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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THEOLOGY AND THE CITY IN AFRICA:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN URBAN EXPERIENCES
FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THEOLOGY

BY

DOMINIC F. TOMUSENI, SJ

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2018

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It takes a village to raise a child, so goes the old African saying. And it takes the world to form a Jesuit, said one African Jesuit. It has taken the whole world to write this dissertation. Many people from the different parts of the world where I have lived have contributed to the writing of this dissertation in ways that I cannot capture in these few words. But for bringing all their wisdom together in the final form that this dissertation has taken, I am indebted to Dr. John McCarthy who directed this work. Since we met in 2012 when I came to Loyola, he has been an inspiring guide who has taught me to appreciate the wisdom of my experiences. He is the midwife of the ideas in this work and I am forever grateful for his patience, wisdom and guidance. I am also grateful to Drs John Nilson, Michael Schuck and Timothy Scarnechia who read this dissertation and gave insightful comments. Jon Nilson and Mike Schuck were part of the Loyola theology community who journeyed with me during my five years at Loyola. They were with me at the most difficult times of the journey. I first encountered Tim Scarnechia through his work on my hometown and he enkindled in me a passion to understand the experience of my people. And I was grateful when he accepted to be part of the committee. I am forever grateful for his time and contribution to this work I pray that they all be blessed.

I am forever grateful to William Manaker, SJ, and Keith Esenether, SJ, who helped me with proofreading and sorting of my grammar. And to all my brother Jesuits across the world who helped in so many ways that I can mention. May he who calls us to this least Society help us

to use all that he has given us to bring good news to the least of our brothers and sisters. Let us continue to hold each other up in prayers

.

To Aruberito Kameza Taima Tomuseni, April 1, 1938–October 21, 2015.
May your tribe increase.

May His name be exalted.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALHA	African Land Husbandry Act
AHA	Archdiocese of Harare Archives
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South Africa Police
ICU	Industrial Commercial Union
JAH	Jesuit Archives Harare
RICU	Reformed Industrial Commercial Union
NADA	Native Affairs Department Annual
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NC	Native Commissioner
NUAA	Native Urban Areas Act
NUAARA	Native Urban Areas Accommodation and Registration Act
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZMR	Zambesi Mission Record

INTRODUCTION

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus, and him crucified. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power... (1 Cor 2:1-4).

Theology, no matter how abstruse, no matter how metaphysical and subtle, is an outgrowth of the theologian's experience of the world (Fredrick Buechner).¹

Preamble

Since this dissertation is about experience as a source for theological reflection, I begin by presenting a personal experience. It is a presentation of a reality through which I encountered the demonstration of spirit and power. The presentation lays the groundwork for a full investigation and reevaluation of the relationship between experience and theological reflection in Africa.

My full name is Dominic Fungai Tomuseni. I was born at the home of my maternal grandparents because my mother was following a Shona custom which requires that a woman must have her first child at her mother's place so that the mother can teach her about children. My grandmother named me Fungai, which means think or reflect. Either she was communicating something to someone, or she was saying something about the situation surrounding my birth. Most Shona names function in this way.

I was baptized as an infant, and I was given the name Dominic. The priest would not accept Fungai for baptism because it was considered a pagan name. He insisted on a Christian

¹ Fredrick Buechner, "Theology as Autobiography," video, 1:13, October 15, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180317124213/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdfwOhsE6uo>.

name. The name Tomuseni is a corruption of the English name Thompson, which my paternal grandfather, who was an immigrant from Mozambique, had adopted because he thought adopting an English name was the 'civilized' thing to do. For many Africans then, English was synonymous with civilization. The people who worked at the registry office did not know how to spell English names, hence the corruption of the name, from Thompson to Tomuseni.

Each name represents something about the historical and social processes that shaped my identity and that of many people in Southern Africa. Fungai represents the African culture into which I was born and raised. It gives clues about where I was born and the circumstances surrounding my birth. Dominic represents the Christian faith that most of my people have adopted and which has become an important part of my identity. Even though many of my people have become Christians and it is valued religion in Zimbabwe, the imposition of the name Dominic in place of Fungai showed that Christianity disparaged other cultures. Tomuseni represents colonial experience in Africa. Contrary to popular thinking that colonialism was about Europeans imposing foreign values, the name Tomuseni is a case of an African who voluntarily embraced the new experience. My grandfather chose the name Thompson of his own accord. It was unlike the name Dominic that was imposed by a priest. The corruption of the name Thompson to Tomuseni indicates something about the levels of education in colonial Zimbabwe. It also represents the disruption that colonialism caused on the continent. In short, the story of my name is the story of a contemporary African experience, a confluence of pre-colonial cultural legacies, Christian (and Islamic) influences and European colonial conquest.

I know many people in situations similar to mine who have changed their names in a bid to recover a genuine African identity. They try to find an African name that can connect them to an identity that is free of colonial influences. A number of African countries attempted a similar

recovery when they changed their names at independence. Northern Rhodesia became Zambia, Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, Nyasaland became Malawi, and Gold Coast became Ghana. Interestingly, Congo became Zaire, but then changed its name back to Congo. Mugambi observes that African countries have retained the boundaries that were drawn at the Berlin conference on the colonial question in 1884, where there was no African present; however, Africans have changed the names considerably.² He considers the renaming to be important because “It is an affirmation of the power of the human being to name his or her environment”³

In as much as I concur with Mugambi’s position that there is some significance in the renaming that has taken place, I maintain that most of these attempts to recover an identity through finding a ‘genuine’ African name or identity have failed to recognize and embrace the fact that European colonial conquest as well as the Christian (and Islamic) influences that came about at the same time as European conquest are important constituents of a contemporary African experience. They have left an indelible mark on African experience and identity. A contemporary African experience cannot be without colonial conquest and Christian impact. Pre-colonial cultural heritage, colonial experience and Christian (Muslim) faith come together to form a complex contemporary African experience.

This complexity is best represented by modern/contemporary Africa cities that developed out of the European colonial enterprise. I grew up in such a city. Growing up in a city was considered a serious deprivation because the city was looked at as a place where colonial decadence triumphed. It was contrasted with growing up in a village, considered by many to be a

² JNK Mugambi, *From liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After Cold War*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995, xii

³ Ibid.

repository for traditional African values. Up to now many still regard the contemporary city as a jungle and the village as home. There is a tendency to romanticize the village, even if one spends most of his life in the city.

Underneath this romanticism, there is also a new generation that is claiming the city, making it their own home, treating it in the same way an older generation would treat a traditional village. The village that was once regarded as home for an African is either disappearing or is being transformed by what happens in the cities. The city is fast becoming a repository of contemporary experience and my experience has demonstrated that it is an important location for academic disciplines, such as contemporary African theology, that use experience as a source.

The State of Theological Reflection in Africa: A Summary

Experience is a major source for theological reflection in Africa. It is more prominent than Scripture and Tradition.⁴ Since the last quarter of the 19th century, colonialism has taken a leading role in shaping African experience such that up until now, it is a major influence in the development of theological reflection and other intellectual disciplines such as history and literature. The struggle against disruption of pre-colonial experience by colonialism shapes much of contemporary African theology. Much energy in contemporary African Theology has been spent in trying to recover a genuine or authentic African experience, equated to what can be preserved from pre-colonial heritage, and used to make theology African. Such an approach

⁴ Although a good number of African theologians insists on the importance of scripture in African Christianity, there is very little about scripture as a source in African Theology. This is a point well illustrated by Mbiti, in the bible in African Christianity (Mbiti, John S. *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986). There is also very little about Tradition as a source of theology in key theological texts from the continent.

operates within the imagination of the colonialist. It emphasizes the disruption caused by colonialism. It does not give adequate attention to the way African pre-colonial identities have been integrated or reinvented in their encounter with colonialism. Urbanization or growth of the city during colonialism and the way Africans played a part in its growth provide an important lens into how African identity found new expressions during colonization, and it is in these expressions that theology can find the best ways of engaging contemporary African experience.

Thesis

I argue that in order to fully grasp and engage the contemporary African experience as a source for African theology, processes of urbanization must be explored and incorporated. The growth of urban centers as repository of contemporary African experience requires that colonial experience must be viewed as not only made up of disruption. It also involved integration. I maintain that an examination of the structure of faith within the disruption and the integration that occurred during urbanization that was initiated by 19th century colonization of Africa, can transform African theology from an identity theology to a global theology or a theology with global significance.

Definition of Terms

Parrat proffers a general sense of African theology as a theology done by Africans.⁵ Bower gives a more nuanced definition. He describes it as “a lively conversation within the African community, beginning in the early 1960s and increasing unabated to the present [which] seeks to address the intellectual and theological issues which concern that community.”⁶ It is true that much of what

⁵John Parratt, (ed). *A Reader in African Christian Theology*. Rev. ed. SPCK International Study Guide ; 23. London: SPCK, 1997. 2

⁶Paul Bowers, “African Theology: Its History, Dynamics, Scope and Future.” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 21. 2 2002. 109

constitutes African theology has been done by Africans; however, the focus has not been on the theologians, but on the issues within the community. Thus, though this dissertation engages the work of African theologians, its main focus is in line with Bower's definition: it is about the concerns and experiences of the African community which have informed African theology. It looks mainly at African theology in the second half of the 20th century, when an African intelligentsia began to emerge.

Experience is a precarious category. Martin Jay has demonstrated that it cannot be tied down to one, all-encompassing definition.⁷ For the purposes of this dissertation, I follow what Jay identifies as *erlebenis* and *erfahrung*, the German equivalents of experience.⁸ *Erlebenis* is defined as a lived reality or occurrence that happens to someone. It involves ordinary life events that happen to people. *Erfahrung*, on the other hand, has to do with "sense impressions or cognitive judgments about them."⁹ The cognitive judgments involve a progressive learning process, out of which narratives develop.

I consider African Theology to be a kind of an *erfahrung* which portrays contemporary African experience as an *erlebenis* made up of a disruption of a genuine experience and an *erfahrung* that consists of resistance to colonialism through restoration or recovery of pre-colonial identities and values. My argument is that the growth of urban centers shows that colonial experience involved an *erlebenis* and an *erfahrung* that involve a complex process of disruption, resistance and integration happening at the same time. The *erlebenis* and *erfahrung* that

⁷ Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience, Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*, Berkeley: University of California press, 2005

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Martin Jay "Songs of Experience: Modern and European Variations on a Universal Theme," Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

can be delineated in the development of urban centers is more inclusive than that captured by most theological works in Africa in that it is not merely about the resistance to the disruption of pre-colonial experience and preservation of pristine African values or cultures. It also involved incorporation of foreign elements. Christian faith was also an important part of this complex *erlebnis* and *erfahrung in urban Centers*. The dissertation investigates the structure of faith in the *erlebinis* and *erfahrung* of the city and it tries to establish how it can be used to establish a transformation of African theology.

By “faith experience,” I am referring to an *erlebinis* and *erfahrung* of divine transcendence. Examples of faith experience are Schleiermacher’s feeling of absolute dependence¹⁰, or Rahner’s transcendentalism¹¹ or Balthasar’s “seeing of the form.”¹² In this dissertation, however, I am not looking at faith experience within the structures of consciousness or personal spiritual processes, as is the case in Schleiermacher or Rahner. Rather, I am investigating faith experience in the social and historical processes that led to the growth of the city. I use those faith experiences to map the structure of faith within urban development in Africa so as to establish or identify ways that this structure can contribute to a transformation of theological reflection in Africa.

I am using the term “identity theology” to refer to all theologies that endeavor to demonstrate how a particular group of people or a race can be part of a faith tradition. Identity

¹⁰ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, eds H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewarts Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2011, 12-18

¹¹ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* Crossroads Publishing Company 1978, 20-21

¹² Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *A Theological Aesthetics Vol 1 Seeing the Form* San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1994

theologies attempt to show the uniqueness of a group in different religious traditions. There are different kinds of identity theologies within Christian tradition. Some, like those of the Ku Klux Klan, the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, or the theology behind the Nazi regime, argue for the superiority of a group within the tradition; they marginalize other groups. Others, such as the black theology of James Cone or the feminist theology of Elizabeth Johnson, seek to show how marginalized groups are also part of the people of God. Most works in African theology are of the latter type. They try to show how Africans, with their own history and culture, can also be Christians; or they make explicit the ways that the gospel takes root in African societies.

Identity theologies such as theologies of liberation or African theology are important in that they highlight important experiences of God that can be marginalized. Most importantly, they expose injustices that arise when experiences of particular groups are disregarded. However, they can be greatly disadvantaged if they do not engage, inform or embrace other global experiences that affect them. This dissertation hopes to show how African theology can move beyond this limitation through an engagement with urban experiences. It is an engagement with processes through which the local become part of the global and an attempt to map a way towards an African theology that goes beyond seeking cultural homogeneity or visibility of the local. It is an attempt to chart a way towards theology with insights that are relevant across the globe.

A common handicap in most identity theologies is that they take the identity of the individual to be the same as the identity of the group. They collapse the identity of the group to coincide with that of the individual. In order to avoid this handicap, this dissertation will explore

the differentiation in urban experiences and its use of individual faith experience is also one way of showing how to transcend the identities commonly associated with their races or groups.

Methodology

The dissertation uses a combination of historical and hermeneutical methods. It begins with a historical review of contemporary experience in African theology (Chapter 1). It is followed by another historical review of how theology has engaged African urban experience (Chapter 2).

The first review examines how the disruption caused by colonialism has played a major role in shaping African theology. The second review is a first stage of understanding and incorporating urban experience. It is an examination of what theology has said about the city; and it outlines the general urbanization across the continent and how it has changed theology, thereby laying the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation.

The third chapter is the second stage of understanding and incorporating urban experience in theology. It is a further exploration of the dynamics that led to changes in theological reflection explored in the second chapter. It focuses on a particular city in Africa. Its objective is to clarify the *erlebnis* and the *erfahrung* that occurred during colonialism. The fourth chapter explores the structure of faith within the development of the city explored in the previous chapter, through biographical data or what I am calling personal faith experiences. It is part of the second stage of understanding and incorporating urban experience in theology. The fifth chapter is mainly about how the personal experiences differ from experiences in Chapter 1 and how they can be used to chart a new path for theology on the continent.

