vernacular language for easy understanding. Borg and Gall (1989) state that questionnaires give respondents freedom to answer truthfully without the influence of the researcher.

1.5.3.2 Structured Interviews

Members and leaders from both ZCC and mainline churches shall be interviewed using structured interviews to gather information. Some members of the Shangwe people shall also be asked about the Shangwe cosmology and their beliefs and practices. Interviews shall be done face to face in order to build a relationship trust with the respondents.

1.5.3.3 Observations

The researcher will also use participatory observations to gather information. This means that the researcher shall participate in some of the religious services and practices of ZCC and some mainline churches

1.6.5 Sampling techniques

Purposive sampling is going to be used in selecting respondents. Purposive sampling involves hand-picking of subjects on the basis of specific characteristics. This method is effective since it ensures a balance of group size when multiple groups are to be selected. However, the major challenge of this method is that samples are not easily defensible as being representative of populations due to potential subjectivity of the researcher.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This research is essential because it brings new ideas since no research on the success of ZCC and the failure of mainline churches in the Shangwe area has been done so far.

Moreover, the research will provide accurate information since the researcher hails from the same area where the research is going to be undertaken, therefore the researcher has fingertip knowledge of the area. The research will help academics at local and international level to have feasible facts when analysing religious matters. It will help mainline churches to adopt some strategies of recruiting members that are used in the ZCC.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The researcher is aware that some scholars like Daneel have undertaken researches on Zionism and that some researches have been carried on the Shangwe people. Daneel (1970) traces the role of faith healing in ZCC. However, Daneel left a gap by not highlighting other factors leading to the growth of ZCC. Nyambara (2002) outlines the clash of the Madheruka and the Shangwe people, but his work did not focus on the ZCC, therefore the researcher seeks to fill the gap left by Nyambara. Ngara (2013) also explore the Shangwe mythology explores the Shangwe mythology in connection to the Shangwe spirit medium and rainmaker, *Nevana*. However, Ngara's thesis did not touch anything on the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area.

Moreover, most scholars concentrated on the rise of African Initiated Churches and paid no attention to the effect of this rise on mainline churches therefore the research is justified in that it fills this gap by addressing both the rise of ZCC and the decline of mainline churches in the Shangwe area.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

The research shall make use of the work by early scholars but will bring some new insights to the study of Zion Christian Church. Sundkler(1961) in his study of AICs in South Africa identified two types of churches; Ethiopian and Zionist Churches. Sundkler (1961) traces the rise of Zionist Churches to the influence of healing and emotionalism in religious expressions.

The rise of the ZCC, like any other AIC or New Religious Movement can be explained in terms of deprivation. Glock (1964) outlines a pscho-motivational theory which highlights that deprivation is the cause of New Religious Movements. This model states that deprivation is a necessary condition for the rise of any movement, whether secular or religious. This will help the researcher in examining the extent to which deprivation has led to the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area.

Moerman(1979) identifies ‘symbolic healing’ as an essential element in African worldview. He postulates that Western medicine does not offer holistic healing since it does not heal both the mind and body . In contrast, Africans’ understanding of human being is less dualistic. Africans have the notion of an interaction between the body and mind. This view shall help the researcher in analysing the role of healing in ZCC.

Jules-Rosette (1987) advocates that New Religious Movements crystallises around a single figure who is regarded as a New Messiah. Daneel (1987) supports this view by stating that Mutendi was viewed as a Christ –like figure and because of that view, he acquired many followers who even expected Mutendi to resurrect after his death, just as Jesus did. This shall help the researcher to examine the extent to which this view helped in the growth of ZCC.

Jose Antunes da Silva(1992) highlights that AICs leaders brainwash the people to get converts. Brainwashing theory shall be assessed if it has contributed to the success of ZCC among the Shangwe people.

Allan Anderson(2003) traces the role of the Holy Spirit in AICs. He highlights that in African worldview, unlike in Western cosmology, the dichotomy between physical and spiritual is untenable. Chitando(2014) supports the importance of the Holy Spirit in the growth of AICs by tracing the emergency and growth of Zion Christian Church to the power of the Holy Spirit right from the time when Bishop Samuel Mutendi first launched the church at Gumunyu in Bikita. Chitando(2014) argues that as Samuel Mutendi delivered his sermon which was based on Luke chapter 3, many people were filled with ‘awe and reverence.’ The role of the Holy Spirit in ZCC shall be explored from this background.

A few researches about the Shangwe people have been carried out. These researches will help the researcher in outlining the Shangwe identity. Nyambara (2002) discusses the clash of the *Madheruka* and Shangwe on ideologies during the early settlement of the Madheruka people in the Shangwe area. Nyambara’s work shall be used in highlighting the background of the Shangwe people .

Ngara (2013) explores the Shangwe mythology in connection with Nevana , the Shangwe spirit medium and rain-maker. Ngara’s work shall be used in identifying Shangwe mythology and Shangwe sacred places. This information shall be used in exploring the Shangwe cosmology.

Maravanyika (2012) adumbrates the history of the Shangwe people and their relations with the Madheruka from the time of their clash around 1960s. This work shall be used in discussing the Shangwe identity and their social way of life.

All this literature together with some which have not been mentioned shall form the foundational base of the researcher's thesis and will provide guiding principles throughout the course of the research.

CHAPTER TWO :

Shangwe way of life

2.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to discuss the background of the people under study. The etymology and meaning of new terms such as *Shangwe* and *Madheruka* and the background of the Shangwe people in terms of political, social and cosmological spheres shall be well elucidated. This chapter ends with a summary of issues discussed.

2.1.0 The etymology and meaning of the terms *Shangwe* and *Madheruka*

Tondori .R(Interview,21 January 2015) notes that the terms *Shangwe* and *Madheruka* came to light during the first clash of the two social groups of people around the 1960s. The first group consisted of the original inhabitants of Gokwe area while the other group was made up of some ethnic group of immigrants. Nyambara(2002) highlights that the *Shangwe* people constituted the group of original inhabitants of Gokwe area while the *Madheruka* people constituted the ethnic group.

Originally, Gokwe was known as the Shangwe area (Mai Penyeni; interview, 21 January 2015). From the Shangwe oral tradition, the term *Shangwe* was derived from a mountain. However, according to Nyambara(2002) the term Shangwe was used by the Madheruka immigrants to refer to the state of primitivism and backwardness of the original inhabitants of Gokwe. The Shangwe people themselves deny this negative meaning attached to the term *Shangwe*. They argue that since the term *Shangwe* was derived from a mountain, it therefore refers to a place rather than the state of people.

The original inhabitant of Gokwe area is called *Mushangwe*(singular) and *Mashangwe* (plural) . The term *Shangwe* is also found in the Swahili language referring to joy. It is not clear whether this term Shangwe was derived from the Swahili language. Another important point to take note of is that the Shangwe and the Korekore dialects share some similar linguistic terms. Both dialects use the term *kudzimba* referring to pain. They both

pronounce the term *nezuro* (yesterday) as *nozuro*. It is not clear whether there is any link between the Shangwe and the Korerekore. However, Beach(1994) asserts that the Shangwe, like any other Shona clans came from Guruuswa and they established a *Shava* (eland totem) confederacy which was led by the paramount chief Chireya.

2.1.1 The meaning of the term *Madheruka*

Maravanyika (2012) highlights that *Madheruka* is a term first used to refer to all migrants who came to Gokwe from various areas around the 1960s. Various subtitles have also been given to the *Madheruka* people depending on their place of origin. Maravanyika(2012) notes that the *Madheruka* people came from various areas like Mberengwa, Gutu, Bikita, Mwenezi Churumhanzu and many other areas. Some of the *Madheruka* people are called *MaRhodesdale* referring to their place of origin which was Rhodesdale Eastate. Some of the *Madheruka* people first settled in Kana and later moved to areas like Nemangwe. Because of that history, they are called *MaKana*. Those who came from Shurugwi are called *MaShurugwi* or *MaSelukwe*. Generally, *Madheruka* is an overall term that encompasses all the non Shangwe people despite their place of origin.

From Dzikamunhenga K (interview ;26 January 2016) the term *Madheruka* comes from the Shangwe verb *kudheruka* meaning lose moral standards. Therefore when this term was applied by the Shangwe people to refer to the new ethnic group that had arrived in their territory, it actually meant a people who had lost their traditions due to polarisation from other religious traditions, especially Westernisation and Christianity which the *Madheruka* had adopted in their various places of origin. However, the *Madheruka* people believe that it was a Shangwe way of mudslinging them partly due to the inferiority complex of the Shangwe people. What is clear is that the terms, *Madheruka* and *Shangwe* were abusively used after the first clash of these two groups of people and that they carry negative connotations.

