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Approved by: Mr Moyo, M.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. This dissertation has not been submitted for my degree or examination at any other University.

Signed

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.....

As the supervisor, I have agreed to the submission of this dissertation

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned hereby certify that they have supervised the student Washington Jembere’s dissertation entitled “Religious Leaders and Politics: A Case Study of Bishop Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa.” The dissertation was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Theology and Religious Studies at Midlands State University.

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Glossary

ANC	African National Congress
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
FROLIZ	Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe
NCC	National council of Churches
OAU	Organization of African Union
PF	Patriotic Front
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SSC	Special Security Commission
UANC	United African National Congress
UMC	United Methodist Church
UN	United Nations
UTC	United Theological College
WCC	World Council of Churches
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Unity
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

DEDICATION

To my beloved wife Mavis and my three children Tadiwanashe, Tafara, and Tatenda who worked hard to see it that I complete this project.

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Abstract

In this research project I explore whether religious leaders can be involved in Party politics and remain true to their calling, with a view of determining whether it is sustainable to argue that Bishop Muzorewa as a religious leader involved in Party politics clean in his political endeavours. The paper attempts to evaluate Bishop Muzorewa's role in national politics and the effects his role had on the United Methodist Church. The paper will rely on data from secondary sources especially books, journals, magazines and internet materials that dwelt on Muzorewa's activities both in the Church and Politics. In the paper, I argue that it is not sustainable to take Bishop Muzorewa as a good example of a Religious Political leader.

Chapter one

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The liberation struggle for Zimbabwe can be traced back to the 1890s with Mbuya Nehanda and Sekuru Kaguvi being pioneers in fighting against the colonial regime. The war of liberation can be subdivided into two: the First and Second Chimurenga with the latter being spearheaded by nationalist leaders like Joshua Nkomo, Rev Ndabaningi Sithole, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, George Nyandoro, James Dambadza Chikerema just to mention but a few. Church leaders also played a crucial role like that of nationalist leaders and an Episcopal leader that is Bishop Abel Tendekai Muzorewa of the United Methodist Church was part and parcel of the liberation war. Muzorewa, the first African bishop of the United Methodist Church took over from the Episcopal leadership of Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge who was deported from the country by Ian Smith for his staunch support of the nationalists. Bishop Dodge had initiated a program of sending students to American Universities, preparing them for future leadership roles in the church and the state. Muzorewa was one of the beneficiaries of that program. On his return from United States of America Bishop Muzorewa worked in various capacities in the church and was subsequently elected Bishop in 1968. Bishop Muzorewa then became prominent and influential in the church and in secular society, that's probably why he was asked by the nationalists to be the Chairman of ANC to fight against what become known as The Pearce Commission, which was meant to bring independence to the majority but the commission had not involved the black majority. It was at this point that saw Bishop Muzorewa engaged in full time politics for the struggle for independence hence, "There is the need to re-position Muzorewa's role in the armed struggle which also shaped the nature of Church-State relations in the Rhodesia of the 1970s (Linden, 1979). So that the role played by church leaders is clearly understood by the church and society, and that it be appreciated.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The role played by Bishop Muzorewa is controversial especially to the current political leadership, and that has led to the stigmatization of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Bishop Muzorewa was part and parcel of the liberation struggle and conflicting statements were said about his role, hence the need to research about him so that the truth about him will be exposed

1.3 AIM

To evaluate the role played by Bishop Abel Muzorewa and its impact to the United Methodist Church

OBJECTIVES

The research will be guided by the following objectives:

1. The role of Muzorewa as the Bishop
2. The role of Muzorewa as the Prime Minister
3. Political intrigue-possible motivation and influence
4. Evaluation –impact on the church, Zimbabwean politics and self

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

When one examines the mission of the church as it is in the gospel according to saint Matthews chapter 28 verses 19 -20, and evaluates the ministry of Bishop Muzorewa, there is a temptation to ask: can religious leaders become political leaders? This has led to the idea of wanting to evaluate how Bishop Muzorewa played the two roles. Did the political role leave a good person? What image did that give to the church that he led? These and many other questions led me to want to know more about Bishop Muzorewa and his political role.

This research will endeavour to bring out the role that the church leaders played in the struggle for national independence of Zimbabwe as Muzorewa seemed to have acted as the midwife for Zimbabwe. This is evidenced by his choice by the nationalists when he was chosen leader of the ANC in 1972 in the successful campaign to reject the Anglo-Rhodesian constitutional proposals for settling the political impasse in this country (by Misa: 2010) It is out of this understanding that the research needs to look at role that was played by church leaders like Bishop Abel Muzorewa in the struggle for liberation. He had played important roles in the struggle against White minority rule in Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia). At a point in the liberation struggle when the nationalists were mainly in prison, underground or in exile, Muzorewa, rose to mobilize the populace and gave them hope. We are yet to see whether his role has not been cheated or that nothing of significance really took place

1.5 Scope

Bishop Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa should be understood in the context of a national leader both in the church and politics because his political involvement was at national level and his Episcopal role was also national because United Methodist Church is found throughout Zimbabwe. The period under study covers the period 1972 – 1980 and it was characterized by Bishop Muzorewa's active involvement in national politics as a leader through invitation to chair the ANC when the nationalists were either in prison or in exile. This invitation was to facilitate a campaign for a NO vote on a constitutional matter that was going to give independence to Rhodesia from Britain without the involvement of the black majority people. Most nationalists in prison or exile were not there to campaign against the drafting of the new Constitution; Muzorewa's voice was loud as he was the Chairperson of All-African Conference of Churches and an Episcopal leader, whose mentorship was from of an influential leader Bishop Dodge who championed the African cause. This could have led Muzorewa being picked for the duty, thus making him the subject of research. Being a church leader it is of paramount importance that the role played by church leaders in the liberation struggle is brought up. It is equally important to evaluate Muzorewa as he played such dual role. The research will fold up in 1980; because of the attainment of independence of Zimbabwe. The major objective of going to war had been achieved and there were fewer activities from Bishop Muzorewa after 1980.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is not much literature available in Zimbabwe that talks about Bishop Muzorewa and his involvement in politics of liberation in Zimbabwe. Joshua Nkomo in his book, 'The Story of My Life,' describes Muzorewa as a "political novice". Nkomo wrote "On his suggestion we approached a well-known church man the Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa.....it was soon suggested that, since Muzorewa was a political novicethe Council appeal could be broadened if the Bishop became the Chairman"

Joshua Nkomo's book "The Story of My Life" seem to project a negative image of the bishop and yet it is Nkomo himself who invited Muzorewa into the politics probably to use him for their political expedience. It is out of this description that Nkomo gives on Bishop Muzorewa that invokes to assess whether Muzorewa's role has not been down played by one of Zimbabwean's

most celebrated national figures gaining cheap popularity by undermining Bishop Muzorewa. A point to note from Joshua Nkomo's work is that, he is an interested person in all this leadership problem hence cannot be expected to be impartial to Bishop Abel Muzorewa. The interesting part from the book is that we get a picture of how Bishop Muzorewa was invited to lead ANC. We also get the idea of the nature of the leadership struggle among the nationalist themselves that probably led Bishop Muzorewa to hold on to power and subsequently turned into a fulltime Politician cum Bishop. Joshua Nkomo's book title "The Story of My Life" shows bias towards his life more than anything. Those that are mentioned are either enhancing his way up the political ladder or are those who were an impediment to his vision and among them is Bishop Abel Muzorewa hence he describes him as a 'political novice, suggesting that Bishop Muzorewa had little to offer in politics, and his contribution to the struggle for independence was insignificant. The Story of My Life seems to justify the leadership of Joshua Nkomo himself than anything else.