CHAPTER 1

THEOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

I am black, but beautiful... (Songs of Songs 1:5)

Introduction

Bowers observes that “African Theology is best construed as a phenomenon of modern African intellectual life” whose central motifs “have revolved for more than a century around the formative experience common to almost all parts of the continent, namely Africa’s traumatic encounter with the West and its multifaceted response/reaction to that encounter.”¹ His claim is corroborated by the prevalence of the theme of colonialism in various texts within different disciplines, such as literature, history and philosophy. Colonialism has played an important role in shaping African contemporary experience, and it has been a major source of intellectual life on the continent. No text that takes African twentieth-century experience seriously can afford to avoid the colonial factor.

Tutu echoes Bowers’ observation in his summation of African theology. He states that “what is subsumed under the heading ‘African theology’ is the result of a reaction against cultural and ecclesial colonialism and it is intimately linked to the struggle for Africa’s liberation.”² The relationship of theology and the liberation struggles on the continent which is highlighted in this

¹ Paul Bowers, “African Theology: Its History, Dynamics, Scope and Future.” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 21. 2 2002, p. 113-114.

² Desmond Tutu, “Whither African Theology?” in *Christianity in Africa*, 364

statement, has been explicitly expressed by a number of renowned African theologians like Mugambi³ and Bujo.⁴ The development of a brand of African theology called black theology in Tutu's home country, South Africa, is a concrete expression of the connection between theology and the struggle for liberation. South African Black theology was a response to apartheid, which ended in 1994, indicating the dominance of colonialism throughout the 20th century.

This chapter builds on what is at the core of Tutu's and Bowers' statements, namely the fact that African contemporary experience revolves around the 19th century colonialism and that it has been a major catalyst for theology (and much of intellectual life in general) on the continent. It traces how identity theology developed in Africa, as theologians struggled with the disruption caused by colonial experience. The chapter is made up of three sections. The first section is an overview of the development of African theology. It is followed by a section that establishes the place of colonialism in the development of African theology. This establishment is through a review of how colonial experience is presented in some major works that discuss what should constitute African Christian Theology. It ends with a section that surveys the effects of colonial experience in theology. This section reviews some works of Mbiti, Nyamiti, Jean-Mac Ela and Emanuel Katongole. Mbiti and Nyamiti represent an early form of theology from early 70's, which focus on engaging pre-colonial African traditions and religion. This theology can be labeled classical contemporary African theology. Jean-Marc Ela and Katongole represent theology from the 80's to the present, which struggles with the post-independence situation of poverty and suffering. In spite of the different eras and the foci, they were all struggling with

³ J. N. K. Mugambi, *African Christian Theology : An Introduction*. Nairobi: Heinemann 1989. P12-13.

⁴ Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*; Translated from the German by John O'Donohue. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992. p. 12.

what colonialism had disparaged. The objective of the chapter is to show how preoccupation with visibility of that which is African in African theology led to an identity theology.

The Development of African Theology

In order to have a better picture of the development of African theology in this chapter, an outline of the different phases of the spread of Christianity in Africa is necessary. In his extensive annotated bibliography of African theology, Young gives three phases of Christianity, which he calls the “ancestors” or precursors to contemporary African theology.⁵ The first phase was during the time of the early church, when centers like Alexandria and Carthage were important Christian centers. It is the phase where we meet some important African theologians like Tertullian, Augustine and Cyprian in the West and Clement and Origen in the East. The second phase was the 15th century, when the Portuguese imperial activities spread to Africa, especially in what is now the Congo. The Christianity of this era did not endure. Young cites “Portuguese preoccupation with the slave trade; paucity of African priests; absence of African seminaries; the waning of influence of Catholicism as an imperial force and the small number of missionaries, made even smaller by African diseases...” as the cause of the disappearance of Christianity during this era.⁶ This also explains why we have no extant theological reflections from this era. We simply have accounts of the attempts to spread Christianity. The third phase was the development of Christianity in West Africa, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This phase was a result of the abolition of slavery in the 18th century and was led by emancipated slaves as well as other Africans who followed the ideas of the emancipated slaves.

⁵ Josiah U. Young, *African Theology: A Critical Analysis and Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993. p.7-12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

Although Young's outline is an accurate presentation of the stages of Christianity in Africa, it does not capture the complexity within this development. Neither does it say much about the relationship between these phases and the theological development. Mbiti's account, which is a slightly different presentation, captures this complexity.⁷ For Mbiti, African Christianity is not a simple homogenous phenomenon that everyone can easily trace in stages. It has a long history and has manifested itself in different parts of the continent in various ways, thereby creating a diverse experience of the same faith. First, there is an African Christianity which was very much part of the early church. This is the African Christianity associated with Augustine and Athanasius; the Christianity of the Donatists and the monophysites; the Christianity of Egypt and Ethiopia. That Christianity came from the Eastern Mediterranean through the Roman Empire, and spread in the northern third of the continent. It was greatly reduced by Islam and now remains in small pockets in Egypt and in Ethiopia.

Then there is the Christianity of the 20th century, which was spread throughout sub-Saharan Africa, spanning two-thirds of the continent. This was the Christianity of missionaries from Europe and America, which was influenced by the history, culture and politics of the Western countries. This Christianity has spread rapidly due to a number of factors: the hard work of missionaries, the commitment of local converts, and the religious experience of Africans prior to the coming of Christianity that prepared converts to accept the Christian message.

The second type of Christianity is made up of three strands. First, there is a strand of Christianity with strong connection with Europe and America. Its centers of authority are in Europe. This is the Christianity found among what are commonly referred to as mainline

⁷ John S Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986. P. 1-22

churches, e.g., Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist. Then there is the Christianity of independent Christian churches, popularly known as African independent churches. These are Christians who have cut ties with European churches. Finally, there is a Christianity of people of European descent in Africa who have dissociated themselves from the African experience, e.g., the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. These strands reflect the complex way in which Christianity has spread in the last stage of the growth of the faith from outside the continent.

This chapter focuses on the development of theology in the first strand of Christianity mentioned by Mbiti. It is a discussion of the theology developed within the Christianity of mainline churches, such as Roman Catholics, Anglican, Methodist. This theology is what is referred to as African contemporary theology in this dissertation. Young traces this contemporary African theology to an era after World War II, when Britain and France, who controlled the largest territories in Africa, started a process of devolution, where they passed power into the hands of some African elites, thereby creating a “myth” of independence.⁸ Young calls the independence a myth, because there was no independence as such. What happened is that the European powers were just replaced by African elites, who led nationalistic movements of independence. These elite Africans perpetuated the colonial mentality and machinery. Among this group of African elites were theologians whom Young calls the “old guard.” They were following proponents of negritude; a Pan-Africanist idiom depicting a form of cultural nationalism which Young argues “owes more to westernization than to popular culture.”⁹ Just like negritude, the theology of the “old guard” emerged from the ideas of Pan-Africanism. It was

⁸ Josiah U Young, *African Theology : A Critical Analysis and Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993. p.13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

elitist, and it did not pay attention to the social and political unrest on the continent. It confined political and liberation issues to South Africa and ignored its significance for the rest of the continent. For Young, the “old guard” failed to realize that the difference between South African black theology and the rest of theology in Africa is just about degree. They are all about liberation.

The “old guard” was followed by a “new guard”, who started a critical analysis of the situation and developed a theology that confronted that situation. Young sees the “new guard” as an important step forward. Unlike the “old guard,” which represents a Christianization of some aspects of African traditional religion, the new guard represents an Africanization of Christianity.

Benezet Bujo, who could be considered an African theologian of the “new guard” in that his theology is rooted in the analysis of the political situation, has a different interpretation of what Young calls the “old guard” and “new guard” .¹⁰ Bujo identifies two tendencies in African theology.¹¹ One tendency is to incarnate the Christian message in African culture. This tendency is closer to what Young calls the old guard. Just as Young had noted, Bujo notes that this tendency does not pay attention to the contemporary African situation of oppression and suffering. Another approach, which Bujo adopts, is one that critically confronts the situation of dictatorship and oppression in post-colonial Africa. He calls it a “post-colonial liberation theology.” Again like Young, Bujo argues that it is closely related to Black Theology of South Africa.¹²

¹⁰ Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*; Translated from the German by John O'Donohue. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992. p.17- 73

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Ibid.

However, Bujo differs significantly from Young in his assessment of what the latter terms the “theology of the old guard,” which is equivalent to what Bujo identifies as one of the two tendencies in theology. This theology was mainly about incarnating the Christian message in African culture. Young considers this theology too elitist and out of touch with the situation on the ground that needed liberation. But, Bujo considers the Traditional religion and culture that the “old guard” engaged had a liberating dimension that is important in understanding how theology of liberation in Africa developed.¹³ He has a positive interpretation of what the proponents of negritude were doing. Colonizers together with missionaries were responsible for the destruction of this liberating dimension. Pan-Africanists as well as the proponents of negritude were an important instance of a consciousness of the unjust disruption of colonialism. African theology beginning with the “old guard” is a further development of this consciousness.

A major handicap in both their assessments is that they present this development in terms of cause and effect. In light of the complexity in the development of Christianity presented by Mbiti, it is difficult to take these clear linear developments as absolute. The development of African theology is so complex that it is difficult to endorse without qualification either Bujo’s or Young’s presentation of its development and to make a conclusive decision about what motivated the ‘old guard.’ Whether the ‘old guard’ were following the influence of negritude that owes much to Westernization as Young would have us believe or whether they were a positive development of what negritude was trying to do as Bujo claims, is a question that cannot be resolved easily. However, what is clear in both Young’s and Bujo’s presentation is that at the root of theological development was the colonial experience that shaped African experience. The

¹³ Ibid., 17-36.

development of Theology was a multifaceted reaction to an experience, and it was not as both Bujo and Young suggest; this can be shown thorough a brief analysis of the different texts that grappled with the nature of African theology.

The roots of contemporary African theology can be traced to the works of Pan-African theologians from the “new world” like Edward Blyden 1832 -1912.¹⁴ Many works that are now considered African theology emerged during the time of Pan-Africanism in the late 19th century. This was also the time at which the European scramble for Africa was gaining momentum. However, it took a while for African theology to emerge as a full-fledged discipline. It was not until the last quarter of the 20th Century that a clear picture of what was happening in African theology began to emerge.

In 1975, Fashole claimed that only ten years earlier the terms “African theology,” “African Christian theology,” and “Theology Africana” were hardly, if ever used.”¹⁵ But a decade later, Muzorewa claims that African theology came into vogue in the mid-fifties and early sixties.”¹⁶ These views are not as contradictory as they appear. The latter is saying, “There was a lot happening in theology in Africa in the fifties and sixties”; and the former is saying, “There was not so much of a systematic reflection in the theology of the time.” They are simply expressing different aspects of what was happening in the fifties and sixties.

¹⁴ Emmanuel Y Lartey, Lartey Y Emmanuel, “ African Theology” in *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* Hart, Trevor A., and Richard(eds). Bauckham, Carlisle, Cumbria, UK ; Waynesboro, GA : Grand Rapids, Mich.: Paternoster Press; W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000, p 5. Paul Bowers, “African Theology: Its History, Dynamics, Scope and Future,” *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 21. 2 2002, p 110. Gwinyai H Muzorewa. *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985.p 47.

¹⁵ E. W. Fashole-Luke, "The Quest for an African Christian Theology." *Ecumenical Review* 27, no. 3 (1975) p 69

¹⁶ Gwinyai H Muzorewa. *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985.p 2.

Up to 1972, when Mbiti claimed that “the Church in Africa is a church without a theological concern,” African theology had not done much reflection on theological reflection on the continent.¹⁷ There was not much thinking about the nature and methodology of African theology. A major step towards this direction was Harry Sawyer’s “What is African Theology,” published a year before Mbiti’s remarks.¹⁸ It was a significant call for a systematic African theology, articulating why it should be done and how it could be done. In “The Quest for African Christian Theology,” published four years later in 1975, Fashole issued a similar call for “a systematic attempt to produce African theology.”¹⁹

The same year, Shorter’s *African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation* was published. It was a comprehensive proposal of the direction that African theology should take. More comprehensive, systematic proposals for African theology began to emerge. Two major works came out, Pobee’s *Toward an African Theology* (1979) and Kwesi Dickson’s *Theology in Africa* (1984). They proposed and outlined how African theology should develop. At the end of the decade, Muzorewa summarized and reiterated major themes found in these works and many others in *The Origins and Development of African Theology* (1985). The recurring theme in these texts was that Africa had to draw from African traditions and culture. These are the works that Young finds to be limited and to have been influenced by Western ideals. Bujo finds these works to be important starting points that enrich African theology of liberation.

¹⁷ John Mbiti, *Some African Concepts of Christology*, GF Vicedom (ed) *Christ and the Younger Churches*, London 1972, p 51.

¹⁸ Sawyer, Harry., *What is African Theology?* in John. Parratt (ed). *The Practice of Presence : Shorter Writings of Harry Sawyer* /. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 1996.

¹⁹ E. W. Fashole-Luke, "The Quest for an African Christian Theology." *Ecumenical Review* 27, no. 3 (1975) p 69.

There are other works after 1985, such as Mugambi's *African Christian Theology* (1989), CS Banana's *Come and Share: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (1991), and Bujo's *African Theology in its Social Context* (1992). Each continued to explore the nature of African theology and widen its scope by including liberation themes. Towards the end of the millennium, after the end of apartheid and all African countries had gained independence, Mugambi published *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African theology After Cold War*, in which he proposed that African theology should move beyond liberation themes and engage in reconstruction.²⁰ These texts are different from Shorter, Pobee, Discknson and Muzorewa in that their primary purpose is no longer a delineating of the nature and methodology of African theology. Their main focus is to use theology to bring about change or liberation to the socio-political situation in post independent Africa. The trend continues as text after text seeks to relate theology to different situations as a way of bringing about transformation.²¹

²⁰ JNK Mugambi, *From liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After Cold War*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995, 2

²¹ Molyneux, K. Gordon. *African Christian Theology : The Quest for Selfhood*. San Francisco : Lewiston, NY, USA: Mellen Research University Press ; Order Fulfillment, E. Mellen Press, 1993.