2.2.0 Geography of the Shangwe area

The Shangwe area is a large area which lies on the North-western side of Zimbabwe in Gokwe District. Ford (1971) notes that Gokwe District is found in region four with an annual rainfall which ranges between 250-500mm at an average temperature of 40 degrees-

Celsius. Ford (1971) notes that Gokwe District is separated by Sanyathi River on the eastern side, the Nkayi District and Chemagora lands on the southern side. On the western side, the area is separated by Kariba District while on the northern side it is separated by Binga District. The rock outcrop is not homogeneous as it varies from clay soils around Chief Jahane area to a mixture of sand and clay soils in Nemangwe and loam soils under Sai chiefdom. As one draws near Kana area under chief Mkoka, the area becomes sandy. From Chief Njelele's area, the land is flat. The presence of various types of soils explains why Gokwe District is not much affected by droughts. Gokwe Growth point is situated on the Mafungautsi plateau and is linked to Kwekwe by the tarred road which was constructed by the Rio Tinto Company to link the Sengwa Coal Mines with the markets.

Maravanyika (2012) notes that Mafungautsi Plateau stretches from Gokwe centre in all directions. Great mountain ranges separate Chief Njelele and Nemangwe. Great Mountains include the Shangwe mountain, Chemakunguwo, Chematendera and Nyamuroro. Big rivers include Ume and Sessame Rivers. Ume is steep sided, rocky and cut through the great jagged terrain boulders that descend from the Mafungautsi Plateau. Sessame River is wide and sandy. It also begins its course from Mafungautsi Plateau. A large forest known as Lutope Forest stretches just a few kilometres from Gokwe centre to the southern direction. Since rainfall is low, many Shangwe people cultivate their crops along Ume and Sesame rivers.

2.2.1 Political system

The Shangwe political system is traditional and complex. The traditional leaders include the paramount chief, sub-chiefs, headmen and kraal heads. The paramount chief of the Shangwe people is Chief Chireya (Beach 1994). He is supported by subordinate chiefs who include Nemangwe, Njelele, Sai and Mkoka. Headmen are below sub-chiefs but have several kraal heads under their authority. These headmen include Goredema, Mashame, Makore, Gumunyu and many others. Below the panel of headmen is found kraal heads such as Nhongo, Nyamadzawo, Gumiremhete, Marariromba, Mahohoma and many others. Since Madheruka people are an ethnic group among the Shangwe people, they submit themselves to the political system which they found existing in the Shangwe area. The traditional rulers are the custodians of customs and must be given respect. The paramount chief deals with issues such as land disputes, divorce (*kurambana*), breaking customary laws, social relations and

makunakuna (incest). Minor disputes are solved at village levels by kraal heads. If kraal heads fail to solve such issues or if the concerned parties are not contented with the judgement, the matter is transferred to the headman

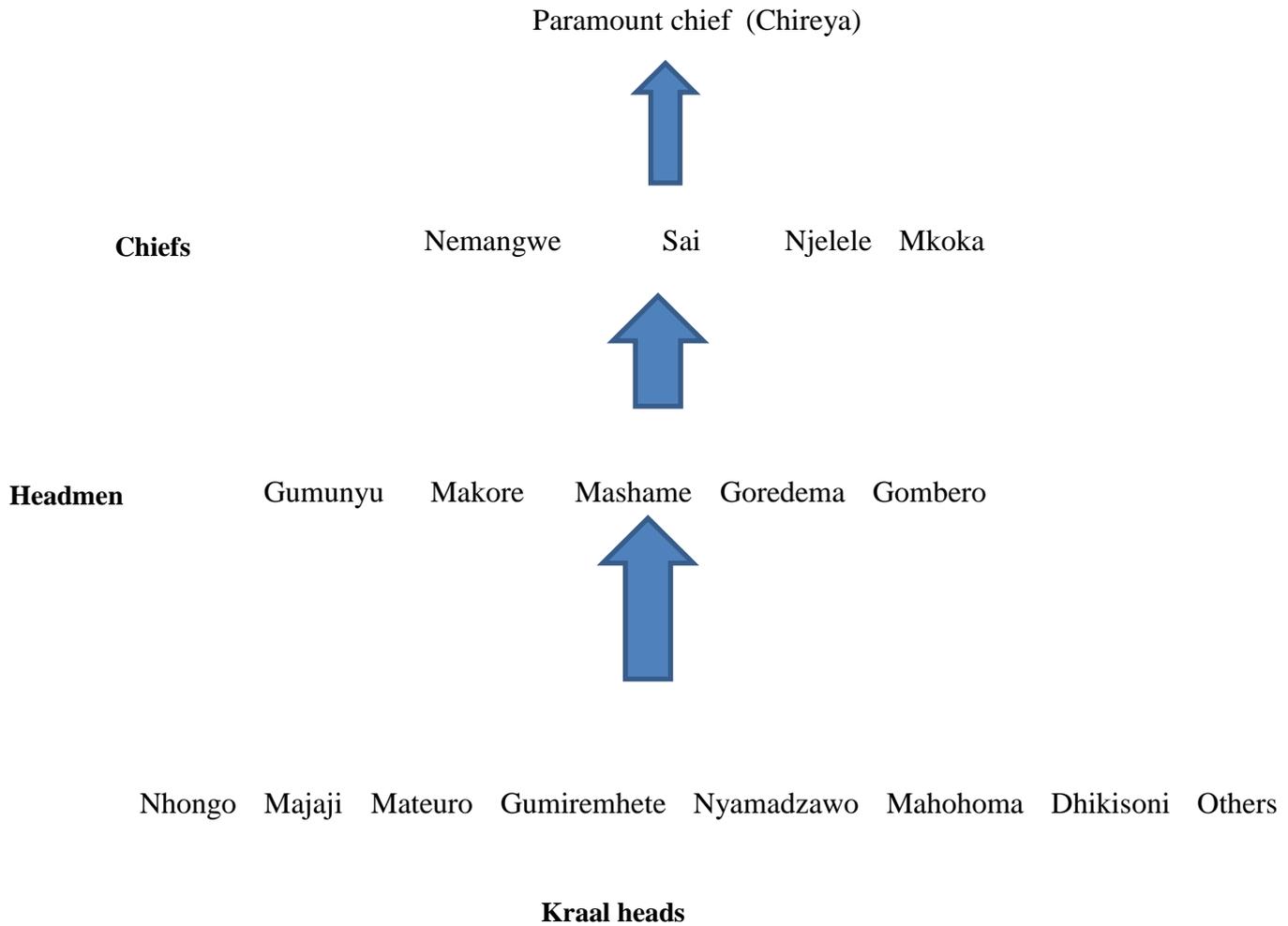


Fig 1. The structure of Shangwe traditional rulers in ascending order.

2.2.2 Shangwe survival strategies

Maravanyika (2012) notes that prior to 1953, the Shangwe people were not agriculturists and relied on hunting and gathering. Their food included honey, fish, wild animals and fruits. The Shangwe people have various survival strategies to cope up with the challenges caused by drought. However, despite the coming of the Madheruka people, the Shangwe continued with some of their traditional ways of survival. During times of drought the Shangwe people rely much on wild tubers (*manyenya*), wild pea-like plants (*svozvi*) and mushroom to augment the little they could have gained from the harvest (Turungwani; interview 26 January 2016). *Manyenya* is a wild tuber similar to sweet potatoes. The tubers are dug from the forests alongside Ume River. They are boiled and eaten. It is important to note that the search for *manyenya* is a task reserved for the elderly people who are able to dichotomize *manyenya* from other poisonous tubers which may lead to death if consumed. When we were young we used to mock the Shangwe people saying “*Mashangwe anodya manyenya*” (The Shangwe people eat *manyenya*) In response to the mockery, the Shangwe people would say “*Madheruka aneja mambaira*” (Madheruka eat sweet potatoes) Sweet potatoes were brought by the Madheruka people to the Shangwe area.

As time passed on, there was a close interaction between the two groups of people as the Shangwe people adopted the Madheruka foodstuffs while some of the Madheruka people adopted *manyenya* as part of their meal.

Svozvi is a wild pea-like plant which grows on dry surfaces. Usually the plant is approximately 30cm tall. The plant is drought resistant. It is evergreen even during a serious drought. The plant produces small green pea-like fruits which turn yellow when ripe. The fruits are called *svozvi* while the plant is called *musvozvi*. The Shangwe boil the *svozvi* for seven days on an open fire. Usually the *svozvi* are boiled near the river for two main reasons. The first reason is that they require a lot of water to remove the poisonous elements in them. The second reason being that they must be boiled away from children who may steal them before they are ready to be eaten and succumb to death.