Bishop Ralph Dodge in his autobiography "**The Revolutionary Bishop**," noted that "not only was the population divided, but members of families were often separated from each other geographically, ideologically, and emotionally. Tensions were felt within the Christian community. Perhaps the United Methodist Church was the most divided of all because of the dual position of Bishop Muzorewa." Bishop Dodge looked at how the church members had a divided loyalty; they loved their church but not ideologically in tune with the Bishop's political point of view. This section will be used when looking at whether it is right for church leaders to be involved in national politics, the view of Bishop Dodge is critical as this is coming from Muzorewa's predecessor and fellow Bishop. This book seem to suggest that Bishop Muzorewa should not have played a dual role as leader of a political party while retaining his ecclesiastical office as this led to division of loyalty among church members. The smooth running of church affairs suffered since Bishop Muzorewa was once in exile and some annual conferences were not held and at times Bishop Ralph Dodge himself was called to chair the Annual Conferences in Bishop Muzorewa's place. This was in fulfilment of constitutional requirements that Annual Conferences are chaired by Bishops. The other affairs of the Church were being cared by other Church appointees. Bishop Dodge's book became important when evaluating the role played by Bishop Muzorewa in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Lloyd Nyarota in his book; ‘**Religious leadership in National Political Conflicts**’ Wants to celebrate the role played by Bishop Muzorewa by highlighting the positive contributions he made without making a critical look of the whole period. He gives Bishop Muzorewa the role of a peace maker in the whole struggle. In Nyarota’s book the researcher will find the positive role played by Muzorewa but will further look at how Muzorewa developed a fully-fledged political party. Was this role compatible with the Christian ethics, what good news will the Bishop preach under such scenario?

Bishop Abel Muzorewa’s autobiography “**Rise up and walk,**” just like others who wrote of their autobiography Bishop Muzorewa attempted to write in his favour. He narrates how he got involved in politics and how he ended being the leader of a political party, most importantly is the fact that got the blessings of the Annual Conference members who were consulted and agreed with the Bishop. The Bishop help by narrating what he thought was right for Christians when dealing with political issues “I wanted our people to be liberated from over eighty years of colonialism and the implication that Africans are by nature inferior. The Church had to work hard to exorcise the demons of that inferiority complex”. This indicates that the Bishop did not so much want to be a political leader but he knew that salvation cannot be completed without political liberation hence he saw no problem in doing both. This was influenced by his predecessor Bishop Ralph Dodge who challenged the government of the day. In the book we find the leadership wrangles that characterized our liberation struggle and how Bishop Muzorewa tried to fill that gap as a peace maker in a non-violent way. Bishop Muzorewa argue that while nationalist leaders were either in detention or in exile he continued to engage Ian Smith government into talks and mobilizing people to support the ideology of majority rule than racial discrimination that was prevalent that time. Bishop Muzorewa helps us understand his role in political involvement and how the United Methodist Church ended up being involved as a Church. It is interesting to note contrary to what people say in the street how Muzorewa was instrumental in most of the Internal Talks that took place during the period 1971 to 1978 and how Ian Smith listened to him and always wanted to come to table for discussion and again that he was never imprisoned by Smith’s government. But just like in other autobiographies it is expected that one write things that he feels is good and could not oppose self hence care need to be exercised.

Ian Smith in his book “**Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal.**” gives us the knowledge of how Smith viewed his racist government to be doing to the black majority people. Smith thought that the British government was failing to understand him, “Our biggest problem was to get Britain and the rest of the free world to understand Africa. Let me repeat that, to my reasoning, the true Africa is sub-Sahara Africa. Our problem was to bring these Africans across, to try to bridge a 2,000-year gap in the shortest possible time”.(1997:149) Probably suggesting that it was an evolution process which he had a mandate to execute and for that reason Smith would hold on to power until the civilization gap had been closed. That also means that anyone who opposes that is a terrorist because Smith believed that he had the mandate to civilize which he acknowledged was taking shape. “.... and a growing number of black people joining the ranks of the wealthy, owning modern houses and employing their own servants, whereas a few decades previously they themselves had been the servants. But it took time....”Smith viewed Muzorewa as not experienced in politics as in most cases Muzorewa continued to change positions and that for Smith delayed majority rule. Muzorewa was confused and the other nationalist were terrorists and Smith never changed that stance until his death. One would think that since the book was written seventeen years after independence the language would be changed, but that never was the case.

Dickson Mungazi in his book **The Honoured Crusade** gives a profound and moving historical account of Bishop Ralph E Dodge in the emergence of nationalism, how the Bishop prepared and mobilized Africans to take serious issues of leadership both in the church and in politics. Mungazi gives us the impression that Bishop Dodge had an unsegregated attitude towards African education and leadership. Mungazi presented to us that “the challenge that Ralph Dodge responded to in assuming his duties as a Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe in 1956 and the record of his accomplishments from that time up to the time that the right wing Rhodesia Front party (RF) deported him in July 1964, was part of the Methodist heritage that he felt called upon to preserve” (Mungazi D 1991:1). The book informs us of unfavourable social conditions which were not good for the advancement of the African people and that the church could not stand and watch such a situation. Mungazi presents Bishop Dodge as sincere in demonstrating the church’s commitment in developing Christian values and development of Africans. The book became useful in the study when looking at historical background of the

United Methodist church from missionary activities especially in chapter two. It is equally useful when looking at the involvement of Bishop Muzorewa in national politics of Zimbabwe. The book presents the involvement of Church leaders in politics as a heritage of the United Methodist Church.

1.7 Methodology

Since Theology and Religious studies are two inter linked disciplines, the research will employ multi-dimensional methods of study such as the historical analytical approach, scientific approach, and the theological approach. The historical approach is interested in the development of events and the behaviour of the main players behind the identified events. The merit of this approach is that it dwells on the real life experience of the targeted research, in this case the role played by church leaders in the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. The scientific method recognizes the fact that events do happen in a dynamic social context. This approach uses sociology, psychology, anthropology and economics to better understand the Bible. (Holmberg 1978:43) such a sociological approach appreciates the fact that the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe happened not in a vacuum but in a society that had its own challenges and success. The scientific approach acknowledges the society's values in the growth and impact of religious ideals. "Theological approach clearly states that theology promotes clear social-cultural values which enhance quality life (Schreiter, R. J, 1992:180.) Suggesting that, theology operates under human will power, hence the need to question certain issues that the church does or fails to do. This method will assess the conditions in which the church operates in, the church's relevancy and authenticity to the historical social context of its own mission (Beavan 1992:31.) A variety of data sources such as published sources journals from the church and interviews will be employed to give the research a contextual base.

Chapter two

2.1 MUZOREWA AS THE BISHOP

Bishop Abel Muzorewa was born in 1925 at Old Umtali mission. His parents came from Rusape in Muziti area under chief Makoni. His parents worked at for missionaries at Old Mutare mission centre. The bishop went to school at Old Mutare mission. Bishop Abel Tendekai Muzorewa became a licensed preacher at a very young age. He became a licensed preacher when he was 19 and was ordained an elder by Bishop Ralph E, in 1957. Dodge the Church's last Missionary Bishop in Africa, (news archives-umc.org.) When Bishop Dodge started sending African students to study in America, Bishop Muzorewa was among the students who acknowledged by saying "I and many others will never forget that it was Bishop Ralph Dodge who had the vision and determination to crash through the barrier of higher education of Zimbabweans. He secured funds so that more than one hundred of us could go to Europe or America for study....." Muzorewa. A.T. (1978:47-48.) the bishop was not the church's first choice but they had first approached Rev Jonah Kawadza who refused to take the offer because of family commitment, Muzorewa was asked to take the offer he quickly grabbed the offer to go to America for further studies.

When Muzorewa returned from America, in 1963 armed with American education and probably influenced by Black American theology, he quickly made an impact in the church as he was appointed to work with the youth in the church and later with the youth at ecumenical level. The bishop influenced the youth to join the liberation struggle outside the country. This influence would later see him being approached to lead ANC.

When in 1968, Bishop Dodge who was running the church from exile decided to retire; people thought that Rev Jonah Kawadza who was the administrative assistant and running the United Methodist church would be any automatic candidate. When elections were conducted Bishop Muzorewa emerged as the winner in the sixth ballot. In 1972 Bishop Muzorewa was elected life bishop of the church. As life bishop it meant that there was not going to be episcopal election until Muzorewa retired. This explains why even during the time that he was involved in politics the church was not able to make episcopal changes and this was a first experience which the church had no idea on what to do with the situation. Muzorewa became the bishop of the united

Methodist from 1968 to 1992 when he retired from active ministry. Bishop Dodge did well in empowering Africans in leadership. It seems Muzorewa was on two occasions a second choice. Bishop Dodge gave Africans opportunity to be educated, both the laity and the clergy were given equal opportunity to go for further studies. During the time of Bishop Muzorewa, there were many people who were in high government positions; these were beneficiaries of the Dodge initiative. These people were mostly in the Ministry of Education. They were schools inspectors, headmasters, and regional directors. These people helped Bishop Muzorewa in many ways as they were involved in church leadership of that time. Even when some missionaries went back to their country the church leadership was able to run the affairs of the church.