Martey, Emmanuel. *African Theology : Inculturation and Liberation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993.

Mugambi, J. N. Kanyua. *From Liberation to Reconstruction : African Christian Theology after the Cold War*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995.

Parratt, John. *Reinventing Christianity : African Theology Today*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Trenton, NJ: Eerdmans ; Africa World Press, 1995

Ajah, Paul O. *An Approach to African Theology / by Paul O. Ajah*. Uburu, Abia State, Nigeria: Truth and Life Publications, 1996.

Okolo, Chukwudum Barnabas. *Faces of African Theology*. Nsukka: Fulladu Publishing Company, 1997.

Ngewa, Samuel., Mark Shaw, and Tite. Tienou eds. *Issues in African Christian Theology*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1998.

Colonial experience played a crucial role in the theology of theologians like Shorter, Pobee, and Dickson who did not explicitly state the significance of liberation in their theology. In contrast the works of Mugambi, Bujo and Banana clearly state that their intention is to bring about liberation. Its place in the works of the former needs further clarification. Such a clarification is helpful in showing the place of colonial experience in much of what makes contemporary African theology. This clarification is the subject matter of the next section.

The Place of Colonial experience in the Development of African Theology

Colonial experience appears in a number of theological works from Africa. Unfortunately, it is not discussed in depth. The following analysis is a snapshot of its significance in the development of theology. It focuses on texts by Shorter, Pobee, Dickson and Muzorewa, which came out between 1975 and 1985, a time when African contemporary theology was coming of age and was reflecting on theological reflection. These texts do not address colonial experience directly, but they are important in that they show its initial impact on theological reflection.

In *African Christian Theology: Adaption or Incarnation?* (1975), Shorter does not make any reference to colonialism. However, his proposal about the shape and direction of African theology is based on premises that reflect the influence of colonialism. His proposal is that “African Christian theologies must grow out of dialogue between Christianity and the Theologies of African Traditional Religion.”²² The proposal is based on the premise that “African

Getui, Mary N. *Theological Method and Aspects of Worship in African Christianity*. African Christianity Series. Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 1998.

Mpagi, Peter Wasswa. *African Christian Theology in the Contemporary Context*. Kisubi, Uganda: Marianum Publishing, 2002.

²² Aylward Shorter. *African Christian Theology : Adaptation or Incarnation?* London: G. Chapman, 1975, p1.

Traditional Religion was tolerant and absorbent of new religious elements, not experiencing any necessity to misrepresent or proselytize other religions or their adherents, whereas Christianity is conscious of offering a challenge, and in the era of its first contacts with Africa it tended to be uncompromising and intolerant—even violent.”²³

What is being expressed in this premise is a desire to engage pre-colonial African traditions and culture. This desire is something that has been at the core of African theology.²⁴ The basis of this desire is the realization that when Christianity was introduced to sub-Saharan Africa at the end of the 19th century, it was some colonial elements inside of Christianity that disparaged African culture and traditions. Shorter does not expand on the nature of these elements, neither does he explore how they are related to broader colonial processes, nor does he try to show their significance in the development of theology in Africa that he proposes. However, his emphasis of the need to revive of African religion and culture shows that these elements had a tremendous effect.

In *Towards an African (Akan) Christian Theology* (1979), a work similar to that of Shorter in that it is a comprehensive and systematic attempt to map how theology in Africa should be done, Pobee sheds more light on the colonial elements within Christianity, their relationship with broader colonial processes, and how these processes function in the development of theology. In Pobee’s presentation, when Christianity reached Sub-Saharan Africa in the 19th century, it had a European stamp on it. This stamp led to the charge that Christianity was an

²³ Ibid., 5-6.

²⁴ Especially in the early days, as is evidenced in some works of prominent theologians like Mbiti, Nyamiti, Idowu, Boulaga, Mvenge and many others (refs).

instrument employed by European colonial powers to enslave Africans.²⁵ This charge comes mainly from nationalist leaders, some of whom are consciously or unconsciously echoing the Marxist charge that religion is the opium of the people.²⁶

He argues that the truth-value of these charges is neither here nor there, but the fact that there is a “feeling that Christianity has been an instrument of oppression” is indisputable.²⁷ Therefore, the best response is to “translate Christianity into Authentic African Categories.”²⁸ It is a way of replacing the European stamp with one that is African. He proposes that the translation must be through dialogue. For Pobee, this process of translating Christianity into African categories in view of the political pressures on Christianity is what African theology should be about.

Just like Shorter, Pobee identifies the dislocation of African pre-colonial experience, resulting from colonial elements within the 19th century missionary activities as the key starting point of the project of African theology. He goes a bit further than Shorter to propose that this dislocation must be addressed in view of nationalist movements that continue to misconstrue Christianity because of its association with colonial powers. This proposal points to a political agenda at the core of African theology, which is similar to those of movements across Africa that fought for an end of colonialism.

The political agenda is further expanded and given a different interpretation by Muzorewa in *Origins and Development of African Theology* (1985). Muzorewa’s work is also an

²⁵ John S Pobee, *Toward an African Theology*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1979. P15-16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

interpretation of how theology in Africa should develop. Out of the five sources of African theology, which he identifies, he singles out African nationalism as a peculiar source, probably because it does not have strong Christian connection. It turns out that this is a key source in his personal theological development, and it occupies a key factor in how he views the development of African theology in the 20th century. He writes, “it was the spirit of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism that opened my eyes to the apparent contradictions between the gospel of Jesus Christ as it was proclaimed in the mission churches and the African social reality as I experienced it. At times it appeared as the politicians spoke to my needs more than the preachers did.”²⁹ This personal awakening is central to African theology because in his understanding of African theology, nationalism and Pan-Africanism remain at the core of what triggered African theology.

The structure of Theology being proposed by Muzorewa that places nationalism at the core is a similar structure to that in Pobee’s proposal, which is about translating Christianity into African categories in view of the political pressures coming from nationalist movements. However, Muzorewa is different from Pobee in that for Pobee, translating Christianity into African categories is a way of countering the misconceptions in some nationalist sentiment that considers Christianity to be part and parcel of the of colonial oppression. For Muzorewa theology is an important part of the nationalist agenda. Muzorewa contends “African nationalism provides a general context within which theology is being done, for the central theme of nationalism gave rise to the spirit of African theology in the 1950s.”³⁰ He goes further to argue that the concepts and issues, with which African theology deals, were first raised by African

²⁹ Gwinyai H. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985. Pxi.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

nationalists; Thus, he concludes that theology is part of the nationalist agenda of liberation. It is carrying forward what the nationalist began. African theology is actual political theology.³¹ It is about liberation from 19th century European colonial machinations.

The view that African theology is about the liberation of Africa from its colonial experience just like the liberation movements on the continent is very common in African theology. This has been explicitly expressed by scholars like Tutu, Mugambi, and Bujo. This view is also implied in many later works that try to revive the image of Africa in post-independence Africa. This association of theology and liberation shows that colonial experience has been crucial in determining the shape and direction of African theology.

The major point coming from Shorter, Pobee and Muzorewa is that African theology has to engage African categories disparaged by the colonialism. However, Shorter and Pobee are quick to add that the categories are not static.³² Colonialism and Christianity have transformed Africans. They can never be as they were before 1884, when the European countries gathered in Berlin to partition Africa. Africans continue to change and find new expression. This observation leads to a pressing question raised and answered by Kwesi Dickson in *Theology in Africa* (1984), which is also an attempt to give a comprehensive and systematic presentation of African theology.

Dickson, just like Shorter and Pobee before him and Muzorewa after him, reiterates the view that African theology must be about Christian faith expressed in African categories made up of an African cultural-religious reality. One of his main concerns is that “in the light of African colonial experience, a confluence of political and Christian missionary influences, and its

³¹ Ibid., 49, 53.

³² Shorter, *African Christian Theology*, 11-15, Pobee, *Towards an African Theology*, 18

consequences, is necessary for the Christian church to look to African pre-colonial thought as a necessary component of the theologizing process.”³³ Colonial experience brought new complexity and modification to African life and thought. Different European countries made the situation in Africa more complex than it was before. They created countries out of diverse linguistic and cultural groups and made them look up to administrative and legal systems from the colonizing countries. They distorted the personality of the people as it made them feel that they had no genuine existence unless they adopted European ways. The missionaries also contributed to these distortions and modifications, as they tended to support the policies of their home countries.³⁴

The attainment of independence does not mean that the distortion as well as complexity introduced by colonialisms is over or that the situation now reverts to what it used to be before colonialism. Africans have taken over the colonial administration and Europeans still have control on Africa. Although there is independence in most African countries, the colonial past continues to influence institutions in African schools, churches and governments.³⁵ It is in light of this situation that Dickson asks whether turning to African life and thought in doing African Theology a necessity.

His response is in the affirmative because of two reasons. First, he observes that although African traditional life and thought has been affected, it has not been overrun.³⁶ It continues to

³³ Kwesi A Dickson, *Theology in Africa*. Maryknoll, N.Y. : London: Orbis Books, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, p. 75.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 82-84

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 85

manifest itself in the contemporary post-colonial era. Secondly, there is wisdom in the pre-colonial African life and thought that is necessary for achievement of selfhood. These arguments also appear in different ways and forms within Shorter's and Pobee's treatments of the same issues of change and continuity.³⁷ They indicate that colonial experience did not just trigger the development of African theology, but that it will remain part of it for some time.

Establishing that colonialism is at the core of the development of theology in Africa is the first step in understanding the nature of African Theology. The second step is to establish how African theology remains a theology, not some sociological or anthropological analysis of African colonial experience. I have just established that colonialism played a fundamental role in triggering the rise of African theology in the 20th century in the same way it triggered the rise of the intellectual life during that time, but I am yet to clarify how theological engagement with this experience is different from ideologies developed by political parties across the continent that are wrestling with the same colonial experience.

The answer lies in the fact that all the texts discussed above make it clear, some more explicitly than others, that what they are proposing is about Christian faith, first and foremost. It is about the universal message of Christ in a specific space and time. Shorter clarifies at the beginning that his work is part of discussion about incarnation or inculturation of the Christian faith.³⁸ Pobee categorically states that this act of "couching essential Christianity into African forms should not be confused with "couching African world views in Christian form." ³⁹ He maintains that there are aspects of Christian faith such as the cross of Christ that are non-

³⁷ Shorter, *African Christian Theology*, 11-15. Pobee, *Towards an African Theology*, 18-20

³⁸ Shorter, *African Christian theology*, 3

³⁹ Pobee, *Towards an African theology*, 18

negotiable. He also adds that the Bible, the foundational document of the church, must be given priority.⁴⁰ Dickson also underscores the fundamental place of Christ and the cross in his emphasis that the quest of African theology is the “necessity to bring the faith in Christ to bear upon the African life-experience.”⁴¹ This emphasis on the priority of Christ is in line with his vision of African theology based on the conviction that “it is essential that African Christians should be in a position to express in a vital way what Christ means to them and to do so in and through a cultural medium that makes original thinking possible.”⁴² Ultimately it is about Christ, not the cultural-religious medium. Muzorewa echoes the same sentiments in his firm statements that Christ is the peculiar thing that missionaries brought to Africa; and he concludes “African theology can be Christian only if it is centered on Christ and his redemptive work.”⁴³ These clarifications that emphasize Christ and scripture locate African theology within the wider Christian reflection. It is important to underscore them because, given the centrality of colonial experience in the development of theological reflection on the continent, African theology runs the risk of being reduced to one of the many liberation movements on the continent fighting against colonialism.

So far it has been established that colonialism, alongside Christianity, disrupted African experience by disparaging African heritage. So the agenda of African theology is to express the Christian faith through a re-engagement of the disparaged heritage. But it has not yet been established how this colonial experience is associated with the spread of Christianity. The

⁴⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁴¹ Kwesi Dickson, *Theology in Africa*, *ibid.*, 8.

⁴² Ibid., 4.

⁴³ Muzorewa. *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. 34.

relationship between the coming of Christianity and the disruption caused by colonialism has not been explored adequately. Shorter hinted at this relationship when he mentioned that Christianity's tendency, "in its first contact with Africa..., to be uncompromising and intolerant—even violent."⁴⁴ This tendency is related to the allegations that Christianity was an instrument of colonialism, captured by Pobee. It can also be discerned in what Tutu calls "ecclesial colonialism." These allusions, however, do not adequately explain how Christianity and colonialism came together.

Muzorewa provides insightful comments on this relationship. He notes that the "planting of Christianity occurred simultaneously with colonization."⁴⁵ Christian missionaries were supported financially and morally by their European and American governments, and they also worked with colonial groups. The missionaries used the facilities that the colonizers made available, not to facilitate colonialism, but to make their tasks easier. The colonists also "tended to use missionaries to make their task easier."⁴⁶ As a result, it became difficult to draw a line between "missionaries intention and the intent of the colonizers."⁴⁷ It is this association that has led to the confusion about Christianity being an agent of colonialism.

In Muzorewa's analysis, the major problem is with the cultural matrix through which Christianity was planted in the 19th century. It distorted the essence of Christian faith.⁴⁸ Being Christian meant adopting Western culture. Salvation was associated with Westernization.

⁴⁴ Shorter "African Christian Theology p 5-6.

⁴⁵ Gwinyai H. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985, 24.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26.