2.2.3 Shangwe forms of marriage

The majority of Shangwe people are polygamous. Polygamy is mostly done by influential people such as the rich and traditional leaders. This does not mean that ordinary Shangwe people cannot practice polygamy. According to Mbiti (1967) polygamy is essential among African men because it is a way an African man may have many children from his many wives ; the more his children the more he will be remembered. Maravanyika(2012) notes that prior to 1953, the Shangwe people were polygamous and one man could have up to fifty children. The forms of marriage among the Shangwe people are mainly traditional. These include *kutizisa* (elopement) *kuzvarira* (child pledging) *kugara nhaka* (widow inheritance) and sometimes *kukumbira* (marriage through negotiations. The majority of the Shangwe people do not make white weddings as this is not part of their culture. Only a few Shangwe people who are adherents to mainline or Pentecostal churches may perform white weddings.

2.2.4. Education

UNESCO (2012) made a research in 49 countries and notes that school drop -out is increasing, noting that the higher rate is found among girls than boys. UNICEF (2011) postulates that financial constraints in most families is the barrier to education. However, the Shangwe people are not much exposed to education not because of financial constraints, but because the area is underdeveloped. There is no institution of higher education like a polytechnic college in the whole district of Gokwe. There are very few high schools among the Shangwe people and in some cases pupils walk a distance of more than 10km to get to secondary schools. Juneja (2001) highlights that the distance between home and school is a key factor leading to pupil drop out. This explains why the majority of Shangwe people leave school at grade seven to avoid the long distance to secondary schools. In some areas like Masosoni, there is no secondary school at all. In some areas where schools are constructed, poor building material is used. The researcher was once a temporary teacher at Nevena Primary School in Gokwe North District before leaving for university education. The school was a laughing stock. The classrooms were constructed using sticks, poles and thatched with grass. School pupils would sit on the dusty ground. Some pupils used to learn under trees. It was only in 2014 when the Adventist Development Relief

Agency (ADRA) constructed two blocks that the school came to life. Despite these recent developments, the majority of pupils come to school barefooted and their parents cannot afford to pay fees.



Fig 2. Nevana Primary School in 2012 (source, Nehanda Radio)

2.2.5 Health Facilities.

Dube in Dube et al (2011) highlight that faith healing is of major concern among indigenous people especially when medicine is not available, when the people are poor or when the distance to the health centre is long. Gunda (2007) highlights that healing remains an issue of major concern in many societies of Zimbabwe. He further asserts that sickness and diseases remain issues that religion must solve, thus religion remains a pivotal organ in safeguarding health and well-being. There is a truism in this view considering the little health facilities offered by the government in the Shangwe area. Only two General Hospitals are found in this area; one at Gokwe Centre and the other one at Nembudzia Growth point. The spacing of clinics is so large that it is difficult for people in remote areas to access medical health from these health centres. For example, the distance between Sesame Baptist clinic and Svisvi clinic is approximately 12km. In Goredema, people have to travel a distance of more than 25km to reach Nembudzia Hospital. As a result, the majority of the Shangwe people rely on traditional medicine which they obtain from *nángas* (traditional healers)

2.3.0 The Shangwe cosmology .

According to Mbiti(1970) Africans are not illiterate in terms of religion. Mbiti goes on to highlight that Africans have an inherent notion of God and that the concept of God was not brought to Africa by Europeans. Daneel (1971) postulates that the Shona had an inherent belief in Mwari who is the final authority above ancestors. In like manner, the Shangwe also had this notion of God prior to the advent of the ZCC in this area. This God was known as Nyadenga (owner of the sky) or Musikavanhu (creator of humanity)(Kudhedhura; interview 20 January 2016). The Shangwe place Nyadenga at the highest position in the hierarchy of supernatural beings. Between Nyadenga and the people exist a number of super-human beings known as *vadzimu*(ancestors) who can be family ancestors (*midzimu yemusha*) or tribal ancestors (*mhondoro*) The Shangwe believe that family problems are left in the hands of family ancestors while the *mhondoro* is responsible for the problem of the whole Shangwe tribe (Mupanedengu; interview 20 January 2016).

The Shangwe spirit medium (*svikiro*) is called Nevana whose totem is *shumba* (lion) denoting his link with lion spirits (*mhondoro*). Ngara et al (2014) highlights that Nevana is

believed to be closer to God. In actual fact, according to the Shangwe belief, God cannot be approached directly, but through Nevana especially when the Shangwe need some rains. Before the advent of Madheruka, Nevana was given great respect. The Paramount Chief Chireya and his subchiefs and many other Shangwe traditional leaders used to send virgins to Nevana who would in turn take them as his wives. Ngara (2013) notes that the last Nevana died in 2004. Up to the time of this research, the Shangwe are still waiting for the tribal spirit to possess anyone whom it chooses.

The dichotomy between the sacred and profane is untenable in the Shangwe's worldview. The term *sacred* in this context does not refer to forbidden things. In actual fact, things are made sacred because of what they represent. According to Ngara(2013) among the Karanga people, a puff-adder is considered sacred because it symbolises rain and fertility. Among the Shangwe people, various things can be regarded as sacred, for example river pools can be sacred if they are believed to be inhabited by river spirits (njuzu) Mountains can be sacred if there are some myths associated with them.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the background of the area of study. The etymologies of new terms such as *Madheruka* and *Shangwe* were well elucidated. Brief discussions on geographical, political, social and cosmological background of the Shangwe area were explored in order to give a better understanding of the area on which the research was carried out. The next chapter will discuss the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area.

CHAPTER 3

THE RISE AND PHENOMENAL GROWTH OF SAMUEL MUTENDI 'S ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE SHANGWE AREA

3.0 Introduction.

In the previous chapter, the researcher outlined the Shangwe 's way of life and discussed the geographical location of the Shangwe area, the political structure , cosmological beliefs and the Shangwe survival strategies. This chapter is centred on the reasons for the rise and phenomenal growth the Zion Christian Church in the Shangwe area. The chapter shall first outline a brief life history of Samuel Mutendi , trace the early developments of ZCC in Masvingo and then discuss the establishment of ZCC among the Shangwe and the factors which have led to the church's growth and development.

3.1 The history of the Samuel Mutendi

Chitando (2014) says that Samuel Mutendi was born in 1880. Mudengezerwa, (2005) notes that Mutendi's original name was Tongotendaziso because he was saved by the blinking eye. His surname was Makuwa. According to Chitando(2014) Mutendi was born a premature baby and had to be hidden among the pens and stayed with goats since according to Karanga traditions, such babies were supposed to be killed. He was saved by the blinking of the eye and breastfed by his grandmother since his mother had passed away. Chimininge(2005) argues that the " Mutendi " is a Christian name which was given to Tendeziso Makuwa.

In Section 10 of *Rungano rwe Zion Christian Church* booklet, it is stated that the first call of Mutendi took place in 1913. Daneel(1971) argues that Mutendi received a dream in 1919 while working as a British South African Police officer in Hartley, which is the present day Chegutu. The dream frightened him . In the dream, Mutendi was informed to build his own

church. When Mutendi left BSAP, he went to his home area in Bikita and became a preacher in the Dutch Reformed Church at Gumunyu School. There at Gumunyu, he began to introduce new ways or religious expressions shaped in African culture. These include such things like dancing and invention of new songs rather than clinging to the songs of DRC. He advised the congregation to make their own prayers rather than to rely on written prayers made available to them by the DRC.

In section ten of Rungano rweZion Christian Church booklet, it is stated that Mutendi, faced an opposition from the DRC and embarked on a long journey to South Africa. There, Mutendi was acquainted to Engenas Lekganyane who led a Zionist Apostolic Church in South Africa. Tradition says that while in South Africa, Mutendi had a vision of the angel who said to him that the ZAP was the ideal church which Mutendi was supposed to form. Lekganyane was pleased with Mutendi and ordered Mutendi to form a branch in Southern Rhodesia(Zimbabwe). Mutendi then returned to Zimbabwe and started preaching at Gumunyu in Bikita.

3.2 The early stages of ZCC in Bikita

The Sunday Mail of April 5, 2015 gives a brief history of the establishment of ZCC in Bikita. The paper asserts that Mutendi started his missionary work at his home base which was known as Mubveve. His major activities were faith healing, preaching and rain making and this gave him reputation. Chitando(2014) points out that when Mutendi preached at Gumunyu, most people were filled with awe and reverence to the power of the Holy Spirit. This created both friends and enemies.

According to The Sunday Mail of April 5, 2015 several attempts to kill Mutendi were made and Mutendi was also accused of child abuse. Mutendi's enemies were chiefs headmen, traditional healers and spirit mediums. His huts were burned, as a result Mutendi had to move from his home base and relocate at Mukute. He stayed there from 1929-1949.

The Sunday Mail of April 5 2015 also states that Mutendi established six schools in Masvingo province. These schools were established in Gutu, Bikita and Zaka districts. However, in 1932 the colonial government burned these schools and Mutendi was arrested because the schools were not registered and he employed untrained teachers. Mutendi served a long jail term with hard labour in Fort Victoria for that offence. Custodial sentences were also designed to disturb his Gospel crusade by alienating him from his congregants.