In administering the church he was a fearless person, who saw in the gospel the power of liberation through the teachings of Christ Jesus. The fearless trait is found even before he becomes Bishop of the church when he organized a demonstration against the deportation of Bishop Dodge. As the first African bishop, he did not hesitate to lead the denomination to where he left in 1992 when he retired from active ministry. The mission schools which were left in his hands are still there and improving. The church under Bishop Muzorewa grew to greater level as evidenced by the number of ordained pastors in the conference.

The election of Bishop Muzorewa into an Episcopal office in 1968 is very historic in that the denomination was uniting with another church that is the United Brethren and Methodist church forming the United Methodist Church. Bishop Muzorewa also became the first African Bishop of formerly missionary churches. This could also be the reason why even in the ecumenical council of Zimbabwe he was given leadership responsibility basing on the trust that he was leading one of the big churches as an African that time.

Bishop Muzorewa presided over a church that still had white missionaries and whites only congregation, it is unfortunate that when he got involved in politics the congregations decided to move out of the church. Showing how racial the whites were even those who were professing Christians. It also shows that Bishop Muzorewa had a tough time to try and unite people together.

There was a lot of church property which were left in his charge, for example he was left about 10 mission schools big and small, in most of the missions, there were still missionaries. The

church was running a paper called *'Umboo'* which was later banned because it was seen as propagating Bishop Muzorewa's political aspirations.

Through the organizations of the church, the church continued to grow numerically. Even during the time the Bishop was in politics, although divided in ideology, the church did not lose its membership as was seen up to this day that even the pastors who left UANC to join the patriotic front are still in good standing with the church. The problem that we seem to have is that there was a time when the Bishop was banned to visit rural areas, his visit to church meetings was associated with his political activities and most of our members are found and in his place there were always some other leaders of the church who were given the task. We should also note that the Bishop at one time was in self-exile in Mozambique around 1974 and was also in exile around 1977, which compromised his leadership of the church.

With all the political involvement of Bishop Muzorewa, it seems even the church after he retired having served the church for so many years, has not honoured him in any significant way. His successor, Bishop Jokomo, had the library named after him at Africa University Library. Only a boys dormitory at Mrewa mission is named after him in his honour.

It is very surprising that the Bishop who when other denominations were not ready to ordain women clergy, the Bishop ordained them in Zimbabwe, against the traditional background that women were not supposed to be ordained. One wonders as to how such a man could not be accorded such a high status. It is to the best knowledge of church leadership not to give or to give him the status that fits his office. If there is anything of his name it was initiated by the family not the church. Is this not telling us something about the Bishop? Or it is the weakness of the church not to own one of their own.

Conclusion

The life and ministry of Bishop Abel Muzorewa is fascinating as he is the first African bishop and the only episcopal leader who played a double role in both politics and church leadership at the same time. One could not tell whether the bishop was addressing a political party or a church gathering as he could mix the two hence his ban to visit rural areas.

Chapter Three

Political intrigue-possible motivation and influence

3.0 Introduction

The History of the Liberation struggle of Zimbabwe is incomplete history without mention of church leaders. Church leaders such as Rev Ndabaningi Sithole, Rev Canaan Banana, Bishop Lamont, Bishop Muzorewa and many others used the pulpit to advocate for the independence of Rhodesia. Many were not mentioned, but had contact with the general populace whom they gave hope. Church leaders some among the outspoken church leaders at national level was Bishop Abel Muzorewa. When he became Episcopal leader of the United Methodist Church, in 1968 he was also elected chairperson of the All-Africa Conference of Churches. In 1971 he was coincidentally chosen as President of the African Conference of Churches and as President of the African National Council (ANC). Bishop Abel Muzorewa was the only person who played a dual role “in church and secular politics simultaneously” (Nyarota L.T. 2013:5).

Admittedly there are other church leaders who played important roles in the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe, but the case of Bishop Muzorewa is unique, in that the noble peace prize winner of South Africa, Bishop Desmond Tutu, though a champion for the African cause and very powerful, he did not involve himself in party politics to the extent of being a political party Chairperson. The story of Bishop Muzorewa therefore needs some attention as he played dual roles of church and political leaders.

3.1 Bishop Muzorewa and politics

The time that Bishop Dodge was deported, Bishop Abel Muzorewa had returned from United States of America in 1963, Muzorewa organized a protest against Bishop Dodge's deportation in 1964. In 1965, he was Secretary for the Youth Christian Council. “I felt proud upon returning to Rhodesia in December 1965 to begin work as Youth Secretary for the Student Council and as the travelling Secretary for the student Christian Movement” (Muzorewa, A.T. 1978:61). The Bishop becomes involved in political issues soon after his return from America. What he did in America is not stated but that he had a Master's Degree in Theology. It cannot be ruled out that

during his stay in America, he interacted with American Black theology or was influenced by it. Muzorewa as leader of students' Christian movement (SCM) asserted "we believe in a saviour who suffers on behalf of the oppressed and who walks with us in our struggle for liberation" (Muzorewa, A.T. 1978:627). This confirms that the Bishop was influenced by black theology while in America and his active roles in such national positions helped him to be recognized by Nationalist leaders.

There are three accounts that tell us how Muzorewa was involved in full-fledged politics, one from Joshua Nkomo, Muzorewa himself and Dr Masapula Sithole. Joshua Nkomo says "I also got in touch with Josiah Chinamano, who had by now been released, in order to set up a front organization to co-ordinate African opposition. On his suggestion we approached a well-known church-man, the Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa. He seemed an ideal candidate for the treasure-ship of the new body which we decided to call the African National Council...., since the Bishop was a political novice, while Josiah was closely identified with me, the council's appeal could be broadened if the Bishop became Chairman...." (NKomo, J. 1984:41).

In The above account the impression is that Bishop Muzorewa was involved in national leadership at ecumenical organizations and using his new found knowledge was initiated by Joshua Nkomo as a political candidate useful only for the campaign against the Pearce Commission. Muzorewa turned politician at Joshua Nkomo's suggestion.

The second assertion is by Bishop Muzorewa himself. "I was surprised when the full committee arrived at my home to ask me to head the new movement. Already they knew of my agreement which I had the main outline for it. The new organization would aim, they said, to unite all our people, establish a new orientation to the struggle and bring about majority rule. The immediate objective, however, would be to fight and defeat the Smith-Home proposal" Muzorewa (1978:94). This shows that Muzorewa was asked by a group of national leaders and the mandate to lead ANC was not only limited to one issue but two, that is the short term, to defeat the Smith-Home proposal and the second was to bring majority rule. Muzorewa argued that Nkomo and Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole were only consulted but the idea came from Josiah Chinamano that Muzorewa be appointed as the Chairman of the new organization. The third assertion was advanced by Masapula Sithole who wrote "Once there was a consensus on the need for an organization and the basic executive structure, it was agreed that the leader of the proposed

council should be a non-controversial personality, preferably someone who was nota member of either ZANU or ZAPU. It had to be someone of national stature, influence, and respectability. Names were put on the table and discussed. A consensus was finally received on the name of Bishop Abel Tendekai Muzorewa ...”(Masipula, S. 1999:133).

This account seems more appealing as it indicates that it was in a formal meeting that many names were thrown on the table and one came out against the set rules that were set. The three accounts try to explain how Bishop Muzorewa found himself chairman of the African National Council. It depends from the angle in which one is coming from as there seems to be no consensus as to how Muzorewa was chosen to be the Chairperson of ANC. Masipula Sithole is closer to the true account but does not give the mandate, which Bishop Muzorewa himself give. This leaves the Joshua Nkomo account with suspicion when compared with what MasipulaSithole’s assertion.

3.2 Bishop Muzorewa as leader of ANC 1971-1974

From what has been learnt so far, one would conclude that Bishop Muzorewa was a man with the African cause at heart. It is here that we need to examine the mandate, and what ANC contributed to the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. Ariston Chambati informs us that, “In any discussion on the question of National Unity in Zimbabwe, the African National Council (ANC) during the period 1971 to 1979, occupies an important place in the history of the liberation movement....” (Chambati, A.M 1989.147). This in itself tells how Muzorewa is important in the whole struggle. But the question is what did he do? What was his role as leader of the ANC.? The other latent questions are why the church chose Muzorewa at such a decisive moment and why him in particular.