Educated African Christians adopted a Western lifestyle about marriage and money economy, thereby, reducing Christianity, making it synonymous with Western culture and materialism. The cultural matrix through which Christianity was spread had a double negative. It disparaged African culture, and it also distorted the essence of Christianity. He concludes by proposing that African theology has to reckon with the distorted essence of Christian faith in the same way it has to reckon with African culture in its fractured state.⁴⁹

Muzorewa's account is a positive and more comprehensive interpretation of missionary activity than the popular view found in some theological and literary texts.⁵⁰ Unlike the popular interpretation that missionaries were agents of colonialism, he maintains that the major problem lies not with missionaries, but with environment in which they operated. He maintains that the missionaries did important work. Their primary motive was to bring the good news of salvation.⁵¹ Their efforts must not be overlooked because of some distortions, which came as a result of the cultural matrix in which they operated, and the associations they had with the colonists. The thriving of Christianity in Africa while colonialism was resisted is evidence that Muzorewa's interpretation is a more credible depiction of the association of colonialism and the 19th century missionary enterprise.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁵⁰ Paul Ajah writes, "The early missionaries were products of a certain cultural thought pattern that had developed in western world. With that cultural pattern of thinking they though they answers for the people of Africa. The truth however was that those missionaries had the wrong notion about the people of the African continent. What was more is that, they had even a wrong theology. The wrong theology added to the wrong about people resulted in a wrong approach in their efforts to establish the church in Africa. The answers the missionaries believed had were wrong answers. Consequently the church which they made every effort to establish turned out to be an ailing church , not really what church should be." *An approach to African Theology* Uburu: Truth and life publications, 1996. 2.

⁵¹ Ibid., 27.

In order to appreciate the complex nature through which this cultural matrix has a bearing on theology, an in-depth analysis of at least one important missionary might be helpful. I will take some time to examine the work of Placide Tempels, who lived from 1906–1977. Tempels was a Franciscan Missionary in the Belgian Congo, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁵² He was born in Belgium, came to the Congo in 1933 and went back to Belgium for good in 1962. He spent most of life in the Congo working as a pastor among different communities in the Congo. It is from this experience that he developed his magnum opus, *Bantu Philosophy*, published in 1945, which was to have a significant influence in African scholarship in general, but had direct influence on African philosophy. It is the text that has earned him the honor of being the author of the first piece of writing that brought African philosophy into academic philosophical discussion.⁵³

Bantu Philosophy was a result of the endeavor to introduce the good news of Christian gospel to the Africans. Tempels came to the conclusion that all efforts to evangelize or civilize Africans would be futile unless there were an appreciation and study of the African system of thought.⁵⁴ He challenged Europeans to go beyond the thinking that an Africans has neither philosophy nor a coherent system of thought. He encouraged any European willing to engage with Africans or wanting to share anything that he considered important to reckon with this fact that African lifestyle has logic and a system that Western or European thought must address. He writes, “Before we set about teaching these Africans our system of philosophical thought, let us

⁵² Tempels bio and most of his works and those that were influenced by his work can be found on <http://www.aequatoria.be/tempels/> .

⁵³ D. A Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* African. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, 46 and <http://www.aequatoria.be/tempels/bio.htm#2>.

⁵⁴ Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1969 p. 16-18.

master theirs. Without philosophical insight, ethnology is mere folklore. We can no longer be content with vague terms like ‘the mysterious forces in beings,’ ‘certain beliefs,’ ‘undefinable influences’ or a ‘certain conception of man and nature’⁵⁵ Even though Tempels was convinced that Africans have systematic metaphysical thought different from that of Europeans, he maintained that Africans were incapable of articulating their own philosophy, and that therefore they needed Europeans to help them.

He went further to construct what he perceived as Bantu ontology and expanded on its relation with Bantu wisdom, anthropology and ethics. Bantu ontology is basically about vital force. Being as understood in Western categories is equivalent to a force or a vital reality “in the sense of integrity of all being.”⁵⁶ The presence of this reality is recognizable in the Bantu language. God is the one who possesses this force in himself. Each being, human, animal, vegetable and inanimate has its own vital force; and it is endowed by God with a certain force capable of strengthening. The human being is the strongest being of all creatures. Supreme happiness is to possess the vital force and misfortune is to decline this force. Everything else that constitutes Bantu philosophy is centered around the way these forces are related or how they operate in different kinds of beings. Wisdom is the knowledge of these forces. And God is the sage par excellence for he comprehends the nature and quality of the force of each.⁵⁷ It is this ontology or thought system that Tempels urged the missionary, the colonial administrator, the scholar or anyone interested in African affairs to understand, if he or she is to achieve any success.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 47

Tempels' conception of Bantu ontology has been a source of contention, which is why he has remained an important figure in African scholarship, especially in African philosophy. He has been heavily criticized by some major thinkers from the continent. In Masolo's meticulous presentation of the development of African philosophy, the standard criticism of Tempels' conception of Bantu philosophy is carried forward convincingly. But, the significance of Tempels' work in illuminating the role of colonial experience in shaping African intellectual discourse, including theology, is also clearly presented.

African philosophy, according to Masolo, emerges out of "European discourse on Africa and an African's response to it."⁵⁸ He maintains at the center of this debate was reason because of the value it has been given. It was used to distinguish between the civilized and the uncivilized. For Masolo, Tempels follows the notion of rationality in early Levi Bruhl who described "primitive" peoples as "pre-logical and "mystical." They "manifest lower levels of mental function by failing to recognize, in their attempts at explanation, what observation and laws of inference dictate."⁵⁹ So they regulate their lives through non-empirical propositions about what is observed. Tempels furthered this thinking that the Westerners have a superior rationality because he did not grant intelligibility to the agents in African societies. Rather he placed it within the vital force, which is accessible through some kind of intuition. He distinguished Africans' ways of conception of being from a clear and distinct idea of Western thought, which is scientific. He presented African conception as "intuitive, magical and contradictory"⁶⁰ Masolo

⁵⁸ D. A Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* African. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, 1

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 57

attributes the distinction that Tempels made between African and European conception of ontology to the “influence of his own formation in the Aristotelian- Thomistic or Scholastic Ontology.”⁶¹ Thus, his conclusions are controlled more by his background than by research.⁶²

Masolo concludes that Tempels is only important because he remains a point of reference in the politics of representation, which are about otherness that revolves around the views of rationality.⁶³ He outlines four different groups that have developed around Tempels’ claims. Among the Europeans, there are those who think he has violated an important occidental cultural hegemony, which elevates *homo rationalis* on one side, and those from the existential and phenomenological schools on the other side, who defend him because he has shown the bankruptcy of logocentrism in philosophy. In Africa, there are those who subscribe to the existential school who see him as a revolutionary in philosophy and in anticolonial discourse and those that consider Tempels to be a furtherance of colonial discourse.⁶⁴ The third group that regard Tempels as a revolutionary philosopher who champion anti-colonial movement is made up of his admirers who “eccentrically” defend what does not exist; and they are responsible for the body of literature that makes up what has come to be known as ethnophilosophy, a philosophy that Masolo does not seem to regard highly.⁶⁵ The view of these admirers was popular in ecclesiastical circles and has been encouraged by Vatican II.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 58.

⁶³ Ibid., 65.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 67.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 65.

From his general interpretation of Tempels, Masolo seems to belong to the last group, which views Tempels as furthering the colonial mind. However, his main purpose is not to discredit Tempels, but to show how the issue of otherness/identity based on the notion of reason has been at the core of African philosophy. He demonstrated how Tempels shared the thinking of the West that views an African as inferior to a European. Tempels was carrying forward the thinking that an African has a low level of rational capacity, unable to systematically and scientifically articulate the principles that governed his/her actions. Thus, inasmuch as Tempels appears to be doing Africans a favor by acknowledging a coherent system of thought in their behavior, he was just articulating the colonial mentality. It is from this viewpoint that Masolo concludes that the people who rush to defend him are defending nothing. He does not have high regard for those that sees Tempels as a revolutionary in philosophy and anti-colonial discourse.

Masolo rightly observed that most of those who regard Tempels highly have been supported by ecclesiastical authorities. It is scholars with ecclesiastical training that have become leading authorities in the practice of explaining and interpreting African thought systems in line with what Tempels proposed. They do not endorse Tempels conception of Bantu Philosophy, but they are agreed that Africans have a coherent thought system. They endeavor to surface this system. They come with different views of what it is. Alexis Kagame⁶⁶ and Mbiti⁶⁷ are some scholars in this camp. A possible reason why Tempels's work resonated with this group is that Tempels was not a mere a colonial agent. He was first and foremost a missionary. As Muzorewa

⁶⁶ Kagame, Alexis. *La Philosophie Bantu-rwandaise De L'Être*. Mémoires In-8o (Académie Royale Des Sciences Coloniales (Belgium). Classe Des Sciences Morales Et Politiques) Nouv. Sér., T. 6, Fasc. 1. Bruxelles, 1955 and Kagame, Alexis. *La Philosophie Bantu Comparée*. Paris: "Présence Africaine", 1976.

⁶⁷ John S. Mbiti, *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A Study of the Encounter between New Testament Theology and African Traditional Concepts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

highlighted, missionary association with their homelands have been a source of confusion, but that does not take away their endeavor to bring the good news of salvation. Tempels's philosophical conclusions might have been defective; and they might have furthered colonial misconceptions; but they were basically about the good news of salvation.

The focus on Tempels's missionary efforts is what is emphasized by Bujo, an African priest and theologian who has a positive assessment of Tempels. Bujo considers Tempels to be the Father of African Theology.⁶⁸ Bujo's position is that Tempels was trying to understand the African cultural heritage so as to better bring the Good News to the people of Africa. His ultimate objective was to design a catechism and a pastoral program suitable for Africans.⁶⁹ He sees in Tempels a quality that should be followed by all missionaries. They have to put aside their own culture when they are Christianizing other cultures.⁷⁰ In short, Bujo, unlike Masolo, would not consider Tempels to be furthering any colonial agenda.

The difference in Masolo's and Bujo's assessments of Tempels comes from different disciplines from which they operate. Masolo is working within philosophy. The sense of philosophy he endorses is that of a primarily academic practice, a systematic investigation of ideas; and its specific approach is "open, rational analysis and synthesis" working towards an understanding.⁷¹ Bujo is doing theology. Although his discipline is also an academic practice that involves analysis and synthesis, his major focus is not about the result of the synthesis. It is about

⁶⁸ Bujo, Bénédet. *African Theology in Its Social Context*; Translated from the German by John O'Donohue. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992: 58.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷¹ D. A Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* African. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, 60.

how God is part of people's life. Bujo's main concern is in how the God of Jesus can be experienced among Africans with a history of slavery, colonialism and post independent challenges of trying to establish a new way forward.⁷²

Masolo sense of philosophy is one among many expression of what philosophy entails, so is Bujo's approach to theology. They are important for our purposes because they provide us with a way of using bringing philosophy in theology. I am going to use Masolos analysis and conclusion to explore how colonial experience affected theological reflection. His presentation of the different ways scholars have responded to Tempels' shows that there was a complex response to the dominant Western notion of rationality, which tended to regard people who do not exhibit the rationality developed in Europe during the modern period to be inferior. His configuration of people around Tempels' claim is helpful in situating the work of theologians like Shorter, Pobe, Dickson and Muzorewa, who try to map what makes African theology through an engagement with traditions from pre-colonial Africa. They are all part of a larger discourse on rationality and identity issue that result from the encounter between Africa and the West. What follows in the next section is an investigation of how the debate about identity or otherness in the encounter between Africa and the West affected those in ecclesiastical circles who like Tempels embarked on grounding a theological reflection on an exclusive African rationality or experience.

The Effect of Colonial Experience on African Theology

Introduction

As presented in the previous section, a major preoccupation of contemporary African theology has been making theology African through an identification of African values or rational

⁷² Bujo, Bénédet. *African Theology in Its Social Context*; Translated from the German by John O'Donohue. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992: 8-13

processes as a response to colonial misconceptions of African rationality. This section goes further to show how this approach has led to an identity theology, because attempts to identify what is African limited African values and rational processes to only that which is free from colonial influence. Recovery, recognition and rehabilitation of the obscured identity or disparaged experience became important tasks of African theology. What became paramount was the visibility of African Tradition.

This state of affairs is demonstrated through a critical analysis of trends in the theology of John Mbiti, Charles Nyamiti, Jean-Marc Ela and Emmanuel Katongole. Mbiti and Nyamiti are prominent theologians representing the emerging contemporary African theology in the early '70s, when it had reached a mature stage and was reflecting on itself as well as developing systematic treatises. According to Young's distinction of the "old guard" and the "new guard," Mbiti and Nyamiti would belong to the "old guard." Jean-Marc Ela and Katongole represents what Young would call the "new guard." The latter represents the trend in post-independence era, where the focus is not so much on what colonialism obscured, but its ravages.

John Mbiti and the Recovery of "us" different from Western categories

John Mbiti is a Kenyan Anglican priest and theologian. He was born in Kenya in 1931. After high school, he attended Makerere University College in Uganda from 1950 to 1953. He then went to the US, where he studied theology. Then, he moved to Cambridge, where he obtained a doctorate in theology in 1963. He was ordained to the Anglican priesthood after graduation. He moved to

Uganda in 1964 where he taught for ten years at his alma mater, Makerere. In 1974 he moved to Switzerland where he now resides with his family.⁷³

Mbiti has written extensively on African theology and philosophy; the few texts used in this section might not do justice to his contribution. However, they adequately give a general direction of his theological work and are sufficient to demonstrate the effect of colonial experience on his theology. His work has a structure similar to that of Pobee, Shorter, Dickson and Muzorewa, who attempt to overcome misrepresentations of African experience in European discourse on Africa, through an engagement with African traditional religion and culture. His approach is similar to that of Tempels, who proposed that it is important to understand a coherent philosophical thought process in the African thought system if one wants to make Christian faith relevant to an African.