The church grew from 1939 onwards when the Peace Order Law was passed. Many people came to be healed at Mukute Mission. It is also reported that at one time Mutendi raised Miriam Rukuni from the dead. In 1949 the church moved to Mutarara due to the Land Husbandry Act(Sunday Mail 5 April 2015). It was at this station that Mutendi embarked on the construction of an administration block and a primary school. Tirivangana (2011) highlights that Mutendi made skirmishes with both the colonial authorities and local Duma chiefdom. As a result the mission of building the administration block and primary school at Mutarara was thwarted as Mutendi was expelled and confined to the remote Shangwe area which is now part of Gokwe District.

3.3 The establishment of ZCC among the Shangwe people

The Chronicle of 15 September, 2015 notes that the ZCC was established in Gokwe around the 1960s . Oral tradition, says Samuel Mutendi first settled at Marimesimbe in Gokwe , but when his fame grew, the colonial authorities pushed him further to the fringes of Gokwe . Mutendi settled at Defe and established his headquarters there until his death in 1976. After independence of Zimbabwe, his son and successor, Nehemiah Mutendi had to re-establish the headquarters at Mbungu in Masvingo in 1981(The Standard,7 August 2011).

3.4.0 Factors leading to the growth development of ZCC among the Shangwe people

The rise and phenomenal growth of the Zion Christian Church of Samuel Mutendi in the Shangwe area was not a matter of a single day or a single factor. The hermeneutic circle surrounding the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area therefore includes various separate yet interlocked factors. These factors include political, sociological, numinological, cosmological, economic, pneumatological, psychological, organisational, liturgical, soteriological and various other factors to be discussed. All these factors provided the ZCC with a framework which enabled the church to grow with an unstoppable momentum. At the same juncture Samuel Mutendi charismatic leadership helped the growth of the church during the early stages of ZCC in the Shangwe area(Kudhedhura ; interview 27 January,2016) Before exploring much about the factors that facilitated the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area, it must be taken into cognisance that the concept of God was something inherent to the Shangwe people prior to the advent of ZCC in their area. It must also be taken into consideration that the ZCC practices such as polygamy, dancing and drumming

coincided with the Shangwe traditional practices thus making the enculturation process possible. By enculturation we mean that it was possible for ZCC to adopt the surrounding patterns of culture, therefore making it easier for the Shangwe people to accept the ZCC's faith without necessarily shattering their traditional beliefs and practices. All these factors shall be discussed.

3.4.1 Political based factors.

When looking on the political factors, one is looking at the political environment in which the ZCC found itself and how this climate facilitated the growth of the church. The white colonial rule was not much exerted in the Shangwe area because the area was regarded as unproductive. This means that the area was politically stable unlike in the previous area of Masvingo where Mutendi was expelled. Moreover, there was no Christian Mission Stations in the Shangwe area which could collaborate with the colonial government to destroy Mutendi's movement as in the case of the DRC in Masvingo which collaborated with the government to expel Mutendi. Local chiefs who were adherents of African Traditional Religion appreciated Samuel Mutendi's acts of power. This motivated Mutendi to preach his message and to do his acts of power without too much interference until his death in 1976. In 1980 Zimbabwe got its independence from the white colonial rule and the ZCC re-established its headquarters in Mbungo. The re-establishment of ZCC headquarters in Mbungo did not mean the abandonment of Defe-Dopota since Samuel Mutendi was buried there.

Following the aftermaths of independence and with the euphoria of the re-establishment of ZCC at Mbungo, the ZCC began to make massive construction of Defe –Dopota. Unlike the Duma Chieftdom which jeopardized Samuel Mutendi's plan to make an administration block at Mutarara, the Shangwe chiefs appreciated the ZCC 's massive construction at Defe and offered the church a right hand of fellowship. The Chronicle of 15 September 2015 notes that Chief Nemangwe expressed his gratitude to the Zion Christian Church for the development which was done at Defe-Dopota.

The Zimbabwean president, His Excellency Robert Gabriel Mugabe also expressed his gratitude for the developments which the ZCC had done in the remote area of Gokwe and gave the church a large piece of land(The Chronicle, September 15,2015). It is noticeable that both AIC leaders and African leaders had the same goal of liberation that is why they

could collaborate so easily. While political leaders wanted political liberation, AIC leaders also wanted religious liberation. Despite the initial euphoria of independence, Zimbabweans were still colonised in mind by thinking that only a white man can do greater things, and more importantly, was closer to God. Thus the Zimbabwean political leaders supported ZCC because they saw it as a vehicle to retrieve out most Zimbabweans from the cocoon which the missionary churches had pressed them into for several decades.

So in general, the minimum white colonial rule in the Shangwe area before independence and the appreciation and support of Shangwe chief Nemangwe and the provision of land to the church by His Excellency President R.G. Mugabe after independence all contributed to the development of the Zion Christian Church in the Shangwe area

3.4.2 Sociological factors.

In order to understand how sociological factors facilitated the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area, one needs to have a definition of the term “ sociology” and an understanding of how religion can be understood from a sociological point of view. The term ‘sociology’ is derived from the French word *sociologie* which was coined by Auguste Comte in 1834 to refer to the study of human societies. Studying the Shangwe society will reveal that the ZCC in the Shangwe area developed due to the social developments which the church provided in the area.

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) provides an understanding of religion from a sociological perspective. Durkheim (1912) notes that religion is eminently social and provides social solidarity and a meaning for life. Gundani(2007) notes that Christianity is not an ahistorical religion because it exists within history. Gundani (2007) goes on saying that the task of Christianity therefore is not only to establish the vertical relationship(that is the relationship of humanity and God) but also to establish the horizontal relationship (love between human beings).This praxis was at the heart of Samuel Mutendi as he travailed with surmountable efforts to transform the Shangwe area through the provision of social services and existential needs. It is most likely that the efforts of ZCC in providing the social services contributed much to its growth in the Shangwe area.

The advanced English Dictionary defines a social service as an activity which is organized for the purpose of improving the condition of a disadvantaged group of people in a society. In short, social services may be provided by the government, individuals or non – governmental organisations in order to improve people’s welfare. Social services promote people’s well- being. The ZCC has offered various social services which include education, health services, infrastructural developments, transport services and several other services . It is plausible to argue that ZCC’s involvement in the social transformation of the Shangwe people played a pivotal role in the growth of the church in this area.

3.4.2.1 Education

Education is one of the most fundamental social developments brought by the ZCC in the Shangwe area which led to the growth and development of the church. Maravanyika (2012) notes that prior to 1953, the Shangwe area was an isolated region and that the local inhabitants in places like Mbumbuze were not exposed to schools, European clothes, churches and modern methods of farming. However social services were not a problem to the inhabitants of Mbumbuze only, but to the whole Shangwe area. The Shangwe people were deprived of various social services. Glock (1964) regards deprivation as an essential precondition for the rise of both secular and religious movements. Therefore, the ZCC took Shangwe primitivism and backwardness as stepping stones and brought fundamental changes in the society. Maposa et al (2011) argue that one of the great dreams of Samuel Mutendi was to eradicate illiteracy. Thus in 1973 the ZCC established Mutendi Primary School in Gokwe South District (Chitando et al 2014).

The establishment of Mutendi Primary School became one of the vehicles through which the church could grow as the church provided both education and the gospel. This led to some of the people to be converted while at school (Tasara, F ; interview 27 January 2016). Besides Mutendi Primary School, the ZCC also established several other schools in the Shangwe area such as Dopota Primary School in 1986; Defe High School in 1999 and Tanda Saskare High School in 2005 (Chitando et al 2014).

3.4.2.2 The Spiritual Healing Centre / Health and Wellness Centre(HWC)

Gunda (2007) notes that healing is a major concern in many societies in Zimbabwe. However the ZCC offers spiritual healing services at its headquarters at Defe in the Shangwe area and Mbungo in Masvingo. This is the reason why Daneel(1970) calls the Zionist Headquarters at Mbungo a ‘hospital.’ Daneel (1970) observes Zionist faith-healing practices as one of the methods the church uses to recruit members. This is quite true considering the ZCC Spiritual Healing Centre at Defe which has attracted the majority of people from the Shangwe area and beyond. The Healing Centre has been regarded as a panacea to all the Shangwe people’s problems which may affect their existential needs. The spiritual healing centre is under the custodian of sacred practioners who include priests and prophets and many others (Munyewende.R; interview 30 January 2016).

The ZCC sacred practioners are custodians of the ZCC tradition, databanks of the church’s proverbial wisdom, suppliers of allopathic medicines and traversers of communication between the spiritual and human world. They are also eradicators of witchcraft as they tirelessly fight against harmful concoctions which some people may use for their selfish aggrandizement. As they supply non-homeopathic medicine, they foster the well-being which is essential in humanity. Besides the fact that they have supernatural powers, the sacred practioners also have knowledge of the indigenous technical knowledge systems (ITKs) which can be used to resolve reproduction problems, impotency and many other problems(Mupambadzi,23 January 2016). Sacred practioners are consulted in crisis prevention and resolutions. They act as buffer zones in times of crisis.