If follow the account ofMasipula Sithole, it is important to note that the canon that was on the table although no human can possess all of these shows that Bishop Muzorewa had unique leadership qualities. This can be the reason why the church in 1968 elected him to the Episcopal office. It is the reason why he is found in Ecumenical Leadership within the country from his early ministry. The formation of African National Council in 1971 was because the Nationalist Leaders were in detention, and there was non-one on the ground to mobilize the masses against the Pearce Commission which was about to come. Since anyone associated with either ZANU or

ZAPU would not lead the council as that would have led to more imprisonment and exiles, a neutral person was therefore required. This leadership was found in Bishop Muzorewa.

His first assignment as ANC Chairperson was to campaign against the Pearce Commission whose objective was to give independence to Rhodesia without involving the black majority. This was supposed to be involving all the people in Zimbabwe. The ANC was formed in December 1971 as a vehicle through which African political thought could be expressed in this regard” (Chambati, A.M 1989:147). The organization was formed because there was a political vacuum internally as most of them were in exile or in detention. Its purpose and mandate was to fight against the Smith- Home constitutional talks in Salisbury, Rhodesia. African people were excluded from the talks....” (Chambati, A.M. 1987:147). The proposal needed an approval from the majority black Bishop Muzorewa being the chairperson of ANC managed to mobilize people for a ‘NO’ vote. The constitution was rejected. Was Bishop Muzorewa supposed to end here as he had achieved his mandate? Did he overstay his welcome? Chambati reports that “On the day that the Pearce Commission left Rhodesia it was decided to turn the ANC into a permanent organization, Abel Muzorewa was asked to continue as its leader, as President” (Chambati, A.M. 1989:150). It is here where one is informed about the ANC vowing to fight until Zimbabwe got its independence. Again following rumours of a split in the ANC, a special meeting was held in September 1973, at which these rumours were dismissed and unity under the leadership of the Bishop reaffirmed. The Bishop was also given a mandate to continue with the regime to achieve majority rule” (Chambati A.M 1989:151). Thus is an indicator that the Bishop was a unifier and peace lover. He embodied the leadership quality that was needed during that time to combat the Ian Smith-Home constitution. He was continuously given the mandate to lead the council to independence. From 1972 to 1974, Bishop Muzorewa was instrumental in mobilizing the people for a ‘NO’ vote and also became a unifier of politics in the country. For Bishop Muzorewa, peaceful – co-existence and an attempt to win independence was possible as seen by his desire for peace settlements.

In looking at the contribution that Bishop Muzorewa made to the liberation struggle it must be equally observed that he was not in isolation from the frontline states as they are the ones who mooted the idea of forming unity between ZAPU and ZANU. Amidst of all this, the frontline states resurrected the so called “Lusaka Manifesto” of 1969 and demanded that ZANU merge

with other Zimbabwe Liberation organization under the leadership of Nkomo which was rejected by ZANU off-hand, and then Muzorewa (accepted) for purpose of negotiating a political settlement with the Smith regime in the name of “detente” or relaxation of tensions in Southern Africa” (Masipula, S.1999.98). It follows that he had links with the likes of President Kaunda of Zambia, President Nyerere of Tanzania and others who held the idea of Unity so as to have majority rule in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi and other states were independent leaving Zimbabwe and South Africa. Because of the respect and influence he commanded Bishop Muzorewa managed during 1971-1974 to relate well with the Frontline states leaders, and Smith did not ban or imprison Muzorewa as he had done previously with other nationalist leaders.

Bishop Muzorewa is seen as an astute leader who could relate well with other leaders. “In the 1970s, African National Council (ANC) emerged as an important new internal force. It had its administrative bases in Harare and could enlist substantial support from the African churches in the City”(Hallencreutz. C.F. 1988:401). The Bishop was able to work with other church leaders, because of his good Ecumenical relations and was well acquainted to the other church leaders in Harare and other cities. The funding of ANC was also coming from the World Council of Churches was channelled for the African cause. There are certain clerics like Bishop Burrough of the Anglican who criticized it, yet most African clerics received the donations positively. Andrew Ndhlela of Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, H. Kachidza, and C. Banana all received it with gladness as the support was meant to aid African Liberation.

Between 1971- 1974 Muzorewa was held in high esteem by both the nationalists and the church. Was he the Moses of the time who wanted to take the people to their promised land? Among his achievements as Chairperson of ANC are as follows:-

- 1972 elected national chairperson of ANC.
- Same year mobilized people for a ‘No’ vote to the Pearce Commission and won.
- After the Pearce Commission ANC made a permanent organization and Muzorewa was asked to lead now in the capacity as president.
- September 1973 –the Bishop was also given the mandate to continue with the regime to achieve majority rule.

- March 1974, Conference – The Conference reaffirmed the Bishop’s leadership and gave the ANC a mandate to continue negotiations with the Smith Regime.
- December 1974 – Continued to promote unity among the African Nationalists that is, ZANU, ZAPU and Frolizi with the above achievements as leader of ANC.

The 1972 Pearce Commission was seen as the first opportunity for Africans to air their political views since the colonial period. The Africans’ ‘No’ vote was seen as win to their white masters and oppressors who were not expecting such as overwhelming defeat from the African. That achievement was attributed to the ANC which was led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Although there was already war, Bishop Muzorewa as a unifier continued with the talks with the Smith regime to try and bring majority rule through negotiations.

With all these achievements attained Bishop Muzorewa, Joshua Nkomo continued to view the ANC leadership as not genuine to the cause of Africans. “The Congress elected new leadership, and once again Zimbabwean nationalism had a genuine voice, the ANC (Zimbabwe) (Nkomo, J. 1984.156). This was after Joshua Nkomo had organized a political conference to elect new leaders. Bishop Muzorewa and Rev Ndabaningi Sithole were outside the country and yet they were supposed to have called for the congress. Did Bishop Muzorewa fear to be unseated as President of ANC? Why did he decide not to follow the Lusaka Agreement which required that they held a congress within four months?

PERIOD 1975 TO 1980

The second part will now look at how Muzorewa fell out of favour with most national leaders. The major questions will be why did the Bishop decide to have an army as a clergy man? Why did he use the gun so as to maintain his position? What really happened with internal settlements which seem to indicate his outright political fall-out with Nationalists? Why would he contest for the office of the President with the Nationalists? How far the Bishop was supposed to continue in politics while those who had mandated him to lead ANC had left and formed or reviewed their parties? There are many questions to answers as Muzorewa, the once esteemed church man, who previously was viewed as the Biblical Moses now turned into a political sell-out by the very people who had chosen him to lead ANC. Ian Smith reports that, “Nyerere was supporting Kaunda in uniting the Rhodesian factions under Muzorewa and the ANC, but that there were

problems. Nkomo and Sithole were digging their heels in order to retain their identity....” (Smith, I.D.1997:167). Thus party leaders were the ones who destroyed the unifying force that they had been formed to end the Zimbabwean problem. Smith in his view made a mockery of African Nationalist leaders, “Muzorewa, Nkomo, Sithole, and Mugabe – all claimed to be leaders. That’s African; anyone who does not comprehend that kind of scene does not understand African (Smith I. 1997:167), showing that there was leadership wrangles from the Nationalist Leaders. But while all these were taking place, was Bishop Muzorewa not seeing it and ask leave from politics as those who had chosen him were all claiming nationalist leadership. Did he fail to read the signs of the times? The Bishop did not want to betray the nation by leaving politicians in their power fighting? So he kept holding on, Bishop Muzorewa was supposed to have left politics soon after ANC disintegrated and concentrated his efforts in Church business, rather than forming a political party the United African National Congress (UANC). In continuing in politics at this point, the mandate given to him as African National Council president had expired because ANC had fallen out. Bishop Muzorewa who is described by Nyarota and other commentators as a peace loving leader, who did not want to achieve independence by the barrel of the gun but by continuing to talk to Ian Smith now as a political leader is now not a unifier as we see in this period that ANC is no longer a trusted front by the National leaders in exile.