However, Mbiti himself would not consider himself to be following Tempels.⁷⁴ He gives Tempels credit for his sympathy towards Africans, not for the content of his work.⁷⁵ Neither would he consider his view of theology to be in the same league with Shorter, Pobee and Dickson. In fact, he does not consider Shorter's *African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation?* to be a Christian theological text. Rather, he sees it as work about African traditional religion.⁷⁶ The

⁷³ Bujo, Bénézet."John Samuel Mbiti, Pioneer of the "sasa" and "Zamani" theology in Bujo ed. *African Theology in the 21st Century: Contribution from the Pioneers*, vol 3. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2013. 37 -39

⁷⁴ John Mbiti., *African Religions & Philosophy*. 2nd Rev. and Enl. ed. Oxford; Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990. 16.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁶ Mbiti, John S Mbiti. "African Christian theology." *Historical Magazine Of The Protestant Episcopal Church* 47, no. 4 (December 1978): 473-477. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 13, 2016). P. 175

distinction between African Christian theology and African traditional religion is important for Mbiti. He cautions that the treatment of African traditional language in his theology should not be confused with African Christian theology.⁷⁷ His review of Kwesi Dickson's book *Theology in Africa* is very positive.⁷⁸ He commends it for raising important question for further reflection "on the meaning of theology in an African setting."⁷⁹ Still, he considers it to be limited. It does not say all that could be said about African theology. In his view of how African theology should be understood, those works which investigate African traditional religion and culture in the way Dickson and Pobee did, are just important stepping stones. They do not constitute what makes proper African Theology.

Mbiti's vision of African theology goes beyond particular concerns such as African traditional religion or culture. In "African Theology," a 1973 essay in which he surveys different views of African theology and proffers his own understanding, he is critical of views that portray African theology in terms of the encounter between Christianity and African traditional religion or culture. He considers them to be limited because "theology is not just about the past, it is also for the present and the future; and some of the burning issues to which theology must address itself may have nothing to do with our traditional background."⁸⁰ His major criticism is that the definitions and directions for African theology, that different scholars propose, are conditioned by the scholar's educational background or what they hope to see theology in Africa fulfilling. He

⁷⁷ Mbiti "African Theology" *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 35.

⁷⁸ Mbiti, John S. "Theology in Africa." *International Review Of Mission* 74, no. 294 (April 1985): 281-282. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 13, 2016): 281-282

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁸⁰ Mbiti "African Theology" *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 34

proposes that African theology should be understood in terms of what it is doing and will do, rather than in terms of the task that scholars expect it to accomplish.⁸¹

In his assessment, what is happening in African contemporary theology is growth in embracing of diversity. The scope of African theology now includes “traditional religious heritage of our peoples,... contemporary problems of living (church and state liberation culture, urban life), worship, service, ministry and pastoral and prophetic work of church.”⁸² What it will do or accomplish is yet to be established: “it may contribute something fresh to the Christian stream of thought...; it may depart from the well-trodden routes of Western theology...; it may reveal something too much so as to embarrass some people or other theological system...; it might irritate some quarters of Christian Christendom”⁸³ He reiterated the same view of how African theology should be understood in another article published a year later, where he was comparing African theology with Black theology.⁸⁴ In short, Mbiti considers the proposals of Pobee and Shorter to be just a part of a wider complex and dynamic development unfolding in Africa.

Furthermore, Mbiti would be critical of the thesis of this chapter, which argues that the disruption caused by colonialism has been key in shaping contemporary African experience and has played a critical role in determining the direction of the intellectual life on the continent, including African theology. This chapter argues that the movement towards an engagement with what is authentically African or towards what Masolo would call a search for an identity is a

⁸¹ Ibid., 38- 39.

⁸² Ibid., 39.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ John S. Mbiti, “An African views American Black Theology” in *Worldview*, August 1974: 44.

response to the disruptions by colonialism. Mbiti would not give colonialism any special role. In fact, he rarely makes any reference to colonial experience in his work. Unlike Tutu, Mugambi and Bujo, he does not declare his theology to be an act of liberation from colonialism. He considers liberation to be a section within the evolving African theological reflection that is embracing diversity.⁸⁵ He acknowledges the importance of liberation theology for people in South Africa, where there has been a development of black theology to deal with the situation of oppression in that country and is critical of its over-reliance on Black theology in America.⁸⁶

In Mbiti's view African theology is not about liberation, (or colonial experience or any other experience). It grows out of the "joy of gospel in the experience of the Christian faith."⁸⁷ The use of African traditional culture and religion in his theology should not be confused with African theology.⁸⁸ It has to do with the nature of African theology that "has to particularize its understanding of the faith according to the total situation of our [African] peoples-historical, cultural, contemporary and anticipated or possible future." For it is to interpret and understand Christian faith.⁸⁹ He will not consider his use of traditional religion or philosophy to be a reaction to the disruption caused by colonial experience because African theology is like any other theology. It is about understanding the Christian faith and Africans have to understand the faith

⁸⁵ Mbiti "African Theology" *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 39.

⁸⁶ Mbiti "African Theology" *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 37- 38 and John S. Mbiti, "An African views American Black Theology" in *Worldview*, August 1974: 43.

⁸⁷ John S. Mbiti, "An African views American Black Theology" in *Worldview*, August 1974: 43.

⁸⁸ Mbiti "African Theology" *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 35

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

“in their own terms and according to their own insights, and in ways that are meaningful to their time and situation.”⁹⁰

This claim that what is primary in African theology is faith, not experience, forms the thesis of his book, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, where he asserts that “the Christian faith is one and remains unchangeable around the person of Jesus Christ. But people employ their cultures, their world views, their hopes and fears, their experiences and disappointments, their songs and cries, their celebration and tears and the totality of their being in order to understand that message, to interpret it, to institutionalize it, celebrate it and weave it into their daily life.”⁹¹ What is important about this thesis is that it shows that Mbiti does not dismiss experience completely. However, he does not pay much attention to the particular experience of colonialism that this chapter claims is central in understanding the aspects of human experiences that he lists; neither will he consider it to be that crucial.

The thesis of this chapter is in line with Mbiti’s vision of African theology, which understand theology to be about Christian faith and that it should not be reduced to be a product of the particular experience that it uses as a source. Theology involves more than the experiences that are used as sources. I have already highlighted this point in the discussion on what makes the works of Shorter, Pobee and Dickson theological works rather than sociological or political analyses of experiences.⁹² However, the chapter argues that this source, this experience in which colonialism has played a significant role, has led to a limitation in theology. It has had a significant impact on a number of major works in African theology. It is responsible for the

⁹⁰ Mbiti “African Theology” *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 38

⁹¹ Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity and Theology*, 19-20.

⁹² see 28-30 above.

preoccupation with that which gives dignity to that which makes Africa African. That preoccupation has led to stagnation around the issue of identity and otherness, which Masolo identified in the philosophy articulated by Tempels. Mbiti's vision of theology, just like that of Shorter, Pobe Dickson and Muzorewa is not primarily about this issue. However, it is not free from this influence.

Like Tempels, Mbiti attempts to recover an African thought system upon which a theology can be based, in contradistinction to Western philosophical foundations. He gives a positive reinterpretation to what Tempels had expressed negatively. Tempels had argued that African philosophy was built into the people's way of life, but that they were not capable of articulating it in the way Europeans had done in their philosophy. Hence, he had maintained that it was the duty of Europeans to articulate this philosophy if they were to make any progress with the Africans.⁹³ Mbiti acknowledges that there are African philosophical systems that have not been formulated. These "may be found in the religion, proverbs, oral traditions, ethics and morals of the society concerned."⁹⁴ He is unlike Tempels who argues that only Europeans can and have to articulate this philosophy. Mbiti maintains that only Africans can interpret this philosophy.⁹⁵ He considers himself one such African.⁹⁶ He then proceeds to construct what he considers to be an authentic African philosophy, different from the one that Tempels

⁹³ Tempels *Bantu Philosophy* 25.

⁹⁴ John Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*. 2nd Rev. and Enl. ed. Oxford; Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990. 2

⁹⁵ Mbiti "African Theology" *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 38-39.

⁹⁶ John Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*. 2nd Rev. and Enl. ed. Oxford; Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990. 2.

constructed. One category in his articulation of African philosophy, for which he is well known and has been discussed widely, is the African concept of time.

The African concept of time was first articulated in his 1969 doctoral thesis *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background* published two years later. It also appeared in *African Philosophy and Theology* (1969). It is presented as fundamental in understanding African religions and philosophy. Based on linguistic analysis and mythological study among the *Akamba* of Kenya, Mbiti came to the conclusion that the African concept of time differs from the Western concept of time in two major ways. Firstly, time is composed of events, what have happened and what is happening, including what will happen in the immediate future. It is not about some abstract mathematical notions, rather it is experienced. Instead of numerical calendars, most African societies have phenomenon calendars; for example, months are named according to the way they are experienced, e.g., the month of the wind.

Secondly, it is made up of actual time and potential time. Actual time is made up of what has happened and what is happening. Potential time is what is likely to happen or what “falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena”⁹⁷ In the realm of potential time, there is no concept of future or at least of any future beyond six months to two years. He based this claim on *Kikamba*, the language of the *Akamba*, which does not have verbs for a distant future. The lack of that kind of future is also found in the fact that the *Akamba* do not have myths about the distant future, but they have myths about the distant past.

Concepts of time as actual and potential differ from Western concepts of time composed of “indefinite past, present and infinite future.”⁹⁸ Unlike the linear three-dimensional Western

⁹⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

concept of time, the African concept is two-dimensional. It is made up of the extended past, *zamani* and the present, *sasa*.⁹⁹ *Sasa* is the now moment, consisting of “a dynamic present and a short future of potential time.”¹⁰⁰ It differs from individual to individual. Each community has its own *sasa* that is recorded through events, not mathematically nor through abstract notions. *Zamani* overlaps with the *sasa*, which is constantly feeding into the *zamani*. Every year, made up of major events, passes into the *zamani*. The *zamani* appear as a graveyard of the *sasa*; but in actual fact, it is more than a graveyard because “*zamani* is the period of myths, giving a sense of foundation or security to the *sasa* period and binding together all created things, so that things are embraced within micro time.”¹⁰¹

Mbiti’s objective is to show a different way of understanding New Testament eschatology, compatible with the African concept of time. He wants to show the limitation of the understanding in the interpretations of Schweitzer and other Western scholars, who used a linear concept of time to interpret New Testament eschatology. They depicted eschatology in terms of teleology and fulfillment or a point of consummation when creation will terminate in eternal bliss or damnation. That understanding can be legitimately traced to the New Testament. And it is in line with the Judaic messianic hope, final destruction of the world or a climax of events. It is the understanding that has informed Western theology and is what was used in introducing the Christian faith to the Africans.

⁹⁹ When he first articulated this concept in his dissertation, Mbiti used *mituki* and *tene* for present and past. These were kikamba words, the language of the Akamba among whom he carried out his research. In *African Religions and Philosophy* he used *sasa* and *zamani*, from Swahili which is spoken across eastern Africa. In this chapter I use *sasa* and *zamani*. These are the words used by many works that make reference to Mbiti’s concept of time.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Unfortunately the Western understanding of time is not helpful in Africa. It is difficult for people who operate within an African concept of time because they do not look forward to a world to come, as is the case in Judaism. Instead they look forward to the *zamani*, where there is an endless rhythm, which knows no interruption, termination, climax and eternal bliss found in Christian apocalyptic literature. The end of the world in Christian apocalyptic literature does not exist in the African concept of time. In the *zamani*, there is an endness and endlessness that take place when what ends in the *sasa* moves into the endlessness of the *zamani*. That is why there are a lot of myths about the *zamani*. The circles and actions in the *sasa* are there from eternity, and one has to follow them so that he secures his place in the *zamani*. Through libation and religious ceremonies, a communion is established with the dead, who exist in the *zamani*. They are the living-dead, who continues to live in the memory of those alive. After about five generations or when no one remembers them, they enter into a world of spirits. As spirits they are no longer formal members of the human family, but they become intermediaries between the living and God.

Mbiti argues that those who operate with a linear concept of time have overlooked an important aspect of that New Testament eschatology which is compatible with an African concept of time. In the New Testament, the Jewish distinction of this time—a time of evil/sorrow and time to come, a time when God reigns—was disrupted by the incarnation. In other words, the time to come has interrupted this time and inaugurated time to come.¹⁰² Thus, New Testament eschatology is Christological. Jesus has put the eschatological realm into our realm.

¹⁰² John S. Mbiti, *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A Study of the Encounter between New Testament Theology and African Traditional Concepts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). 32.

What has been inaugurated in this Christ-event will be fulfilled with the *parousia*. Here, one can notice that the New Testament eschatology emphasizes a two-dimensional concept of time. What is realized now which will be finalized at the *parousia*.

However, this inauguration by Christ of what will be finalized later is still unlike the African concept of time described above because its orientation is not in the past, but in time to come or in a different world. Nonetheless, this interruption of this realm by Christ paves a way towards a different understanding of New Testament eschatology that is not tied to any concept of time. It reveals that “time is subject to eschatology and not vice versa.”¹⁰³ It has a vertical dimension that defies the horizontal conception. It is not about future or past, but it is about another world related to this world. He concludes: “it is my conviction in this work that this New Testament approach to the problem not only adequately handles the so called ‘delay’ of the *parousia*, but has given Christianity an Eschatology incorporating but not dependent upon a linear concept of time. It is an Eschatology firmly grounded on Christology and hence capable of being converted and understood in other historical and cultural situations such as the African background...”¹⁰⁴ The emphasis is on the Christological aspect of eschatology, which makes it possible to be understood by people with no linear concept of time, because the in-breaking of the Christ event shatters all concepts of time. It was unfortunate that the interpretation based on the linear concept of time with an orientation towards the future was emphasized by missionaries among the *Akamba*. It created a lot of problems for the *Akamba*.¹⁰⁵ He sets out to develop an approach that uses the new understanding of eschatology to suit the *Akamba* concept of time.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 61.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 57.

Although I find Mbiti's articulation of time very persuasive and important for understanding African experiences and Christian faith, I will not discuss its significance in that regard. This chapter is not a positive development of the African concept of time as some have done.¹⁰⁶ Neither is it critical analysis showing its limitation as others have done.¹⁰⁷ Nor is it a reaction to Mbiti's responses to those who have commented on his presentation of the concept of time.¹⁰⁸ It presents this conception as a way of showing that Mbiti's theology is part of the intellectual development influenced by contemporary experiences that have been shaped by colonial processes and missionary endeavors. He is reacting to the disruption caused by colonial experiences through a recovery of the "us" or the African different from Western categories upon which an African theology has to be built.