Some sacred practioners are *vafemberi* (predictors) who may predict the cause of the disease through *kufemba* (smelling) the patient. A prophet is another sacred practioner who breaks into the divine realm in search of solutions to a crisis. The Mbuya Nyamukuta(midwife) also assist women on the process of child deliverance and in undertaking pre- and post-birth rituals.

Appiah –Kubi(1989) notes that diseases result in the breakdown of life’s harmony. Therefore ZCC sacred practioners ‘s role is to restore this harmony. The belief in the interaction of the body and soul among the Shangwe people existed prior to the establishment of ZCC in their area. Since the African conception of humanity is less dualistic (Gyekye 1987) the dichotomy between the body and soul is inevitably untenable in the African worldview. Therefore the Shangwe could easily embrace the holistic healing which the ZCC had offered. The Shangwe prefer the ZCC holistic healing to Western

medicine because Western medicine imprisons the Cartesian dichotomy of the mind and soul. Western doctors have been entrapped by an eloquent gruesome misconception of diseases which has led them to fight against diseases instead of treating patients (Moerman, 1979).

At the wellness centre, a priest works in matters that need prayers or anointing with holy water. In matters that are complicated such as those that need a spiritual explanation, a prophet is consulted so that he or she can consult the spiritual world while in an ecstatic frenzy to get the answers to the cause and solutions to the problem.

People with various problems come to this centre for spiritual deliverance of their problems. Daneel (1970) asserts that problems which people may bring to the spiritual centre include problems such as those who are looking for a partner to marry, those suffering from headache of those possessed by evil spirits as examples of problems which people brought to the Zionist faith healing centre. People who come to the wellness centre usually have problems which ranges from diseases such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, pneumonia to mental related problems such as schizophrenia, déjà vu, neurosis and psychosis. The demon possessed and those who have been bewitched form another group of people who also seek help from the ZCC sacred practitioners. It must be noted that once the person's problem is solved, it is most likely that such a person will become a ZCC member. This is how some of the members of ZCC were converted.

There are many reasons why most people are attracted to the ZCC. Gundani (2001) notes that many people feel that prophetic healing is affordable and is an excellent service which can cater for the poor. There is a truism in this view especially considering the Shangwe state of living. The majority of the Shangwe people are peasant farmers. They can only afford to use chicken or goats as means of payment, something the prophet can accept while the hospitals cannot accept. In most cases nurses and doctors prescribe the pills which hospitals do not have and patients have to buy from pharmacies and surgeries where they are unaffordable. This gives the spiritual churches an opportunity to expand their markets in the field of healing. As highlighted earlier that there are a few hospitals in Gokwe District and that the health facilities are poor, it is most likely that the spirit type churches are the solutions to the people's health problems.

Chavhunduka (1977) postulates that missionaries failed to provide magicio-medicinal facilities. This means that despite the presence of hospitals, Africans are still in the dilemma when they suffer from diseases related to witchcraft and magic. Anderson (2001) dichotomises diseases into two; natural and African type of diseases. According to

Anderson(2001) natural diseases are those which can be treated using Western medicine or traditional herbs while African diseases are those which need spiritual explanations. Usually, these African diseases are those caused by evil acts of witches and wizards. Such type of diseases have led to the majority of the Shangwe people join the ZCC because the Shangwe do not only need a solution to the problem, but they also want explanations for the cause of the problem.

Besides the spiritual healing centre, the ZCC offers a fourteen –bed clinic and counselling services at Defe –Dopota. The clinic caters for those seeking medical services while counselling which is done by the non-governmental organisation is meant to help those who need professional counselling.

3.4.2.3 Transport and Infrastructural developmental factors.

By the time the ZCC established its headquarters at Defe, the area was very secluded. There were no roads networks to link Defe with the outer world and the means of transport were very poor. The period after Zimbabwe's independence saw a lot of developments taking place. Roads were constructed to link the church headquarters with the outer world. The church has also provided buses for the convenience of those who may want to travel to the shrine. This does not mean that the buses only carry those going to the shrine. The buses, which are painted green and operate under the trade name 'Hotline' operate like any other buses on the road. The only important thing about these buses is that they carry the ZCC banner , play ZCC music thus sending a powerful message to the Shangwe community.

The headquarters at Defe have led to the developments of a business centre , development of residential suburbs which are being linked with piped water and sewer system. A large dam was constructed at Defe and this has led to the local people to benefit from the dam through gardening, availability of water for domestic uses and for their livestock. The area is actually developing into a small town. This means that the local people need not to travel a distance of more than fifty kilometres to Gokwe centre for groceries or other goods and services.

3.4.3. Numinological factors

One of the most influential thinkers about religion, Rudolf Otto developed an analysis of an experience that, in his view, underlies all religion. He called this experience "numinous." In his actual words, Otto (1917) describes the numinous as the "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*" (fearful and fascinating mystery) "Mysterium" means that the numinous is "Wholly Other" and experienced with blank wonder and stupor. "Tremendum": means awfulness, terror, demonic dread, awe, absolute unapproachability, "Fascinans" refers to the potent charm, and attractiveness in spite of fear or terror.

In both the Shangwe and ZCC traditions, the numinous is experienced in awe. The numinous is unapproachable because the numinous is tremendous, thus sacred practitioners mediate between the numinous and the ordinary people. The gap between the numinous and the people must be maintained. The numinous is experienced with wonder and stupor as in the case of the Shangwe 's traditional practices where a sacred practitioner is possessed by the numinous and experience stupefaction and becomes dull and lethargic. In the same manner, when the ZCC prophet is possessed by the numinous, he or she becomes groggy, dazed and semi-conscious. Therefore, it is through the similarities in the Shangwe and the ZCC 's experience of the numinous that an enculturation process was possible, thus leading to the growth of the ZCC.

The Shangwe's spiritual realm consist of *Mwari* (God) and ancestral spirits(*midzimu*). Bourdillon (1976) notes that ancestral spirits play a fundamental role in the life of humanity. The spiritual realm of the ZCC includes God, Jesus, The Holy Spirit and angels. Gelfand [1973] asserts that *Mwari* is known as the supreme being , the creator and the one who sustains the universe . The underworld is the world of the dead. Both the spiritual and the underworld have an impact to human understanding of reality. The dead are revered and treated with respect. This explains why the ZCC make an annual pilgrimage to Defe to pay tribute to their founder who is buried there.

Ngara (2013) postulates that the Shangwe people believe in Mwari (God) who speaks to them through their spirit medium, Nevana. In like manner, the ZCC believe in God who spoke to them through Samuel Mutendi, the founder of ZCC. In both traditions, God is unapproachable as Rudolf Otto says. A medium is required to broker the relationship between the numinous and the people. In both ZCC and Shagwe cosmological worldview, the spiritual world also consists of other realms such as the river spirits (njuzu) avenging spirit(ngozi) zvidhoma and zvikwambo (goblins) spooks(zvipoko) ghosts(magorototo) and *tokolotches*

This last realm of the spiritual world is most feared by humanity because in some cases it destroys people's well-being. Therefore in both Shangwe and ZCC traditions, sacred practitioners play a pivotal role in reducing harmful effects which might be caused by this spiritual world to human beings. When the ZCC came with the office of a prophet, it was easy for the Shangwe people to accept the ZCC since the office of a prophet was just similar to the office of a traditional healer which the Shangwe people had known from time immemorial. The acceptance of ZCC faith by the Shangwe people did not mean an abolishment of their beliefs. Therefore at this juncture one can say that the similarity of the Shangwe and ZCC numinological beliefs also contributed to the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area.

3.4.4 Cosmological factors.

The term cosmos is derived from the Medieval Latin word *cosmologia* and from the Greek word *kosmos*. The Advanced English Dictionary defines cosmology, (*cosmogony or cosmogeny*) as the study of the evolution and structure or nature of the universe. The ZCC and Shangwe's understanding of the nature of the cosmos is similar. Eliade (1957) highlights that space is not homogeneous for a religious man, but interruptions break it into sacred and profane spaces. Eliade (1957) goes on to say that it is only when the sacred manifests in a hierophany for the purpose of revelation of an absolute reality that the homogeneity of space is broken. Cox (1992) notes that mountains are the meeting places between the sacred and profane, for example Matopo Hill is an example where the sacred manifest themselves in a hierophany. Mbiti (1991) notes that African cosmology is expressed in proverbs, myths legends, wise sayings, rituals and symbols. Aschwanden (1989) and Cox (1992) assert that cosmogonic myth are common among the Shona people. Magesa (1997) defines myths as a language that tries to explain the truth about human existence in a rational way. However, the cosmos is understood from an anthropomorphic sense.