When nationalist leaders like Joshua Nkomo began to revive their political parties and start to negotiate with Ian Smith as individual parties, it shows that “Nationalists had chosen Christian leaders to run the council with the hope that the arrangement would serve their own interests”. (ZAPU Publicity Bureau.1977:8). Showing that in the minds of the nationalist the council was just a Midwife that stands to facilitate change of power without the council leadership becoming a political entity. Bishop Muzorewa in his autobiography even stated that “I have no personal ambition. I seek no office, nor position for myself, only democratic rule for my country” (Muzorewa, A.1973) in Bulawayo. This points to us that Muzorewa had never campaigned to be voted as ANC leader, and that confirmed his quality of leadership, the leadership traits that led him to be recognized by those who appointed him leader of the ANC and confirmation of his leadership until 1974.

But why did Joshua Nkomo leave the ANC and form ANC Zimbabwe. The original idea of forming ANC that was led by Bishop Muzorewa is summarized by Mr Mawema who says that “the major consideration in creating a National Executive for original ANC was for ZANU and ZAPU to be represented on the Executive Committee as equitably as was humanly possible. We also looked at individuals who would not only be ZANU and ZAPU but competent organizers as well. Tribal or ethnic considerations were not a strong factor at all” (Masipula S. 1999:132). Should Muzorewa be blamed for continuing in power after Nkomo had left? Was it not within the power of the two parties to seat and review progress and possibly make some changes to suit their agenda if Bishop Muzorewa was now weak and falling out of the tune with their original plan. Was it not that Nkomo was thirsty for power that he was determined to undermine ANC leadership by forming his ANC-Zimbabwe? If this was the case then Bishop Muzorewa and his predominant ANC clergy was justified to continue in power as he had the mandate of the larger group. He could not be seen as accepting the position of one man, Joshua Nkomo. In holding on to power after Nkomo had left, can Bishop Muzorewa be described as one who sought to hinder genuine African independence by holding on to power?

In 1974 there was the Lusaka meeting which was called by the front-line states again to try and rescue the Zimbabwe issues, this was under the leadership of Bishop Abel Muzorewa but unfortunately, he was further pushed out by the ZAPU and ZANU leadership. Independence could not be easily achieved as most initiatives to bring harmony to the Zimbabwean nationalist leadership continued to out-do each other. This is also evidenced by the Dar-Salam meeting where Rev Ndabaningi Sithole was rejected by the commanders of ZANU in favour of Robert Mugabe, the same with Bishop Muzorewa. It meant that if one does not have an army he cannot lead the struggle. But was Muzorewa the kind of person who preferred to win the struggle using the gun? In most cases the Bishop in peace talks with Ian Smith and frontline states leaders tried to reach a transfer of power to the majority rule without the bloodshed that was shed during the war of liberation. The nation lost many young people, schools, churches, infrastructure, relatives and economic activities were lost as the war continued. Many people were displaced, racial discrimination continued; one would ask whether it was proper for the Bishop to want to continue in negotiations rather than waging a war against the oppressor? Is Nyarota right to say Bishop Muzorewa was a peace loving person? Was he not encouraging the nationalist to intensify the war by his action? Was Ian Smith not taking advantage of peace negotiations to

delay the transfer of power to the majority rule, that when seen by the Nationalist leaders they would describe Bishop Muzorewa as a weak person?

After the Dar-Salam meeting, Bishop Muzorewa wanted to take control of the armed forces in Mozambique but failed, he then went into self-exile in Mozambique. It is self-exile because he was not banned in Rhodesia, but he had decided to collaborate with the Sons and daughters of the country who were living in stressful conditions in the bush and at the same time wanted to liberate the country. When the idea of taking control of the armed forces failed, the Bishop returned to Zimbabwe again to have talks with Smith. Also to note is that even Father Zimbabwe, Joshua Nkomo, had some secret talks with Ian Smith for the transfer of power but also failed in his endeavours.

In looking at all these problems the question that one should always ask is, were the failures of the ANC under the leadership of Bishop Abel Muzorewa caused by the Bishop, or it was the unwilling co-operation of the Nationalist leaders who had their agenda for leadership control. If the qualities of a leader that were raised earlier on are anything to go by, one is tempted to say the struggle for control of leadership and recognition was the major contributing factor in Bishop Abel Muzorewa's failure to properly deliver his mandate. According to Mwangagwa E.D. (1989:143), this new ANC was also placed under Bishop Muzorewa and now there was a third party FROLIZI under Nathan Shamuyarira which was arguing that ZAPU and ZANU were "Ideologically bankrupt? According to Shamuyarira, "ZANU and ZAPU had not been able to sustain the spirit of a confrontation with the white settlers that had characterized the struggle in the early years of 1964 to 1968". Mwangagwa assert the forming of many liberation movements not a sign of discontentment or power struggle within the movement, that it becomes easy to place the blame on Bishop Muzorewa that he was failing to lead ANC properly (Mwangagwa E. D. 1989:142). But how come they continue to entrust him with such task. Mwangagwa continue to shoulder blame on the New ANC when he said "but after the Lusaka Declaration the new ANC failed to prosecute the war. The ANC established a liberation committee which was headed by Ndabaningi Sithole". This was a really counter-productive attack which needs further investigation as Joshua Nkomo would say that the last years of the liberation struggle were a real worst of time.

Are there no facts that show Bishop Muzorewa at the far end and that made the popular notion of a sell-out become so prominent over what he had done? From 1975 onwards there is no longer the ANC as constituted in 1971, there was UANC, the other parties, ZAPU, and ZANU are also operating under different leaderships. In his usual effort Bishop Muzorewa continued to have talks with Ian Smith. “During the course of these talks, Abel Muzorewa reached an agreement with Ian Smith and signed a document containing proposals which were identical to the 1971 proposals. He did without consulting his Central Committee. The matter was eventually debated at a Central Committee meeting held on June 2, 1974, and the proposals were unanimously rejected.” (Banana C.S. 1989:152) This signalled the mistrust of Bishop Muzorewa’s leadership, as he began to do things behind his central committee. It is not true that leaders are supposed to consult always before making decisions. However from the look of things as reported by Banana C.S there was some act of dishonest “when questioned why he had signed the document without consulting his central committee. The Bishop argued that he and Ian Smith had agreed to amend the document after they had signed it, to reflect the position of the ANC. He claimed that the document in his possession was an amended version. But, according the Bishop’s uncle, Chad Chipunza, who was present at the time of the signing ceremony, the Bishop had in fact signed the document without any amendments. (Banana C.S 1989:153) This is the point where the character and leadership of Bishop Abel Muzorewa became questionable in various quarters. This was an act of dishonesty, as a result of this; the Bishop would not have credibility among those he led. In the eyes of the Nationalists it was a ‘real selling-out’ of the country, how could he secretly sign to accept a document which was out rightly rejected by the people in 1971. Joshua Nkomodescribes Bishop Muzorewa as a political novice, Ian Smith describe him as a ‘weak link’. “It was a dreadful position in which we found ourselves. Here was a man who was a leading member of our team, who had concurred with decisions which we had made, and now, only when he was cornered, conceded that he had done so under false pretences.” (Smith, I.D.1997:259). The Bishop as a cleric was now lacking integrity and this made him to lose trust from Ian Smith and the Nationalists. Further to that his deputy, Mundawarara then chose to be on the side of Ndabaningi Sithole, previously Canaan Banana had crossed over to ZANU, and his personal secretary also left leading to a lot of shake-ups in the UANC. It is also argued that, Bishop Muzorewa “began to advocate peaceful negotiations with the Smith government, at the

same time denouncing the armed struggle. Consequently, it was he himself who brought about divisions within the ANC” (Banana, C.S. 1987:156).

When Bishop Muzorewa was in Mozambique he expelled Joshua Nkomo from ANC, and “The majority of the ANC had lost confidence in their leader” (Banana C.S. 1987:156) Because of such actions the frontlines states could no longer support ANC but shifted their focus to ZANU and ZAPU and the leaders of the nationalist movements would obviously not have supported Bishop Muzorewa. Bishop Muzorewa further joined the Smith regime in the so called Internal Settlement. “It is important to point out that by joining the Smith government, Abel Muzorewa committed political suicide, and in fact he drove a political death nail into a coffin where the ANC was to be buried” (Banana C.S 1987:158). Without making any excuse, the nationalists would not be accused of calling the Bishop a sell-out as he was now seating comfortably with Ian Smith. To further prove that Bishop Muzorewa was weak in politics “the period of the Smith /Muzorewa joint leadership saw the intensification of bombings of the infrastructures of the liberation movements both in Zambia and Mozambique, and Mass killings of freedom fighters” (Banana C.S 1989:158). It can be argued that Bishop Muzorewa did not have control of the Defence Ministry, but the fact is that he was in a government that was committing all these acts. So Nkomo and Smith would call him ‘*political novice*’ and ‘*weak-link*’ respectively because of the Internal Settlement. Both the internal actors, ZANU and ZAPU questioned it and they now saw Muzorewa and Sithole as their foremost enemies. “For the patriotic front, the internal settlement was a provocation as it tried to settle the issue of the illegality of Rhodesia by marginalizing the liberation forces”(Hallecreutz, C.F 1988:434).by so doing Bishop Muzorewa’s UANC became the enemy of the people.