The articulation of the African concept of time is a response to the Western interpretation of the New Testament. It is not just a spontaneous elaboration of an African philosophy or worldview for the sake of sharing information. In presenting this concept of time, he is critiquing the Western interpretation and showing why they have failed to make an impact among the *Akamba*, even though his objectives are much wider than this critique.¹⁰⁹ He presents

¹⁰⁶ W. B. Burleson, "John Mbiti: The Dialogue of an African Theologian with an African Traditional Religion" (PHD Diss., Baylor University, 1987) is one of several works that approve of Mbiti's work and tries to build on it.

¹⁰⁷ Chapter 5 of D. A Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* African. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, is a one example of critical assessment that tries to show its limitation and it is critical of its significance.

¹⁰⁸ John Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*. 2nd Rev. and Enl. ed. Oxford; Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990. .27-28.

¹⁰⁹ John S. Mbiti *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A study of the Encounter between New Testament Theology and African Traditional Concepts*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. 1-3.

a way of thinking that is very different from the Western way of thinking that could be used to understand the Christian mystery. He explicitly made the point clear In *African Religions and philosophy* (1969), where he reiterated this concept. In this text, he locates his work among African studies serving as corrective efforts to Western interpretations.¹¹⁰

In a nutshell, Mbiti's theology is part of the discussion that is trying to recover the trodden heritage in response to misinterpretation or interpretation from a Western perspective. Just like Pobee, Shorter and Dickson, he turns to the traditional culture and religion to find an anthropology upon which theological reflection can be articulated. Ultimately recovery of an African identity different from what European scholars and theologians have used to understand as African becomes a crucial part of his work.

Nyamiti and the Recognition of "us,"

Similar to Western Categories

Charles Nyamiti, a Tanzanian Roman Catholic priest, belongs to the early generation of African theologians who emerged after Second World War at the same time as John Mbiti. He was born in 1931, entered the seminary in 1954, after finishing high school, and was ordained in 1962. After ordination, he was sent to Louvain in Belgium where he obtained a doctorate in theology in 1969. He then moved to Vienna where he studied ethnology and music and gained another doctorate in 1975. He returned to Tanzania where he taught at the seminary and later moved to the Catholic University of East Africa, where he is now professor emeritus.

Like Mbiti, Nyamiti would not consider his work to have been influenced by the colonial experience. He does not give colonialism any consideration in his work. Neither does he consider

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 10 -14.

his theology to be liberation theology like those from South Africa. He explicitly states that he does not consider himself a liberation theologian, even though he fully appreciates its importance¹¹¹ For Nyamiti, the major handicap of Black theology of South Africa and its sister Black Theology from North America is the failure to be “faithful to the teaching that all true theology has to be based on the sources of Christian revelation.”¹¹²

Nonetheless, his theology is not free from the influence of colonial experience. The relationship of his theology and the colonial discourse is articulated by Mika Vahakangas, who has studied his methodology extensively. In Vahakangas’ presentation, Nyamiti comes into the picture in the late sixties, the early period of African independence, following the efforts to inculturate Christianity that had gained ground because of the desire to make Christianity African and not Western. His move towards inculturation was out of a concern “that rises partly from the sentiments of alienation felt by many Africans during and after the colonial period.”¹¹³

Furthermore, Nyamiti acknowledges the influence of Western ideas in his theological work. However, he distinguishes this influence from colonialism. In a response to reviews, which had highlighted Western influences in one of his texts where he outlines his scope of African theology, Nyamiti maintained that the Western influences in African theology do not necessarily

¹¹¹ Charles Nyamiti. “My Approach to African Theology” in *African Christian Studies*, vol. 7 No. 4 35-53. 35

¹¹² Charles Nyamiti, “Approaches to African Theologies in Torres, Sergio., and Virginia. Fabella. *The Emergent Gospel : Theology from the Underside of History : Papers from the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians, Dar Es Salaam. August 5-12, 1976.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1978. 37.

¹¹³Mika Vähäkangas, *In Search of Foundations for African Catholicism : Charles Nyamiti’s Theological Methodology*, Studies in Christian Mission, v. 23. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 1999. 18.

imply a deformation in African theology.¹¹⁴ He views Western influence as something unavoidable and cautions against extreme exclusion or avoidance of foreign contamination as it can lead to cultural isolation and false particularization. In fact, he did not see his use of Western ideas as dependence, but regards them as dialogue partners, which should lead to a reciprocal influence, if it is done properly. He distinguishes between an influence that impoverishes and one, which enriches. The former is a colonizing influence that suffocates African souls. He does not see that kind of influence in his theology. He considers the influence of Western ideas in his theology to be enriching.¹¹⁵

This position shows an awareness of colonial influences and a conscious attempt to avoid its negative side. It is this awareness of the negativity of colonial influences and attempt to engage with positive Western influences in a constructive way that places Nyamiti in the discourse about Western influence and African responses. His statements about reciprocal influence and exclusion that leads to isolation make it clear that the issue of identity is lurking in his theology. His theology is part of the discourse that has to respond to the experience of self and otherness brought about by the colonial experience, in which the Christian missionary efforts played a significant part. What remains to be established is how his theology relates to the contemporary experiences shaped by colonial experience. A quick survey of some of his work might be helpful.

Commenting on Nyamiti's "African Theology, Its Nature, Problems and Methodology" (1971), Mbiti says that Nyamiti proposes a Thomistic approach in evolving an African theology, which involves "building up an African philosophy and using it afterwards," but "he rejects the

¹¹⁴ Charles Nyamiti "An African Theology Dependent on Western Counterparts?" *African Ecclesial Review* 17. No. 3 (1975) 141-147. 141.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

idea in favour of advocating pastoral motives, which he considers to determine African theology.”¹¹⁶ He concludes that “the main trouble with Fr. Nyamiti is that for him Christian Doctrine is ready-made and African theology has to “adapt it” to African mentality.”¹¹⁷ A close look at the text that Mbiti was reviewing will show that Nyamiti envisaged an African theology that is more than just adaption of ready-made doctrine. Neither is he “building up an African philosophy and using it afterwards.” In fact it is Mbiti’s theology that does that, not that of Nyamiti’s.

Nyamiti is critical of those who think of systematic theology through a construction of an African philosophy. He considers such approach to be too narrow because it means one has to wait for African philosophy before dealing directly with problems of African theology.¹¹⁸ His proposal is that “the correct notion of theology can best be obtained by searching for it in the entire history of theology not in searching for definition of theology in textbooks and manuals.”¹¹⁹ He acknowledges that his essay is short and that, therefore, it neither explores the historical development of African theology nor gives a definition. What he proffers are different elements that are essential for arriving at the right notion of theology.¹²⁰

In Nyamiti’s conception of theology, divine revelation is primary. Magisterial teaching of the church and history of theology are also important elements. These elements need to be considered in constructing the right notion of theology which have to be determined by pastoral

¹¹⁶ “African theology” *Worldview* 16 (August 1973): 33-39. 37.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Charles Nyamiti, “African Theology Its Nature, Problems and Methods.” Kampala: GABA Publications, 1971. 3.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

activity because theology must lead to an understanding of revealed truth, and “to communicate it to others so that they can best understand and live its mysteries.”¹²¹ After establishing these elements, he describes concrete ways of realizing the revealed truth through them. He outlines three methods: apologetical, pedagogical and comparative and recommends use of all the methods simultaneously.¹²²

This conception shows that Nyamiti is not arguing for a ready-made doctrine; rather, he is proposing a methodology for African theology. He takes revelation as his point of departure. Thus his method is close or similar to a scholastic method of Aquinas. Many, including Mbiti, have noticed Nyamiti’s reliance on neo-Scholastic method.¹²³ Vahangakas identifies a number of people who refer to Nyamiti’s Thomistic and Neo-Scholastic approach.¹²⁴ His study is an investigation of how the neo-Thomist methodology and African thinking come together in Nyamiti’s methodology.¹²⁵

In spite of the heavy influence of Thomism, Nyamiti’s understanding of African theology is as robust and dynamic as the one suggested by Mbiti, who argued that African theology should not be confined to a particular need or task that it is performing, but must be understood through an appreciation of the entirety of what is happening on the continent.¹²⁶ Nyamiti express

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 1.

¹²³ Bénédet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*; Translated from the German by John O’Donohue. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992. 68. J Dupuis Book reviews Africa Ecclesial Review 4/ 1974. 437. Adrian Hastings, book review *The Tablet* 23 March 1974.

¹²⁴ Mika Vähäkangas, *In Search of Foundations for African Catholicism : Charles Nyamiti’s Theological Methodology*, Studies in Christian Mission, v. 23. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 1999, 8-9.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁶ Mbiti ,“African Theology” *Worldview* 16 (August, 1973): 38-39.

the same dynamism in his suggestion that the different elements, which he proposes, need further exploration and reconfiguration in order to arrive at a proper notion of African theology.

However, he differs from Mbiti in some important areas. In *New Testament Eschatology in African Background*, Mbiti prioritizes philosophy. He constructs a philosophy within the African mentality that can be used to understand a biblical theme of eschatology. In his writing, Nyamiti adopts a scholastic method in the manner of Aquinas who sees revelation as above philosophy and proposes a different science or philosophy to engage with this revelation. The two have different entry points into African theology. Nyamiti starts with revelation and proposes a number of methods to make it comprehensible in an African context. African pre-colonial tradition, religions and culture are important in expressing this revelation. Mbiti starts with African Christian tradition and he identifies a system of thought that can be used to get into the mystery of the eschatology in the Bible.

Mbiti's comments on Nyamiti are limited because they are based on a very short monogram, which did not fully expand on some of the terms used. Nyamiti expanded the discussion in another monogram, "The Scope of African Theology" (1973). The two monograms were later edited and published together as "The Way to Christian Theology for Africa," 1979. A number of essays and presentation, which explored the nature and scope of African theology further followed.¹²⁷ They reiterated and expanded what was laid out in the first two texts and

¹²⁷ "Approaches to African Theologies in Torres, Sergio., and Virginia. Fabella. *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Underside of History: Papers from the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians, Dar Es Salaam, August 5-12, 1976*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1978. "My Approach to African Theology" in *African Christian Studies*, vol. 7 No. 4 35-53. "African Tradition and Christian God" Spearhead, Number 49, Eldoret Kenya: Gaba productions, 1979. *Christ as our Ancestor: Christology from an African Experience*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984 "Some Methodological Consideration on the use of African Elements in today's African Theology" *African Christian studies* 14., no. 2 (1998), 30-41.

revised in the third text. The enduring themes in these and other publications are methodology and the significance of the category of ancestor in theology. The latter is an expansion of the methodological approach discussed in most publications. Ultimately, Nyamiti has more on methodology than he has on any other theme that he treats. It is within his articulation of methodology that we can identify his response to colonial experience.

In Nyamiti's methodology, African traditions and culture are secondary. They are subordinate to revelation, incarnation and magisterium. He views African theology as an expression and presentation of "the very same Catholic doctrine according to the "African mentality and needs."¹²⁸ It is not "a new religious doctrine" neither is it "a syncretism between Christian teaching and African beliefs."¹²⁹ He adds, "...it is inevitable that African theology shall have to be based on Christian revelation, and African culture. With regard to Christian revelation it is important to distinguish between the fundamental content of this revelation and its cultural expression. The content is universal and essential, and as such it forms the unchangeable kernel of revelation. It is this kernel and not its cultural expression that has to penetrate and transform African culture."¹³⁰ These statements reinforce what has been stated earlier, that revelation comes first. This revelation will find expressions that are African or in accordance with African needs. He sees a similar process of comprehending the revelation in the African context with what happens in the West. What differs are just the expressions or metaphors that it uses. What African theology is doing is expressing and presenting the truth of the One Triune God. They are

¹²⁸ Charles Nyamiti, "African Theology Its Nature, Problems and Methods." Kampala: GABA Publications, 1971, 1.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

expressed or presented through the apologetical, pedagogical and comparative methods mentioned above.

The relevance of African cultural theology is carefully and critically considered in Nyamiti's view of African theology. He goes beyond just identifying an African philosophy or thought system that can be used to understand the Christian mystery or for Christianization. The importance of African culture is primarily in regards to the moments of history, past, present and future upon which African theology has to be based.¹³¹ He asks, "On which of the three moments, shall the African theologian have to base his theology?"¹³² Some dismiss African culture, as archaic and outdated, out of a desire for progress; and others confine themselves to the past because of fear of neo-colonialism.¹³³ Both positions lack a critical attitude that is able to deal with the "historical dimension and dynamics of all cultures, which involve perpetual changes."¹³⁴ It is important to distinguish "fundamental and permanent values" from those that are transitory and engage with the former in different moments.¹³⁵ He suggests that Africa should learn from what has happened in the West, where the history of its culture is "characterized by various 'revivals', 'renaissances', 'neo's of their past; and Africa would gain by following a similar course."¹³⁶ In short, Nyamiti does not give any permanence to cultural expressions; however, they

¹³¹ Charles Nyamiti, "The Scope of African Theology". Kampala: GABA Publications. 1973. 4.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 6.

remain an important part of the discourse, which needs to be critically engaged at different moments.

Nyamiti is not distinguishing between African and Western thought systems or philosophies. He is not constructing or recovering any African thought system that can be used to anchor African theology. Rather he is just recognizing a different expression of revelation in the African context. There is no “us-and-them” but there is only “we” who experience revelation differently. Thus, in the ongoing intellectual development about the Western discourse on Africa and Africa’s response, Nyamiti sees similarity between the West and Africa. What differs are expressions of the same revelation.

Ela and Katongole: None but Ourselves.

According to Young’s distinction between the “old guard” and the “new guard,” it is easier to identify the connection between colonial experience and the theology of Ela and that of Katongole. The two belong to the “new guard” who in Young’s view were able to confront the “myth” of independence and addressed the ravages of colonialism. They are unlike the “old guard” discussed above whom Young says were elitist. The old guard tried to develop theology using African categories that they considered to be different from, but just as sophisticated as, Western categories (Mbiti) or through processes similar to those of the West (Nyamiti). In the theology of the “old guard,” the major focus is on the precolonial experience or at least its expression in contemporary Africa. The “new guard” anchored their theology in the situation of the poor who were marginalized by the colonial system, who continue to be marginalized by independent governments, which inherited the colonial machinery.