Durkheim(1912) asserts that objects that are sacred are such objects which are considered as part and parcel of the spiritual realms. These include objects of reverence, or rites. Profane are such things without religious meaning or function. Durkheim goes on to say that while not undermining the dichotomy between the sacred and profane, it must be taken into consideration that these two realms depend on each other and interact for survival. The sacred cannot survive without the profane and vice versa. Therefore there is a symbiotic

relationship between these two realms. Both ZCC and the Shangwe people believe in the division of space into these two categories.

Moreover, both the ZCC and the Shangwe believe in that the numinous reveal themselves to humanity through objects such as trees, mountains, places, sticks or stones. Eliade(1957) calls these object hierrophanies. When the numinous break into the mundane world through these, hierophanies, these hierophanies become sacred.

Thus both ZCC and Shangwe people believe in the existence of sacred places which they believe to be places where the numinous manifest themselves. Such places are given reverence. For example, in ZCC both Mbungo and Defe Shrines are sacred places while the Shangwe believe that Nevana Shrine is sacred. Eliade (1957) mentions Jerusalem as an *axis mundi* to the Jews, that is area which brings the heaven and earth into connection, the ladder to heaven . In like manner, Defe Shrine in the Shangwe area is the ZCC *axis mundi* while Nevana Shrine is also the *axis mundi* for the Shangwe people. Ngara (2013) notes that this shrine is important in rain-making ceremonies. Therefore both the ZCC and the Shangwe people share the same beliefs. This explains why the Shangwe people did not find it difficult to embrace the ZCC. Moreover, the ZCC tolerate the Shangwe belief system because they share a lot in common.

In addition to the belief that the *axis mundi* links the numinous and humanity, both ZCC and the Shangwe believe that the numinous break into the mundane world through other human beings such as spirit mediums (*svikiro*) and traditional healers (*nánaga*) among the Shangwe people and prophets(*vaporofita*) in the ZCC. Ngara (2013) argues that Nevana, whose real name is Tavasiira Marariromba, was the Shangwe spirit medium who was believed to be closer to *Mwari*, but unfortunately he died in 2004. Anderson (2001) notes that the office of the prophet in AICs replaces that of the traditional healer. It is the revelation of the deity through these prophets which produces a great value to the Shangwe people, for the Shangwe people had always been preoccupied by the quest for knowledge about their welfare, their surroundings , their future and the causes of their misfortunes. Therefore analysing the ZCC and Shangwe cosmogonies , it can be concluded that the cosmological factors also had a positive impact to the growth of ZCC among the Shangwe people since the Shangwe Traditional belief systems share a lot in common with the ZCC traditions.

3.4.5 Organisational and liturgical factors

The ZCC structure, its practices and liturgy have all contributed to the growth of the church among the Shangwe people. The church structure is made up of both men and women who are chosen not on the basis of academic qualifications, but on the basis of their talents and ability. This means that one does not need to go through a tertiary education institution like a university or college in order to become an elder, a pastor(*mufundisi*) a prophet(*muporofita*), preacher (*muparidzi*), or to train as a nurse to become a midwife (*mbuya nyamukuta*) and many others. Considering the absence of tertiary education institutions in Gokwe, the Shangwe are likely to go for ZCC than mainline churches where leadership is not attained through academic qualifications.

The ZCC practices such as polygamy also attracted the Shangwe people who are polygamous people. Maravanyika(2012) highlights that prior to 1953, the Shangwe people had many wives and that one man could have up to fifty children. Mbiti (1967) regards polygamy as an essential practice among African men because it is a way an African man may have many children from his many wives so that he will be remembered after his death.

Liturgically, the ZCC is more comprehensible to the Shangwe people than missionary churches. Music and dance form the most entertaining part of ZCC liturgy. Jose Antunes da Silva (1993) regards dancing in AICs as an important way of expressing joy in Jesus. The use of drums and dancing were common features in the Shangwe traditions prior to the advent of ZCC, thus by joining ZCC, the Shangwe people are not totally uprooted from their traditional practices. Preaching in ZCC does not require one to acquire the skills of biblical exegesis or hermeneutics. Jose Antunes da Silva (1993) notes that a sermon in an AIC is usually short, simple and punctuated with words such as 'Amen!', Alleluya! The ZCC makes a literal interpretation of the bible making it easier for even the less educated Shangwe people to preach.



Fig 3. A uniform brings oneness in the ZCC while dancing makes the church 's way of religious expression more live and vivid. *Source. www.zccmbungo.org*

3.4.6 The uniform

Like most AICs, the ZCC emphasises on the wearing of a uniform during worship services. The major positive impact that the uniform has brought to the church is that it destroys the classism and social stratification of people which casual clothes can bring to the church. People in the same uniform usually feel a sense of belonging to the group. A uniform brings a sense of equality and solidarity, thus removing the possibility of a feeling of inferiority complex which casual clothes can bring. A uniform reduces the problem of being identified with one dress as what casual clothes do. People fear to be known for wearing the same type of clothes every day of worship. Others cannot afford to buy suits and costumes which are common in the mainline and Pentecostal churches. This explains why the majority of people have embraced ZCC because they do not feel a burden on what to wear as it is obvious that they will wear uniform and they feel a sense of belonging during the time of the church service

3.4.7. Psychological factors

Brainwashing and mind control techniques have been used by various AICs as a way of recruiting members. Bromely et al (1981) notes that members who join New Religious Movements are victims of brainwashing and mind –control techniques, usually this is attributed to hypnosis, physical and psychological manipulation and drugging. The ZCC uses seductive testimonies and tranquilizing sermons and songs to allure those people whose relatives are suffering from various kinds of problems. Problems such as diseases, hiccups, infertility, neurosis and psychosis are all attributed to the work of evil hence need spiritual healing by the prophet. Sometimes people who have been healed are used as testimonies in order to get more converts.

Daneel (1970) notes that songs play a pivotal role in the ZCC's mind control and brainwashing techniques. Songs are used to manipulate the mind of those people who are deprived of health and well-being to join the church. Daneel(1970) argues that the following Zionist hymn reverberates through Zion City Sunday after Sunday:

Come and see what Jesus does,

Come see what Moyo [Mutendi] here performs,

*Come look from the East,
You from the West, come observe what Zion does.
You who are sick, to Zion for treatment come,
Come and See!
You with 'zvipusha' [epilepsy] come and be healed,
Come see what Jesus does.
The other day we were with him [Mutendi],
Last night we were in his sight,
Last year we were with him
Even today he's with us.
Come see what Zion does!*

To make their brainwashing technique effective, the stories about Samuel Mutendi are also mythologised and mystified to such an extent that the church becomes the true church of God and Samuel Mutendi becomes the Messiah. Jules –Rosette (1987) notes that the Messianic movements are those which crystallise around a single figure who is believed to be a new Messiah, the last messenger of God or the last prophet.

Such form of leader-centeredness has helped the ZCC to be free from breakaway factions and is also a source of recruiting new members since the movement is portrayed as the only way to salvation. Thus the Shangwe people have become victims of psychological manipulation and brainwashing, leading to the growth of ZCC.

3.4.8 Pneumatological factors

Anderson (2003) calls the AICs “Churches of the Spirit” and highlights that these churches emphasise on pneumatology which is essential to emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the people. Chitando (2014) notes that the first sermon of Samuel Mutendi at Gumunyu which was based on Luke 3verse 1 resulted in people being filled with the Holy Spirit, awe and reverence. It is the work of the Holy Spirit which enabled the Zion Christian church to grow among the Shangwe people. The work of the Holy Spirit in ZCC can be seen through miracles that are commonly done in the church, the blind seeing, the lame walking and those with various diseases being healed (Daneel,1970). The Shangwe people are more attracted to the work of the Holy Spirit in ZCC, something which is not found in mainline churches.

3.4.9 Soteriological factors

Like the Shangwe people, the ZCC believes in the concept of salvation. Salvation to them is wholesome and holistic. The salvation embraces the concepts of here now and here after. It is both futuristic and world affirming. It is salvation from all the societal and physical ills that humanity is facing. The ZCC hold the view that people should not wait for God to wipe their tears in heaven, the tears should be wiped right now, The Shangwe people had this concept of salvation prior to the advent of ZCC. They consulted the traditional healers in order to be relieved from various problems such as diseases, infirmity, social relations, poverty or problems caused by witchcraft and sorcery . The form of salvation in both the Shangwe and the ZCC is different from the concept of salvation in mainline churches. While mainline churches focus on futuristic salvation, the Shangwe and the ZCC embrace the kind of salvation that caters for their present life situation. This explains why the Shangwe people were more attracted to the ZCC than the mainline churches.

3.4.10 Economic factors.

The Chronicle of September 15,2015 notes that the construction of the dam at Defe has led to economic developments to the surrounding area as people are now embarking on gardening and selling their produce to the small business community at Defe. The paper goes on to say that the developments taking place at Defe have led to the villagers to seek employment there, thus relieving them from the economic hardships imposed to them due to the fall of cotton prices. In addition to these developments, it must be known that the development of the business centre at Defe has also improved the Shangwe people's lifestyle ,thus giving the ZCC a good image and value which has enabled it to get more members.