For one to further understand why Bishop Muzorewa was tagged as a sell-out was that the Bishop went on to form an army called *PfumoRevanh* which was involved in eliminating Muzorewa’s opponents. The Army was popularly known as the Auxiliary forces. The Auxiliary forces were seen as having taking the place of the more notorious Selous Scouts. These Auxiliary forces were trained by the Rhodesian forces of Ian Smith. But was Muzorewa being used by Smith in all these arrangements that he could not read how politics was being played?

If Bishop Abel Muzorewa was being cheated by Smith, then even the Patriotic front were also arm twisted by both the frontline states leaders and Lord Carrington – it is reported that during the Lancaster Conference that “none of the frontline states wanted the war to continue...Samora Michael had privately told him (Robert Mugabe) that he wanted peace, and without Mozambique as a Sanctuary ZANLA would collapse Michael told Mugabe, “we FRELIMO secured independence by Military victory against colonialist. But your settlers have not been defeated, so you must negotiate” (Moorcroft P and McLaughlin P. 2008:166). This was done so that independence was achieved through talks as warned by Lord Carrington that if The Patriotic front leaders do not accept the terms of the Lancaster Conference then, there was the “second class solution: recognition of Muzorewa”(Moorcroft, P and McLaughlin, P. 2008:167).if Mugabe was not arm twisted Muzorewa was going to be a victor at the end of the day, and Michael and other frontline states leaders were becoming tired of the war. Smith on the other hand was also arm- twisted however Muzorewa has conceded easily to Lord Carrington’s proposal. But Smith had to be brought into line by the toughness of Lord Carrington, the Conference Chairman” (Moorcroft P and McLaughlin P. 2008:168). The British then won the day making sure that all stakeholders play to its tune.

In the history of the liberation of Zimbabwe it is worth noting that despite the fact that Bishop Muzorewa was politically weak,he was equally instrumental in preventing the white supremacy between 1971 and 1974. It will not be good then to see him as if he is a non-actor in the struggle for independence, blunders he made yes especially in making UANC a political party and later with *PfumoRevanh* as his army. His motive for entering into the internal settlement are not very clear as it can be interpreted as the panache act of sell-out or as the aid in disguise for Lancaster Conference.

BUT WHAT ACTUALY WENT WRONG WITH BISHOP MUZOREWA?

Throughout the 1970s Bishop Abel Muzorewa opposed the white minority rule of Ian Smith, and he was advocating for a peaceful transition to democratic rule. In the later period of the struggle he seemed to have been corrupted by power and a promise of good material things at the expense of the majority. The ecumenical organization, the World Council of Churches which used to support them stopped. “The two black leaders, the United Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Congregationalist minister Ndabaningi Sithole (president of ZANU), had been generously

funded by the World Council of Churches in 1975 and 1976, when they joined interim government however, the funding stopped”, which is an indication that the move by Muzorewa was seen as a fatal one even by church organization. “In 1978 the special fund to combat racism gave Patriotic Front guerrillas who were Marxist-Leninists who opposed the interim government, \$85, 000, and \$5000, came from the World Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries”(Robb E.W and Robb. J 1992:4).The church must have noticed that one of its own has lost direction and went on to support Mugabe and Nkomo.Events which took place during the internal settlement were gruesome that the Bishop was just supposed to leave politics or join the patriotic front. The unfortunate did happen; the bishop went on to form an army to fight against the patriotic front. “The GNU’s (government of national unity) recruited of 16,000 African auxiliaries, (the so called *PfumoRevanh*u or Spear of the Nation), which was funded by South Africa”(Hove, M. 1990:18).The auxiliaries would disguise themselves as the real guerrillas and terrorize communities. They would go about telling people that the guerrillas will not win war against the white man. To add on to that the auxiliaries who were trained the Selous Scouts of Ian Smith,were later described by the Rhodesians as “an embarrassing failure in the effort to stem the guerrilla tide that was fast engulfing the Rhodes, cause untold suffering abusing villagers with impunity”(Hove M 1990:20). The churches, through World Council of Churches decide to work with Mugabe instead of their own. The same is said about the United Methodist church, “the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, like WCC and NCC, remarkably severed support for Muzorewa even though a bishop of their church and instead supported Mugabe’s Marxist guerrillas after the 1978 peace agreement leading to Muzorewa’s election” (Robb, E. W and Robb, J. 1992:7). The question is why did Muzorewa decide to enter into the Internal Settlement against all odds? Worse still why would the bishop need an army? Is this not a contradiction to what we used to know of him in the 1970s?It is really not sustainable to say that the Bishop was a peace loving person when in the later years of his political carrier;he used the army to fight against the guerrilla along-side the enemy of the patriotic front. Once the Bishop was in office as the country’s Prime Minister,Ian Smith intensified his raids in Mozambique and Zambia. “A Rhodesian external raid in Mozambique in October 1979 caused over 11million damage to infrastructure and seriously set back ZANLA’s hope for an overall military victory” (The guardian magazine 12 April 2010).Because he had agreed to the Internal

Settlement and the bombings so happened while he was in office then he sold out. The picture below shows the Bishop campaigning in his clerical attire



Bishop Muzorewa campaigning for election in 1979 adopted from the guardian 12april 2010

The truth and reconciliation of South Africa revealed that South African government supported the bishop for their personal advantage. “In the run-up to the March 1980 pre-independence election, Rhodesia remained at the top of SSC agenda.....excepts from the minutes of SSC meeting of 28 January 1980 provide an insight into the state’s strategic thinking at the time” (The truth and reconciliation report. 29 October 1998.) Why Rhodesia was to become a strategy for South Africa was for the protection of minority rule to remain in South Africa. They had to find for a weak person in Zimbabwe among the blacks whom they would support that if that person win the election them their interest would be safe guarded. This they found in Bishop Muzorewa, “The South African government raised an excess of R12million in support of Bishop Muzorewa’s United African Council (UANC) in the March 1980 elections.....at independence inherited a total debit of over R4000millionwhich South Africa was to insist was to be repaid”. (The truth and reconciliation report 29 October 1998) If the Bishop was involved in those sinister deals, to safeguard the interest of South Africa, then at this time, his moral standing as bishop of the church was very much compromised. Was it for the love of power, the prestige to want to live in state house that had overtaken his judgment? The truth and reconciliation report further point out that “.....was part of a much larger exercise involving the transfer to South Africa of

various parts of Rhodesia's pre-independence security apparatus. This included several hundreds of black members of Bishop Muzorewa's security force, Auxiliaries who were deployed to a farm near Pretoria." (The truth and reconciliation report 29 October 1998) This could be the reason why in 1983 Muzorewa was imprisoned as those who had crossed into South Africa were causing some disturbances along the Zimbabwean South African borders.

Muzorewa Abel was the first black Prime Minister of the short lived Zimbabwe – Rhodesia in 1979. Zimbabwe Rhodesia was born out of the Internal Settlement signed between Ian Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chief Jeremiah Chirawu, Muzorewa being the Prime Minister. This coalition Government failed in its attempts to create biracial government to end the civil war in Zimbabwe.

3.3 Muzorewa the Prime Minister

From the on-start, the transitional government was doomed to failure. Muzorewa became Prime Minister when his United National Council (UANC) agreed to an election which the Bishop won. This was historical in that this was the first time Africans were asked to cast their vote to choose a government of their choice from the time the country was colonized. The name of the country was changed to Zimbabwe Rhodesia from Rhodesia. The major weakness of this election was that it did not include the Patriotic front and the Patriotic Front denounced the elections and the war continued unabated and no international recognition was forthcoming. "When Muzorewa attempted to address the United Nations Security Council the day after Nkomo and Mugabe, he was not permitted to do so. The security situation deteriorated until government supporters were unsafe beyond the region around the capital" (Hove M 1990:21) Because of fear of the whites, they migrated to other countries leaving the economy to crumble. His government was having problems in all fronts: it was not recognized by the Patriotic front, it was recognized by the United Nations. What had gone wrong with the arrangements?