Although Young’s distinction adequately captures the connection of colonial experience to the theology in the works of Ela and Katongole, it does not do justice to all the factors that

made the approaches of Ela and Katongole different. Whether independence was a “myth” or it was a reality that was abused by African government is an issue that cannot easily be solved. There are many questions, which must be answered before that distinction can be clarified. Could it be said that the “new guard” was engaging colonial experience or the failure of governments in independent Africa? To what extent can the post-independence problems be blamed on colonialism or on Africans? These are just a couple of important questions that need to be addressed in order to validate Young’s distinction of the old and the new guard. The silence of the “old guard” as regards the socio-political situation could have been because they did their theology during a time of hope, when most African countries had just gained independence. The “new guard” came at a time of when it was becoming clear that it is not easy to attain the hopes of independence. The “old guard” and “new guard” distinction needs more space and time.

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to note that some oppressive structures from colonial regimes continued in post-independence Africa. The early generation of theologians like Mbiti and Nyamiti did not address them. A possible reason is that in the 70s when the early works of Mbiti and Nyamiti came out, many African countries were gaining political independence; but cultural domination remained a problem. Hence, they focused on inculturation. But a later generation addressed the political and social situation because it was affected by the dysfunction of the governments of independent African states, which had inherited the oppressive colonial structures. Ela and Katongole had personal confrontations with these structures of oppression. Ela spent the last years of his life in self-exile in Canada, away from his native land in Cameroon because of threats upon his life. He left his country after the threats became more disturbing following the assassination of his colleague and fellow theologian, Engelbert Mveng, in 1995. Katongole lived during the dictatorship of Amin in

Uganda, which had an impact on his life; and he enlisted to fight against Amin. He only failed to participate due to ill health.¹³⁷ Liberation became important for this generation.

In their confrontation of the structures of oppression and miserable state in Africa, we can identify a different position in the discourse about the West and Africa. At this stage, it was no longer about how different (Mbiti) or similar (Nyamiti) are Africans to the Westerners. It was about how do we improve ourselves or what can we do to take responsibility of our own destiny. The focus is on the “us,” who have needs to be “saved” and live a dignified life.

Jean-Mac Ela 1936-2008

Jean-Marc Ela was born in 1936 in Ebolowa, Cameroon. He joined the minor seminary after high school and proceeded to the major seminary and was ordained in 1956. He was sent to France where he earned a doctorate in theology at the university of Strasbourg in 1969 and another one in sociology in 1978. From 1970 up to 1984, he worked as priest among the rural mountain communities in northwestern Cameroon. These were poor communities that were exploited by the state, and Ela not only ministered to them, but also articulated their plight. It led to tension with the state. He was moved to Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, where he taught at the university whilst living among poor communities. He remained a target of the government because of his activities. After the assassination of a fellow theologian, Engelbert Mveng, he went into self-exile to Canada in 1995, where he worked at Laval University of Quebec, among many other things. He died in 2008 in Canada.

Ela wrote extensively. His two works translated in English, *African Cry* (1980) and *My Faith as an African* (1988), are sufficient to give us a general direction of his theology in the

¹³⁷ Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.5.

discourse ignited by colonial experience. According to Bujo, these two texts and a third one, *Voici les temps des heritiers*, which he co-authored with Rene Luneau and Christiane Ngendakuriyo, are Ela's essential contribution to African theology.¹³⁸ The other works make explicit or deepen the ideas in the three works.¹³⁹ The texts are difficult to summarize because they do not follow a clear systematic program. They are made up of different essays written at different times during his pastoral ministry. A good summary of what they are trying to achieve and how they proceed is in Chapter 10 and the conclusion of *My Faith as an African*. I will highlight some themes and proposals in these works so as to identify how his theology has been influenced by colonial experience and how it responded.

Some consider his theology as African liberation theology.¹⁴⁰ Others, like Katongole, acknowledge that there are many themes of liberation but contends that "the label liberation theology is a misleading characterization of Ela's work."¹⁴¹ A close look at his work shows that he is more on the side of liberation. He describes his theology as "shade tree theology."¹⁴² It is "a theology that, far from libraries and the offices, develops among brothers and sisters searching shoulder to shoulder with unlettered peasants for the sense of the word of God in situations in which these words touch them."¹⁴³ He develops this theology from his experience of working

¹³⁸ B Bujo "Jean Mac- Ela: Champion of a Theology Under Trees" in B Bujo and J Ilunga Muya (eds) *African Theology: Contribution from Pioneers Vol 2*, Nairobi, Pauline publications Africa, 2006. 184.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Paul Gifford. *Africa Christianity: Its Public Role*, Bloomington Indiana University Press, 1998), 269-270, 333.

¹⁴¹ Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 2011. 104.

¹⁴² Jean Marc Ela, *African Cry*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986. Vi.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

among the mountain people in northwestern Cameroon, where he confronted many injustices suffered by these communities, including being forced to grow cash crops like cotton instead of millet which was necessary for their survival.¹⁴⁴

The same vision of theology is reiterated in *My Faith as an African*, where he says “Perhaps this theology will not use the vocabulary of scholars and philosophers. But didn’t God speak the language of peasants and shepherds in order to be revealed to humanity? We must discover the oral dimension of theology, which is no less important than the *summae* and the great treatises. Christian theology must be liberated from a cultural system that sometimes conveys the false impression that the Word has been made text. Why can’t the language of faith also portray song, game art, dance and above all the gesture of humanity standing up and marching through wherever the gospel elicits and nourishes a liberating effort.”¹⁴⁵ His theology is neither a treatise nor a *summa*, but an exploration of how the church can address the situation of poverty and suffering experienced by many in Africa. His primary source is pastoral experience, not academic research.

Just like the theologians before him, he considers The African traditional and cultural heritage to be very important. Unlike Mbiti who used it as a hermeneutical tool for biblical themes or Nyamiti’s who consider it an as an expression of revelation that comes to all, Ela views it as a sphere of liberation. He recommends that the established churches, i.e., mainline churches like Roman Catholic, Anglican or Methodist, learn from African independent churches how to engage African traditional religion and culture.¹⁴⁶ African religion was persecuted by colonialists.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 180-181.

¹⁴⁶Jean Marc Ela, *African Cry*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986. 49-50.

Messianism, a strand of African independent churches, engaged this persecuted religion, not as a way of going back to ancestral worship, but as an attempt to “make the message of the gospel to be heard in African context.”¹⁴⁷ This engagement was not just a reaction by people incapable of reason. Rather it was a product of reason, and it “constituted an effort at global interpretation of the situation of Africa in a context of domination.”¹⁴⁸ Its “effort to reconcile the bible with ancestral religion was a product of hidden forces of liberation.”¹⁴⁹ Whilst the “official Christianity were caught up in institutionalization and were being domesticated by colonial systems, messianism was asserting a will to autonomy, a desire for the independence of Africa”¹⁵⁰ Therefore, it is important for the official church to critically engage with messianism.¹⁵¹ It is “the locus of the development of a critical analysis of the condition of the black people in the colonial situation.”¹⁵² Ela makes these recommendations in view of the fact that the church, especially what he calls established churches or official church (churches established by missionaries from Europe), was part of a colonial enterprise.¹⁵³ And it continues to carry on with the colonial elements.¹⁵⁴

His focus is on liberation within the church through engagement with traditional religious experiences. One way of how this liberation in the church is explored is in an essay that

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 47.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 47-49.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 49-40.

¹⁵² Ibid., 47.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 44.

explores the ancestors and Christian faith in *My faith as an African*. His main argument is that the church should use resources within itself that allow for an African commemoration of the ancestors.¹⁵⁵ The commemoration of ancestors in Africa is not sacrificing to spirits to gain favors as has been assumed by missionaries.¹⁵⁶ It is about relationships within this life that continue after someone's departure from this life.¹⁵⁷ The church should not just replace these commemorations with Christian rites.¹⁵⁸ Neither should it treat traditional rites as if they are the same as the veneration of the saints.¹⁵⁹ The saints can never be ancestors. The tradition of saints comes from "a particular cult, characteristic of a particular epoch, a society and a culture."¹⁶⁰ It cannot substitute the communion that Africans have with their ancestors. What is needed is to situate the ancestors within the mystery of the Christian faith.

Ela's proposal of how the cult of ancestors must be approached and be incorporated in Christian faith is closer to Mbiti, as evidenced by his statement that "we must inquire how they can celebrate as Christians the relationships with the dead in a universe – an African universe that has its own technics, its theory of knowledge, its way of interpreting reality its system of rationalization and explanation."¹⁶¹ However, he is different from Mbiti in that his discussion about ancestors and Christian faith is not so much about "transforming dogmas, rites, rules, and

¹⁵⁵Jean-Marc Ela, *My Faith as an African*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2009. 24-26.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 16-17.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 24.

customs formed overseas for African traditions, which are then violently cast off.”¹⁶² His emphasis is on the need to purify and liberate. His focus is on empowering the people.

What Ela is doing is best captured by Magesa’s observation that “Jean Marc Ela’s *African Cry* is a result of deep anguish at the state of affairs in contemporary Africa, but it is neither a self pity work nor, quite obviously a clamour for some sort of recognition by people outside Africa of Africa’s suffering.”¹⁶³ Ela’s position in the discourse about Africa’s response to the Western discourse on Africa is not so much about what the others say about Africa, but is on how the African, especially the poor Africans in the rural area, can be responsible for themselves and on the role of the church in this process. The other who is addressed in his liberation is no longer just a colonial master, but anyone who oppresses, including the African ruling elite.

Emmanuel Katongole, a Ugandan priest staying in the United States, also articulates a similar position. He anchors his theology in the experience of suffering in Africa and explores what the church ought to do to address their misery. Katongole cites Ela as one of the three important figures who points to a new way of envisioning social ethics in Africa (Chapter 5). He builds on what Jean Marc Ela was proposing.

Emmanuel Katongole 1960-

Katongole was born in Uganda in 1960. He completed his secondary school at Kisubi Minor seminary in 1978. In 1980, he began priestly formation at Katigondo Major seminary. He was ordained in 1987. He taught for three years at the seminary. In 1991 he moved to the Catholic University of Louvain where he obtained a PhD in 1996. He returned to Uganda and taught at Katigondo and a number of places in Uganda and abroad. In 2001, he moved to Duke Divinity

¹⁶² Ibid., 13.

¹⁶³ Laurenti Magesa. *African Ecclesial Review* 29 no 4 Aug 1987, p 255-256. 255.

School. He obtained tenure in 2010. In 2013, he moved to Notre Dame, where he is an associate professor of theology and peace studies.

Katongole has written several books and articles, and has edited a collection of essays on theology in Africa. As has been the case with all the theologians treated in this section, I will use a sample of his writing to show how his theology responds to the colonial experience that shaped contemporary experience, which has been a major factor in 20th century African theology. I will focus on *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (2011). Of the texts that have been discussed in this section, it is the only text that was published in the 21st century; and it gives an idea of how theology is developing in the new century. Above all, it is an important text that has a description of the current situation in Africa. It builds on the narrative theology of Hauerwas, which Katongole, explored in his PhD dissertation published as *Beyond Universal Reason: The Relation between Ethics and Religion in the Work of Stanley Hauerwas*, (2000). It is the fruit of a long period of reflection.

Sacrificing Africa proffers an alternative way of envisioning Christian Social ethics in Africa. It is wrestling with the issue of Christianity's growth in a continent that is devastated by poverty, violence and civil war. It explores what the Church can do to address this situation of suffering in Africa. Its premise is that Christianity has not been able to confront the misery effectively (Chapter 1). At times, the Church was silent, confining itself to the spiritual realm away from politics. At other times it just involved itself in some activism like an NGO. In some situations, it was co-opted into the status quo and reproduces tribalism and violence.¹⁶⁴ It also argues that the social ethics that are being developed in Africa are ineffective in their challenge of

¹⁶⁴Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011. 47-50.

the situation because they have been about skills and strategies needed to make the nation-state work in Africa (Chapter 2). They are oblivious of the fact that nation-state is the problem (Chapter 3). It is an institution developed in Europe and was imposed on Africa for exploitative purposes. The African elites who have taken over this institution continue with the exploitation and the sacrificing of African populations. They use traditional African culture to advance their own interest and ideologies.¹⁶⁵ His proposal is that what is needed is not to help the nation-state work better, but an alternative approach to challenge its structure.

Katongole finds this alternative approach in the life stories of people who work very hard under difficult situations giving an alternative narrative. Bishop Taribe Badan of Sudan resigned his position as bishop and retreated to a remote area where he set up a peace village to fight tribalism (Chapter 7). Angelina Atyam had a daughter kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army. She managed to overcome her pain and loss and embraced forgiveness, starting advocacy work on behalf of those affected (Chapter 8). Maggy Barankitse lived through the ethnic violence in Burundi; she ended up taking care of orphaned and abused children of all ethnicities (Chapter 9). These are the experiences of an effective Christian approach to the misery of Africa, not the skills and strategies to make the nation-state work. More of these stories need to be resurfaced so as to give an alternative narrative to that of the nation-state, which has failed Africa.

Just like Ela, Katongole confronts colonialism and its legacy directly. He takes a radical step further than Ela, as he calls for a rejection of the nation-state, a framework that supports post-colonial Africa. Many Africans have been supporting the nation state as is evidenced by the examples of the efforts to make the nation state work in Africa that he cites. This is a very

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 56.

difficult position to take, because the nation-state has become an important part of Africa. Nonetheless, it shows that Katongole represents an important radical response to the Western discourse on Africa, which demands complete overhaul of the system in Africa. It is a demand for Africa to look neither to the past nor to the West, but to Africa's current potential and its own responsibility into crafting its own identity.

Summary of Chapter

After a review of the development of Christian theology in Africa, this chapter established the place of colonial experience in this development. It established that colonial experience is at the core of the development of theology and other intellectual endeavors on the continent. It went further to establish that colonial experience is dominated by the Western discourse about Africa and African response, and it is what contemporary the African experience is all about. This experience has led to a colonial imagination that has been a dominant factor in African theology. It is basically an imagination that the views colonial experience as a rupture of African tradition and culture, considered to be a "true" theological locus. Much of African theology has been preoccupied with recovering, recognizing or rehabilitating this locus. Visibility and survival took center stage in this theology. Ultimately, African identity emerged as the paramount preoccupation of African theology.