3.5 Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be noted that the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area is attributed to various factors. It is also noticeable that the similarities between the beliefs of the Shangwe people and those of ZCC had a positive impact to the church growth. At the same time, the church's great socio-economic developments in the Shangwe area has given the ZCC legitimacy which has helped the church to attract more converts. This chapter have discussed the early stages of ZCC in Masvingo and the establishment of the ZCC in the

Shangwe area. The factors which have led to the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area have been explored at great length. These factors include the political, social, cosmological , liturgical and brainwashing factors. While the ZCC has claimed a large following in the Shangwe area, it is plausible that the area has witnessed the decline of many mainline churches. The next chapter will provide various factors that has led to the decline of mainline churches in the area under study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DECLINE OF MAINLINE CHURCHES.

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher explored the various factors which have contributed to the rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC among the Shangwe people. These factors include the political, social, cosmological, liturgical and many other factors. The previous chapter also noted that while the ZCC was experiencing the rapid growth, mainline churches were declining. This chapter shall outline various mainline churches that are found in the Shangwe area and explore the various factors that have led to their decline.

4.1 Mainline churches in the Shangwe area

The rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area has left mainline churches in topsy-turvy and pandemonium. Mainline churches have also been known as missionary churches. These churches are branch of Christianity whose origin can be traced back to Europe or America. Gunda (2007) defines missionary churches as those churches whose origin is Western based. Some of these churches carry the identity of their place of origin, for example The Roman Catholic Church which has its headquarters in Rome, Italy. Anglican Church is also another church that bears the name of its place of origin. It was formed after King Henry of England left the Roman Catholic Church because he wanted to marry another wife. The Advanced English Dictionary define “Anglo” as England or English.

Other mainline churches in the Shangwe area include The Lutheran Church, The Baptist Church, The Salvation Army Church, The Seventh Day Adventist Church ,The Methodist

Church, The Dutch Reformed Church and many others. Most mainline churches were used as vehicles for oppression and segregation, for example, the DRC supported apartheid in South Africa. Therefore, it can be argued that these churches carried the colonial mentality of their countries of origin and that they viewed whiteness as superior to blackness. This explains why they failed to address the problems of black people due to their pursuance of fulfilling the white-man's demands. Despite their numbers, it can be noted that the majority of the people in the Shangwe area have been attracted to AICs, thus leaving the mainline churches with just a few number of people, particularly the Madheruka people.

4.2 Factors leading to the decline of mainline churches

The decline of these missionary churches has led to various speculations, theories and hypotheses. However, it must be noted that various factors such as the presence of many AICs in the Shangwe area, the failure to effectively apply adaptation and enculturation theologies by some of the mainline churches, the hierarchical bureaucracy, Westernisation, the general passive forms of religious expressions, strict dietary laws and many others have contributed to the decline of mainline churches.

4.2.1 The presence of many AICs in the Shangwe area.

The Shangwe area is now scattered with several AICs. Chitando (2006) describes African Indigenous Churches as those churches whose aim is to get African converts and often use local traditions, focus on healing problems related to barrenness and bewitchment. These AICs include Mutendi's ZCC, the Johane Masowe WeChishanu Apostolic Church which is commonly known as "*Madzibaba*" (fathers), Zion-Sabata, (the Zion of the Sabbath) Mughodhi, Israel, Zion Pentecostal Church, the Johane Marange Apostolic Church and many others. As a result, the battle for souls between AICs and mainline churches in Shangwe area is now tense. Ositelu (2002) postulates that AICs are currently the fastest growing churches in the world. The AICs have out-manoeuvred the missionary churches because of their conception of life, fecundity, renewal of the Holy Spirit and communalism. AICs conception of life is wholesome. It is not dualistic as in some Western missionary Churches where the sacred and profane are dichotomised. The AICs's general solidarity and sharing of social life has created good personal relationships among members of the same faith. AICs have also revitalised what the missionary churches have neglected, leading to the

decline of mainline churches. Wallace (1956) regards revitalisation as an effort deliberately and consciously organised by the society to create a more satisfying culture. Thus AICs made great contributions in the revitalisation of the Shangwe modalities which the mainline churches had dubbed ‘paganism.’

4.2.2 The failure to effectively apply enculturation and adaptation theologies.

When missionary churches came to the Shangwe area, they were shaped according to the Western theologies. The Roman Catholic Church is the only church in the Shangwe area which tried to foster enculturation, though not effectively. Other missionary churches tried to supplant the Shangwe worldview with Western ideologies without taking into cognisance the cosmological catastrophe which they had brewed. Bauer et al (1979) regards theology as a rational discussion concerning God, his relationship with humanity and creation. Amanze (1998) emphasises that theology is concerned about God and how He relates to his creation. Missionary Churches failed to effectively contextualise their theologies through enculturation and adaptation so that it would make sense to the Shangwe people. Martey (2009), argues that enculturation is an effort to incarnate the Christian in African culture. Except for the Roman Catholic Church, the missionary Churches failed to integrate the Shangwe traditional culture into their churches, thus leading to the decline of many mainline churches in the advent of many AICs which incorporated the Shangwe traditional practices. The Advanced English Dictionary defines adaptation as a responsive adjustment to varying conditions. The missionary churches failed to adjust to the Shangwe traditional practices such as polygamy, ancestor veneration and traditional forms of marriage like elopement (*kutizira/kutizisa*). The missionary churches suppressed these practices, but suppressing such practices was just a temporary measure. The coming of many AICs which tolerated such practices led to the decline of mainline churches.

4.3.3 The hierarchical bureaucracy

Many mainline churches have a long channel of hierarchical bureaucracy. This reduces the flexibility of the churches in decision making. A simple issue like for example, the debate about women ordination as pastors in one of the SDA churches in Zimbabwe has to be passed from church level, district level, conference level until it reaches the General

Conference level in America. The decision has to be debated and voted . The votes have to be counted and then announced from the General Conference back to the church level. This explains why AICs have maximized on the mainline churches' inflexibility in decision making thus becoming a large Christian movement.

4.3.4 Liturgy

The missionary churches' liturgy has also contributed to the downfall of mainline churches in the Shangwe area. The liturgy is often regarded as pervasive and not appealing to the Shangwe people. Preaching in most mainline churches is usually done by the educated people like pastors and church fathers who employ much biblical exegesis and hermeneutics, making it difficult for the ordinary people to understand. Apocalyptic books like the book of Daniel and Revelations are usually the main focus of the Adventist Churches instead on focusing on simple books like Luke's gospel and simple themes like the theme of love which is more practical than bombarding congregations with terrifying verses. At the same note, mainline churches have also been accused of sticking to European hymns and music, some of which require a lot of note interpretations. Dancing is not allowed in mainline churches, if allowed, it is passive and boring. This is why AICs have managed to outmanoeuvre missionary churches in this area. According to Ositelu(2002) AICs's use of drums, confidence during prayers and expression of joy is in harmony with the Africans' way of life. This means the passivity of missionary churches in expressing their religiosity is not only a barrier to their expansion, but a factor contributing to their decline as well.

4.3.5. Classism , Westernisation and Individualism.

The Advanced English Dictionary defines classism as a form of discrimination or prejudice which is based on social classes. Classism is simply the stratification of people into classes. Classism is a successor of racism. This comes through various barriers that are put in place to disqualify some people to attain some certain positions. For example, for one to become a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, he should undergo a training for ten years. In the SDA, to become a pastor , one needs to be trained for four years, while to become a captain in the Salvation Army, one needs to be trained for two years. This is not the case in AICs where anyone can become a leader, despite his social, financial or academic backgrounds.

Classism in missionary churches is also through Westernisation. For example, missionary church emphasis on white weddings is a factor that divides people into classes. Those who cannot afford do white weddings are seen as the lower class while the upper class is able to arrange expensive wedding ceremonies and hire a convoy of vehicles, hotel rooms and other fascinating things. Those who cannot afford such weddings suffer from inferiority complex.

Individualism is also a factor that has destroyed missionary churches among the Shangwe people and beyond. Individualism is a Western ideology that promotes capitalism. Durkheim (1912) notes that religion brings social solidarity, cohesion, value consensus and an identification of members within the society. However, mainline churches have failed to come up with a plan to bring people together and make projects, just as how the Johane Masowe Wechishanu Apostolic Church and the Johane Marange have managed to do. Dillone-Malone(1976) notes that Johane Masowe launched a self-help project in Kostern and thus the group was known as *Kostern-Basket Makers*. The Johane Marange church members have formed some co-operative societies where products like furniture, tins, cans, baskets and many others are produced. Mainline churches have launched programs of providing the needy instead of teaching people projects on how to self-emancipate themselves. A liberation theology which leads to self-emancipation is what is lacking in mainline churches.