From the on-start of things Muzorewa was seen as a puppet to the white Government. Evidence that is there is that, "Government has decided that Mugabe is too much of a radical to take risks with, particularly, as seems likely, if he gains the support of the majority of blacks in Rhodesia at an election arising out of the Lancaster house talks. He was already made his intentions clear ...we want to turn the country into a one party Marxist state. The feeling was that with him out

of the way, a power struggle would develop within ZANU, which, while it is in progress, would leave the way clear for either Bishop Muzorewa, the then present Prime Minister, to remain in office or for Joshua Nkomo to be put into office as a puppet” (Peter stiff 1985:303). These were ideas brought in August 1979. This suggests that the Bishop during his tenure of office, he had no power at all, he was viewed as a ‘yes’ man. His acceptance of office without controlling the security sector had serious misgiving on him. This led Ian Smith to continue his raids in guerrilla bases outside the country, while the Bishop was seating in Zimbabwe house. There were reasons that he was put as part of the government plan to eliminate Mugabe. This shows that the whites had seen in him that there can be a black Prime Minister but advancing the cause of the minority white. Why was he a choice to Smith’s government? Was it that his desire for peaceful negotiation was interpreted as weak?

Some argue that Zimbabwe Rhodesia was short lived to judge Bishop Muzorewa to have achieved anything of substance. It is worth noting that Bishop Muzorewa asked for leave from the church so that he could attend full time to his new position as Prime Minister – though short lived. The Zimbabwe Rhodesia government committed a lot of sins to the populace economically, politically and socially.

In the political front, war continued unabated and so no economic gains were achieved. Britain did not remove its sanctions on the country and for that there was no trade link as neighbouring countries were supporting the Patriotic Front. On the political front there was no diplomatic recognition from outside world. On the social side, Smith continues to take people for call-ups, so people were not at easy. Again in families there were those who supported Bishop Muzorewa and those who supported the Patriotic Front. This gave problem to the families and the community at large, as others were killed because they supported Bishop Muzorewa and they were braided as sell-outs. The undisputed historical data available is that some of Bishop Muzorewa’s security personnel were his young brothers and some were his close relatives, some of his brothers were pastors in the United Methodist some later became pastors in the same church. It is a known fact that Muzorewa’s Auxiliaries were trained by Roy “Muzorewa” Benet who was a leading Sell-out Scout member. When the Bishop became Prime Minister he surrounded himself with his relatives. The same thing happened; he took the same people to be leaders in the church.

The government of Bishop Muzorewa could not receive recognition from outside world and when Margaret Thatcher came into power she wanted to resolve the Rhodesian issue and Lancaster House meeting was called in 1979 which led to March 1980 elections which were won by Robert Mugabe. Can the coming in of Bishop Muzorewa into power be said to have led to independence in 1980? It can be argued that he enabled the transfer of power by his being the first black Prime Minister. However the evidence available does not sustain that, because there was no – any diplomatic acceptance of the 1979 elections, it then led to fresh elections that brought independence in 1980.

The Zimbabwe – Rhodesia government can be said to have been short-lived. Yes, but what it failed to do is also of great concern to the nation; failing to stop the war and that the Bishop continued to be viewed as a puppet of the white people. This cost him in the 1980 elections and it lead him to win just three seats in parliament and non in the next elections. So it is easier for any observer to quickly say that Muzorewa was a failure during the tenure of his office.

The government of President Robert Mugabe never recognized him as a national leader even when he died in 2010 there was no high profile government leaders who attended his burial at OldMutare. When compared to his successor Bishop Christopher Jokomo who died in 2008 before Bishop Muzorewa; his funeral was attended by the vice president Joyce Mujuru. When Bishop Muzorewa passed on, the church honoured him by cancelling the Pastor School and channelled all the Pastor's school funds to his funeral.

Although the Bishop accepted the office of Prime minister, he did not enjoy his tenure at it was full of meetings and the patriotic front calling him a sell-out of people's revolution. Until there is convincing evidence that the Bishop did not sell-out, what is available leaves much to be desired. His army was trained by the Selous scouts, fought alongside them and worse still fighting against the Patriotic Front that later on won the elections and recognized internationally. The 1966 sanctions against Smith were quickly removed and America became the first to set diplomatic offices in Zimbabwe. This overwhelming evidence against Bishop Muzorewa as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Rhodesia is hard to dispute and therefore can be concluded that he become enemy number one of the Patriotic Front.

CHAPTER four

4.0 Evaluation – impact on the Zimbabwean church

Since Bishop Muzorewa continued to be both Episcopal Leader of the United Methodist and President of UANC, it will be of interest to have a look at the state of the church in the same period under review. How was the United Methodist Church viewed from 1971 to 1974 when the Nationalist leaders were still in support of Bishop Muzorewa and what was its status after 1974 onwards.

Not much information can be found on the United Methodist status during the period 1971 to 1974 except that its members were equally participating in the politics of the day and that would in future give a negative impact on the church. This involved laity members and the clergy who were found in the UANC leadership and in conference and District Leadership of the church. Some pastors were Youth Secretaries of ANC in Mutare and elsewhere. They would attend ANC meeting, open and closed door sessions, and one would not be able to separate church meetings with political meetings. This was not bad at first but after 1974 when the Bishop began to fall out of favour with nationalist the church was greatly impacted on. In celebrating its centennial at Old Mutare Mission, the church noted that “the post-war period was characterized by rebuilding, reconciliations and recapturing of the ground and the grip that had been lost during the liberation struggle.” Zimbabwe Annual Conference Report (1997:62). In the same report it further states that “The period 1984 to 1986 was characterized by political disturbances which saw pastors being evicted from Mission Centres by members of the public in the name of party politics (1997:62). In retrospect the church was negatively impacted on. As one tries to look at words like rebuilding, reconciliation and recapturing of the groundlost during the liberation struggle, it becomes clear that the church did not have growth during this very period. The disturbances that were being witnessed in the 1980s were also as a result of the church’s involvement in politics in the 1970s.

The Bishop got his mandate to be involved in national politics from the church as reflected in his words: “Before I accepted the invitation to lead the ANC, I consulted the Annual Conference (of my church) at Old Mutare in 1972. The Annual Conference unanimously voted to let me involved” Nyarota L.T. (2013; 70). The 1997 report says that the church lost some pastors who

were joining the government “some of our Pastors had left the ministry for greener pastures offered in various government institutions” Annual Conference Report (1997:62) Can this not be interpreted as disgruntlement by those who were not interested in seeing the church being involved in party politics. Would the work of evangelism not be affected? The church at one point was referred to as church “*Yemadzakutsaku*” or church “*yaMuzorewa*” (referring the church to the name of his Auxiliary army). It appears the tag name was now referring to traitors of liberation struggle, and once the church was viewed as such there was no way that it could grow, people also would not want to associate with that church. Although the church reports such statements, the said ministers remained members of the clergy. Their relationship with the church was not affected.

Even if the real impact is stated, one thing for sure is that in rural areas where war was intensified the United Methodist members could not openly wear their blue-red and white uniform as they were associated with Bishop Muzorewa. This scaled down the growth of the church.

Administratively from 1975 to 1985, the Bishop either did not chair the Annual Conference or co-chaired with someone. According to the official conference journal of the United Methodist Church 1996 page 300, see table below

Year	Month	Date	Place	Chair	Secretary
1975	January	5	Mutambara	Muzorewa ,Clymer	Kurewa,Munjoma J.F
1976	January	4	Old Mutare	Nicolas	Kurewa,Munjoma J.F
1977	January	9	Murewa	Muzorewa, kurewa	Munjoma J.F
1978	January	8	Nyatsime	Muzorewa	Munjoma J.F
1979	No session	due to	the war of liberation		

1980	January	6	Range house	Dodge	Munjoma J.F
1983	December	18	Nyadure	deCrvaldo,Hardt	
1985	December	15	Old Mutare	Matthews	Munjoma.