4.3.6 Strict dietary laws.

Strict dietary laws have contributed to the decline of some mainline churches, mostly the SDA. The SDA church advocates for a vegetarian diet and argues that God's intention was that human beings rely on fruits, nut and vegetables (Genesis 2;16). Mark A. Finley, and N Landless (2014) argue that "today medical science recognizes the importance of a vegetarian diet". Finley and Landless advocate that it is recommended that people take animal products such as eggs and milk rather than the animal itself. In the SDA book, *Health and Wellness*,(2014) Finley and Landless outline foods restrictions. Beverages, coffee, sodas are not recommended because they do not have nutritional value. Dietary laws are essential especially during this era of various diseases, both pandemic and endemic. However, the Shangwe people have not come to an understanding of such laws, just as they have not come to terms of appreciating white-weddings. It is because of the context where they come from and their backgrounds. Most issues that are debatable and which have caused the majority of

the Shangwe people to shun mainline churches are restrictions about pork, or meat from various animals recorded in the book of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Despite the fact that food restrictions are also found in AICs, mainline churches such as my own (SDA) is fundamentalist and seeks to recover the Jewish dietary laws and goes even further to recover the dietary laws given to Adam. Meat, according to the SDA interpretation of the bible, came to be part of food after Adam and Eve had sinned. This makes it difficult to the majority of people to comply with such a recommendation.

4.3.7 Absence of spiritual healing, tongues and prophets.

The absence of a spiritual healing centre in the missionary churches has contributed to their downfall. Despite the fact that these missionary churches own hospitals in the Shangwe area, for example, the Sesame Baptist hospital at Nemangwe Business Centre, it is plausible to note that hospitals do not solve problems inherent to African problems.

Chavhunduka (1977) notes that in Africa, some selfish practitioners use their expertise by bringing harm or selling harmful concoctions to people who may harm their fellow relatives. Some of these harmful concoctions are used for aggrandizement at the expense of other people's life. It is from such an eloquent gruesome scenario that a prophet is needed to rescue such victims from such life problems. However, helping people whose problems are caused by witchcraft cannot be done in mainline churches or their hospitals.

Anderson (2003) highlights that AICs emphasises on Holy Spirit and pneumatology to meet emotional, physical and spiritual needs, thus meeting all of facets life. This explains why in the Shangwe area, mainline churches have also been abandoned and accused for failing to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and tongues which Jesus promised. This has led to the Shangwe people to resort to AICs where the gifts of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues are emphasised. AICs offer wholesome solutions to the Shangwe problems, something which the mainline churches have failed. It is easy for the Shangwe people to accept the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as substitutes to the experiences of ancestral spirits and the behaviour of spirit mediums during the period of possession, something which the Shangwe people had been accustomed to.

The absence of the office of a prophet in mainline churches has a bearing on the decline of these churches. From time immemorial, the Shangwe people had been used to seeking answers about their welfare through necromancy, spiritism, hydromancy and other various methods of primitive prophecy. The advent of missionaries saw tremendous changes in the

Shangwe religious life as missionary churches took turns in patronizing and condescending the Shangwe's religious systems. This did not mean that missionary churches were able to provide the Shangwe people's existential needs. The ZCC s was therefore a church through which the Shangwe's religious system could be revitalised. Anderson (2003) says that the prophet and the diviner are just the same because they provide the same answers to the same problem. Thus the Shangwe people are attracted to the AICs than mainline churches because in AICs, a prophet can solve their problems holistically unlike in mainline churches where the office of a prophet is non-existent.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has adumbrated the various factors that have led to the decline of mainline churches in the Shangwe area. It was made crystal clear that AICs have capitalised on the weakness of mainline churches leading to the phenomenal growth of the former and the decline of the latter. It is plausible that mainline churches declined due to the presence of many AICs, a situation that has created a stiff competition in the religious market. Though the Roman Catholic tried to foster the enculturation process, it seems as if it was not effectively done thus leading to the ZCC to take advantage of the mainline 's failure to effectively foster the enculturation process. Other factors which have contributed to the downfall of mainline churches include individualism, Westernisation, absence of the acts of the Holy Spirit , speaking in tongues and strictness especially in matters of dietary laws. The next chapter shall look at recommendations and conclusion

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Recommendations and concluding remarks.

5.0 Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to give a summary of all the issues covered in this research. The chapter will also highlight the researcher's recommendations to the ZCC and the mainline churches based on the research findings. The chapter shall end with concluding remarks.

5.1 Summary

The research was grounded on an exploration of the factors leading to the rise and phenomenal growth of the ZCC in the Shangwe area. The rise and phenomenal growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area led to the decline of mainline churches. The first chapter outlines the problem, explores research instruments which include the research design, methodology, data collection methods, and sampling techniques used in the research. The chapter also justifies the choice of research instruments.

The second chapter outlines the geography of the Shangwe people, their way of life in terms of political, social, cosmological and religious aspects. It also discusses the two main groups found in the Shangwe area; the *Madheruka* and the *Shangwe* people. This was done to give a clear picture of the area under study.

The third chapter gives an in-depth discussion on the possible factors which can be attributed to the rise and phenomenal growth of the ZCC in the Shangwe area. For a better comprehension, the researcher came up with a typology which categorised the factors into political, sociological, numinological, pneumatological, cosmological, organisational

and liturgical factors. The categorisation of the factors was done to break the whole ZCC system into smaller parts so that just like a machine broken into smaller parts, the whole ZCC operating system becomes comprehensible. The chapter explores these factors from an academic perspective, using theological arguments which the researcher acquired during the course of his studies. These facts are feasible and verifiable.

The rise of ZCC led to the decline of mainline churches. Thus fourth chapter focuses on the reasons for the decline of mainline churches. The data collected shows that the mainline churches in the Shangwe area decline due to the hierarchical bureaucracy of these churches which render them inflexible in decision making. The researcher is aware that some enculturation processes were done by some mainline churches like the Roman Catholic Church, but not to the extent to which the ZCC had done it in the Shangwe area. Therefore mainline churches fail also due to their failure to effectively foster the enculturation, process thus making it difficult for the Shangwe people to adopt mainline Christianity since it uproots them from their traditional way of life.

5.2.0 Recommendations and concluding remarks.

Since the rise and phenomenal growth of the ZCC led to the decline of mainline churches, the researcher recommends these two branches of Christianity to live in harmony and set aside their differences. The researcher also recommends an ecumenical movement between the mainline and African Initiated Churches in the Shangwe area. This ecumenical movement will try to bring the two major branches of Christianity to stand on some common grounds and therefore will reduce the possible chances of religious antagonism in the area. The researcher would like to recommend other scholars who are interested in religious studies to look on other AICs in the Shangwe area. This is such an interesting topic because there are many AICs in this area.

The researcher appreciates the work done by the ZCC in transforming the Shangwe community through the provision of facilities such as schools, roads, the dam, and the Health and Wellness Centre. The ZCC has produced a positive impact in shaping Christianity in a way that the Shangwe people can enjoy without necessarily destroying much of their traditions. Given the fact that the Shangwe area is remote and that very little developments

are taking place in this area, the researcher recommends the ZCC to continue with its developments. The researcher also recommends the ZCC to build a tertiary institution like a college or a university in the Shangwe area to help the majority of people in this area who find it difficult to go to other institutions of learning which are far from their homes. This will even help the ZCC to capitalise on the background of the area where their academic institution would not compete for students.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire Guide

I, Mberengwa Norman am a student at Midlands State University who is currently reading for Theology and Religious Studies Honours Degree. I am carrying out a research on the rise and phenomenal growth of Samuel Mutendi's ZCC in the Shangwe area. I am asking you to kindly help me with the information from your knowledge and experience. The information will be used for academic purpose only. I assure you that the information you will provide me is confidential and will treat it with caution and respect. You are kindly requested to fill in the gaps provided. Your contribution will be of great importance in Religious Studies in Zimbabwe and the world at large. As an important note, you are not allowed to write your names on any part of this questionnaire.

Thank you in advance

PERSONAL DETAILS

SEX

Female

Male

AGE

20-30	
31-40	
41-50	

51-70	
71+	

Status (tick where possible)

Prophet	
villager	
elder	
Other(specify)	

Questions.

1. What is the meaning of the following terms?

(i) Shangwe

.....

(ii) Madheruka

.....

2 What were the Shangwe belief systems before the advent of Christianity in the area?

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.....
.....
.....

3 What factors facilitated the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area?

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4 Why do many Shangwe people prefer African Initiated Churches to mainline churches?

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5 What are the developments that were brought by the ZCC in the Shangwe area?

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6 What are the possible reasons for the decline of mainline churches?

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7 How does healing contribute to the growth of ZCC in the Shangwe area?

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8 What recommendations can you give to the ZCC considering the effort they have done to transform the Shangwe society?

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