From 1986 onwards it was Bishop Muzorewa chairing the Annual conferences as usual. But the above years is an indication that The Bishop’s involvement in politics was no longer healthy for the church. There are some who may argue that the condition of the church was not permitting the spread of the gospel but in the areas where this researcher grew up that is Rusape in Makoni district the Anglican, Seventh day and Dutch reformed churches continued with their worship services without problems and they would continue with their services until independence. The problem that was there was that those who were leaders in the UANC and others got ministerial post in the short-lived Zimbabwe Rhodesia continued to be leaders in the top of the church both clergy and laity, these include Rev M Chambara, Mr f Marima, Rev Muzorewa F.D to mention just a few.

By implication, the church leadership became UANC leaders and so UANC become United Methodist Church because of its leadership involvement. By that, action, whatever was associated with UANC was easily attached to the church, and church members were not at liberty to go and worship on their Sunday worship days. Even the Bishop himself could not find it easy to go and preach at big revivals as that was equally interpreted as political rally. There was no distinguishing mark between the two. That then directly affect the growth of the church that even to this day; in other places the church is still referred to the “*Church yekwa Muzorewa*” (The church of Muzorewa) or “*Church yemadzakutsaku.*”

When training at the United Theological College, it became a common name to refer to the United Methodist Church as *dzakutsaku*. Well that was or is done and taken as a joke, it shows the extent society viewed the United Methodist Church. So the tag is still there even up to this day. If one visits places where United Methodist Church is not well-known and simply say *church yaMuzorewa* and people will know which church one is talking about. In places such as Mtoko where Bishop Muzorewa’s army operated there is unconfirmed story that when the

intention to build Africa University there was brought in, the people protested against such a development as they argued that they could not let Muzorewa and his church make further developments it was seen again as a campaign tool by Bishop Muzorewa. The people in Mtoko could not take that as they were witnesses to the ruthless killings of *PfumoRevanh*. This story is so popular in Mtoko but it is not confirmed anywhere as African University was built at the present following the vision of Bishop C. Hartzel that at Old Mutare, people from all of Africa shall converge. But if this is anything to go by, it further gives evidence that the involvement of Bishop Muzorewa in politics, although approved by the church had some effects on the United Methodist Church. It is sad to note that during the war of liberation United Methodist churches were closed as it was increasingly becoming difficult to separate the two. The growth of the church then and even now is strained because of that. In Mrewa and Mtoko it very opens to the community that Bishop Muzorewa had his army.

The other issue is that at times the church was left without its leader in some instances as the Bishop was at one point in exile in Mozambique or was in political conferences. His time was divided, as all the duties were demanding. One of it would obviously suffer, considering the fact that top leaders and some of them were his close relatives who were leaders involved in both UANC and the United Methodist.

As soon as Muzorewa committed himself to be involved directly in the political liberation of the country, he immediately created for himself enemies who did not believe that a bishop of the church should be a political activist. The first such groups were the white members of the church who decided to move out and join other denominations that were neutral. The two congregations, one in Rusape and the other in Mutare seceded from the United Methodist Church leaving the denomination almost exclusively black in membership.

Nyarota L.T noted that “In some areas guerrillas were reported to be taking a more antagonistic stance towards local Christian congregations and institutions, as their leaders were involved in the internal settlement (Nyarota L.T 2013:56). He further noted that also “As soon as he became head of state, his church members had also been forced into dual role, some joined his party, and others did not. Needless to say, this proved very difficult for many of them”. (Nyarota L. T 2013:56). What this actually meant is that the church was in a dilemma, the faithful ones who remained suffered from the stigmatization of being labelled *church yekwaMuzorewa*. It is not

said how many left the church to join other denominations that were not so much involved in politics or that supported the Nationalists. Bishop Dodge when he came back in Zimbabwe noted in his autobiography that “the political situation was tragic in its divisiveness. Not only was the population divided, but also members of the families were often separated from each other geographically, ideologically and emotionally’ (Dodge R.1986:192). All was not well in the church. Other clergy members decided to cross over to support ZANU and one actually left to join the struggle for liberation.

All these point to the fact that the United Methodist did suffer because the later years of Bishop Muzorewa’s political involvement were seen as a betrayal of the African cause. His continual hold on both did affect the church growth especially in areas where his army operated and also in areas where the church was not known. To this day, if a person who does not know the United Methodist asks to know about the United Methodist and is told the church of Muzorewa. There is much evidence that shows that the church was affected.

Chapter five

5.0 Recommendations and way forward

From this study it can be noticed that from the formative days of Bishop Muzorewa's involvement in national politics, he did well and what he did is very commendable. One needs to note that at this point Bishop Muzorewa was not a political party leader but a unifier to the Zimbabwean situation and that cannot be disputed. The trend began to change when the patriotic front began to lose trust in him and the bishop went on to form his own political party which later openly fought against the ideologies of the political front. We notice that when the bishop entered the Internal Settlement with Ian Smith there were a lot of atrocities that were done when he was Prime Minister, Chimoi, Nyadzonya and places in Zambia all were bombed at this time. This put his name in disrepute.

After the war of liberation bishop Muzorewa continued to be active in politics and it earned him an imprisonment at Goromonzi prison, because of such action the church continued to suffer as he continued being the leader of both UANC and The United Methodist Church. Some who were Bishop Muzorewa's cabinet ministers ended up being ministers of religion in the United Methodist Church; others who were key leaders in the UANC also earned respected church positions which when one looks at it, points to the fact that there was payback time or that the Bishop did not want to lose his close friends and that should not have happened for it continues to give a bad name to the United Methodist Church (UMC).

Can the church afford to take the same route in the future? One very obvious answer will be a no. The answer no will apply to the United Methodist church pastors because of the experience that they went through during the time when Bishop Muzorewa was in power. The church suffered from the stigma that they are the church of Muzorewa. That has affected the church from its prophetic voice. As seen from all the past elections the United Methodist church have not been head commenting people are quick to say the church of Muzorewa has said this and that.

Bishop Muzorewa who became the subject of this research can only be used to point that in life of church leaders, there is a time to continue to lead and a time to step down. What happened is, he got the chairmanship of ANC because he had the respect of other leaders both in the church and in society. When that respect was no-more it should have been a signal for Bishop Muzorewa to move back to the church. People will always want to know that if one is a church leader their position is respected and one does not need to take that position into party politics. Political parties have the notion that they can use whatever means available and that does not fit on Christian ethics of tolerance. In politics people become useful for a season if one's usefulness is no more the person has to step aside.

People in the church should not remain quiet when their leaders decide to play party politics as that destroys the image of the church and other church leaders who may want to carry a prophetic role as they are easily misunderstood to be like Bishop Muzorewa. Probably the Bishop wanted to make history especially in Africa where such an experience at that time was not known. It remains an area of research, as what continues to motivate Bishop Muzorewa to play both roles continues to puzzle many people, was it just history making? Was it fame? Was it for the love of Zimbabwean people? All the above needs further exploration to find out the real Muzorewa in both politics and church leadership.

It is out of these discoveries that the following recommendations are made for the United Methodist Church who have experienced the problem and to other church leaders who might want to become party political leaders in future that they should not take the risk as that will divide the church. The church is a place where people of different political orientation meet to worship their God. If they find that their leader is now a leader of a political party some will withdraw their support or will withdraw their membership. This they will do basing on what they learnt from Bishop Muzorewa.

That at any given time the church should not be involved in party politics as that divides the church.

That if church leaders so desire a political office, that leader must take a leave of absence from the church and disassociate political activities from that of the church.

From a moral point of view, a church leader cannot be seen on the fore-front in part politics as that divide the church and put it into disrepute and name calling.

While in politics the church cannot stand aside and watch Politiano things in the wrong way but the church must retain its prophetic voice. If it joins party politics will it prophesy against its self?

Conclusion

The history for Zimbabwean independence cannot be completed without the mention of clergy members such as Bishop Abel Muzorewa. It was in the darkest hour that the Bishop was asked to take a leading role in ANC from its formation until it became a political party in 1975. The role that was played by Bishop Muzorewa became questionable when he became political leader and episcopal leader at the same time. The church then affected because of that and the clergy from any other denomination cannot now be involved in political party issues as they risk being labelled Muzorewa type. With current political leadership in the country no clergy can risk associated with politics especially opposition politics, the name of Bishop Muzorewa would be raised as a bad example, because of that ministers of religion can take a prophetic role only in the Zimbabwean context. The Zimbabwean situation is different from other countries like South Africa were a clergy would form political parties without any problems and this happens in many other countries except Zimbabwe.

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