Mbiti and Nyamiti concentrated on inculturation and tried to safeguard the eclipse of African identity by showing similarities and differences between African and Western forms of understanding the faith. Ela and Katongole focus on survival, and their focus is on how theology can liberate Africa. In the works of Ela and Katongole, there is not much contrasting of what is African and what is Western. The focus is on the experience of independent governments continuing with the colonial legacy and on the continent. Their theology is part of the struggle

against the colonial experience of destruction, since these governments continued with the structures of oppression of colonial governments. Just like Mbiti and Nyamiti, their theology reinforces the importance of the dignity and the identity of an African; and they use this dignity and identity to make Christianity African. They all operate within the sphere of identity theology, that is, a theology that is preoccupied the how different groups can identify they Christian faith.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN URBAN EXPERIENCE

“Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you” (Luke 9:49–50).

Introduction

This chapter outlines the development of the new direction that emerged when theology started reflecting on urban experience through a critical review of theological works on the city in Africa. It argues that the rise of the city during the colonial period created a complex space that subverts the “relationality” in African theology explored in chapter 1, which is basically a relationship within colonial imagination, where colonial experience is viewed in terms of its rupture from a “true” African experience, that is, an experience free of colonial influences. Within colonial imagination, two forms of identity theology developed. One used pre-colonial experiences and values to articulate the nature (and uniqueness) of developments in African Christianity (Mbiti and Nyamiti). Another tried to use Christian faith to address the situation of misery and suffering in post independent Africa, created by colonial experiences and its legacies (Ela and Katongole). Both forms sought to root Christian faith in African societies through a recovery, recognition and rehabilitation of peculiar African experiences, free from external and negative influences. This theology within the colonial imagination is done in view of the other (the colonialist), whose views and presence disrupted that which is African. It is a theology that is

located in Western metaphysical constructions of what is African. All it does is to give an alternative.

In this chapter, I endeavor to show that in its engagement with experiences within urban space, theology moved away from the colonial imagination. It encountered a sense of selfhood or identity in Africa that was not confined to an identity peculiar to pre-colonial values or to struggles aimed at ending misery caused by colonization. The rise and growth of the city gave rise to a new sense of identity on the continent as Africans devised ways of integrating their traditions and values into the new social, economic and political structures that came about as a result of urbanization. There was a disruption and integration taking place during colonialism that can be identified in urbanization processes, which gave rise to a sense of identity that is not confined to pre-colonial values or any specific attributes peculiar to the African experience. In this process of disruption and integration, the presence of the other was not a threat; rather it provided new ways of expressing traditional values. An engagement with this process has led to a new direction in theological reflection on the continent. The focus is no longer on the other, the colonialist, but on how the self (African) is adapting itself to the new situation that came about as a result of colonial experience.

The chapter begins with a brief assessment of the theological literature on the city, which unfortunately is not much. Then it identifies the general dynamics of urbanization on the continent captured in this literature, followed by an assessment of the changes that these dynamics bring to theological reflection. It concludes with a review of a proposal for how theology can engage the dynamics in the African city.

Review of Literature on Theological Reflection on the City in Africa

There are many texts on African theology, but there is not much theological literature reflecting on the city in Africa. A couple of reasons for this lack can be constructed from the few available texts. One possible reason can be drawn from Mugambi's argument that there has been a lack of systematic analysis of Christian Missionary activity in Contemporary Africa, "with a view to discerning the future of Christianity under rapidly changing demographic, economic and settlements patterns in the continent" because the African societies were regarded by Western Scholars "as too simple for sociological analysis."¹ Mugambi further argues that the study of African societies has been confined to anthropology, "considered the preserve of "uncivilized societies...on the fringes of industrial world;" and sociological analysis has been reserved for European societies, considered to be industrialized and advanced.² From this argument, it can be concluded that there are only a few theological texts reflecting on the city because theology was following the major trends on African scholarship that regard African societies as too simple and not complex enough for sociological analysis.

Inasmuch as Mugambi's observation is an apt description of how the study of African societies has been done, especially by Europeans, it cannot be used to account for the lack of theological literature on the city, because, since the 1960s, when theological reflection was gaining ground in Africa, there have been many other works in other disciplines studying the social processes in African cities. A more probable reason for lack of theological literature on the city is the one identified by Kelly who attributes what he calls the great silence about the city, in

¹ J. N. K Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction; African Christian Theology After the Cold War*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995, 52.

² Ibid.

the official Catholic Church documents, to the failure to appreciate the biblical symbol of the city as the place where God dwells with his people.³ He traces this failure to a negative attitude towards the city that developed sometime in the late middle ages.

According to Kelly, there are two images of the city in the scriptures. One is a negative image found in Genesis, where the city is portrayed as being under the curse of God. It is a portrayal of a city that emerged out of strife between Cain and Abel. The same image is also found in the story of the destruction of the tower of Babel and that of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is the same image portrayed in the fall of Jericho. Kelly considers this to be an image that expresses an attitude of a nomadic people who had no city. The attitude changes when Jerusalem is made the city of God. A positive image of the city emerges. Jerusalem becomes a place where God dwells among his people. It is praised in the psalms. This positive image of the city is part of other images found in secular literature such as the epic of Gilgamesh and some of Plato's dialogues.

Kelly maintains that the Church's attitude towards the city is more in line with the negative images. He takes the influence of Augustine on Christian Catholic faith as a possible hypothesis for this attitude.⁴ In his *City of God*, Augustine created a dualism that cast the city of man as a city opposed to the city of God. This view was consonant with Augustine's view of human nature. For Augustine, human nature is fallen, corrupt and cannot be redeemed without the light of grace.⁵ It is this view that has dominated the Western, mostly Catholic understanding of the city. Protestants have taken a slightly different attitude. The writings of Harvey Cox,

³John Kelly, "Image of the city Christian Tradition" AFER, vol. 20 No. 4, August 1978, 236.

⁴ Ibid., 240.

⁵ Ibid.

Gibson Winters and Jacques Ellul have been positive about the city. Kelly concludes by suggesting that the Catholic Church has to be more positive about the city. It must “think and feel about the city as a place where God’s love and presence has already been experienced” so that it can develop effective pastoral approaches.⁶

From this analysis, it can be inferred that the dominance of a negative attitude towards the city is responsible for the scarcity of theological literature on the city in general, especially in Catholic circles. However, there is need for further investigation into this attitude because Kelly’s argument that it was a result of Augustine’s influence requires more evidence than his passing statement that Augustine has had more influence on Catholic faith than the Bible. The fact that Augustine did not equate the city of men with the city of God does not translate to a negative attitude towards the city. After all, Augustine operated within cities of his time. Kelly himself notes his assessment of the Church’s negativity toward the city is just one hypothesis. It is a more probable hypothesis that needs further investigation, especially on why and how the negative attitude toward the city became dominant.

Shorter, who has the most comprehensive study of the Church in the city in Africa to date, gives a more possible account of the negative attitude towards the city and how it influenced the spread of Christianity in Africa.⁷ The account provides the most probable reason for the lack of theological literature on the city in Africa. It also gives a summary of how the Church gradually became part of the 20th century African city. Shorter connects the initial growth of the Church in Africa around mission stations outside centers of urban growth to the anti-urbanism that developed sometime around the late Middle Ages in Europe. Unlike the

⁶ Ibid., 241.

⁷ Alward Shorter, *The Church in the African City*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991, 58-68

apostolic Church, which thrived in city centers, the 14th century Church encountered serious social problems that led to an aversion of cities. In the 4th century, when the Roman Emperors began to tolerate Christianity, “martyrs’ relics where translated into basilicas erected in towns by Emperors, and became focal points for worship.”⁸ Since the Church thrived in the cities, the rural areas were not given as much attention as the city centers.

By the 14th century, European cities became centers of serious social and moral decay. Cities were seriously affected by the Black Death. They were targets of marauding mercenaries, and were the abode of hated moneylenders and foreign merchants. It was in this environment that the negative images of the city found in Genesis began to thrive. The rural became the ideal. Its simplicity and homogeneity was emphasized by theologians and intellectuals, and it became the model structure for the church. The rise of industrialization, which led to more social dislocation, poverty and suffering, reinforced the anti-urbanism that was already thriving. Just as in the 4th century, theology neglected rural areas, the theology of late Middle Ages neglected cities.⁹

The 19th century missionary to Africa carried the same negative attitude towards the city when they came to Africa. They concentrated their efforts in missions outside the city. They trained future missionaries, most of whom were from the countryside, in centers on the edges of the city.¹⁰ Rural areas were also advantageous for missionaries because they supplied food and resources needed to make the missions self-sufficient. These factors, compounded by the fact that there were no urban traditions in 19th century Africa, led to a Church with a rural rather than an

⁸ Ibid., 60.

⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰ Ibid.

urban orientation. Early missionaries perceived the developing towns as alien to the gospel, so they did not place much value in them.¹¹ Unlike colonial governments, which concentrated on the development in the new cities, missionaries looked to the rural population, whose poverty resonated with evangelical poverty.

With the coming of independence, the attitude changed. More Africans came to live in the city.¹² The Church was moving away from being a missionary Church to a local Church. An African leadership was emerging, and it aligned itself with the new structures of the independent nations. Their centers were in city centers. All these developments were an indicator that anti-urbanism was no longer sustainable.

Although Shorter's account of the negative attitude of the Church towards the city doesn't cover the complex relationship of the church and the city, it is more plausible than Kelly's assumption that the church's negative attitude towards the city was the influence of Augustine on Christian faith. Shorter's account has got its own limitations. It does not address everything about the church and city in history. For example, it does not take into account the fact that many great Gothic cathedrals built in Europe during the Middle Ages were in the cities. Furthermore, it does not explain why the late Middle Ages were also the time of the rise of the universities at the cathedrals in the cities. The relationship of church and city is more complex than what Shorter presents. However, the complexity does not invalidate Shorter's and Kelly's point that there is an anti-urbanism in the history of the Church that can be connected to the missionary church in Africa. This negative attitude is the most possible reason why there is the lack of theological literature on the city in Africa.

¹¹ Ibid., 63.

¹² Ibid., 65-68.

Nonetheless, this lack or scarcity of literature does not take away the fact that Christianity has been an important part of urbanization in African. The few texts available about the Church and its ministry in the city offer important insights into how the Christian faith has been part of the dynamics of urban experiences. These texts are not rigorous theological works; however; they are a primary source of theological reflection on the city in Africa and they can be used to show an important shift taking place in African theology as it reflects on the experiences in the city. This chapter makes reference to a number of them, but it analyses in depth five texts. Kelly's text, *The Church in Town* (1977) is an important early theological text about the city. Alyward Shorter's *The Church in African City* is the most comprehensive study to date. It covers most of sub-Saharan Africa. It is a key text that provides a summary of dynamics in the cities. *Urban Ministry in Africa*, edited by Chimwe M Nwoye, is a collection of essays by different theologians. It gives a comprehensive overview of pastoral issues in the 21st century. "Doing Urban Public Theology in South Africa: Introducing a New Agenda" and "Towards a fusion of Horizons: Thematic contours for an urban public theological praxis- agenda in South Africa" by Ignatius Swart and Stephan De Beers are introductory texts in a journal that focuses on the city in South Africa. They are the only texts that specifically address hermeneutical and conceptual frameworks of theological reflection on the city. These will be used to establish how best to take theological reflection on the city further.

Dynamics of African Urban Experiences in Theological Reflection on the City

This section examines the dynamics, characteristics, and trends of the urbanization in Africa that are captured in theological reflections on the city. Its primary objective is to give a rough idea of urbanization across the continent. It is one way of trying to capture the complex development of cities on the continent at the beginning of the 20th century. In this examination, I follow a

distinction between urbanization and urban growth identified by Shorter, who adopts Kenneth Little's definition of urbanization as "...the process whereby people acquire material and non-material elements of culture behavior patterns and ideas that originate in, or are distinctive of, the city."¹³ He distinguishes it from urban growth, which he describes as a physical aspect of urbanization. This section is exploring a theological view of urbanization in Africa. In other words, it examines how theology in Africa captures and presents material and non-material elements that originate in or are distinctive to the cities that developed in colonial period. This kind of urbanization is different from developments of ancient cities such as Great Zimbabwe or other Islamic cities prior to European colonization of Africa in the 19th century. Colonial cities established, in the 20th century Africa, have infrastructure; and they imitate lifestyles that are similar to what had developed in Europe since the industrial revolution. They are different from most pre-colonial urban centers, which were mostly monarchical states with a palace at the center and different settlements around it.¹⁴

As has been stated already, Shorter's text, *The Church in the African City* (1991) is the most comprehensive out of all texts that focus on Christian faith and the city. Its focus is on East Africa; however, its descriptions of the processes in the African cities give a general picture of the dynamics across most of sub-Saharan Africa, whose particular circumstances can be complex. It is a good entry point into theology and the city, because it describes a framework that can be used to understand specific urban experiences in particular contexts and circumstances that are dealt with in other texts to be considered later.

¹³ Ibid., 7-8.

¹⁴ Ibid., 21.

In Shorter's presentation, the key aspect of urbanization due to colonization is the concentration of power and development in urban centers.¹⁵ Cities in Africa have become home to major administrative institutions. Headquarters of important medical, legislative, legal, economic, financial, industrial and religious institutions are in the cities. They are also the location of centers of higher and specialized education. Markets and distributing centers of different commodities, which include labour, finances and ideas, are also in towns. In short, all development is concentrated in the cities. Most of these cities started as centers from which colonial governments operated. They were power bases for a tiny ruling class who dominated a politically fragmented country. They grew into power centers from which "the nation is organized in all its aspects of its life."¹⁶ The situation has continued in post-independence Africa, with a small urban group of urban dwellers who have power over what happens throughout the whole country. For example, peasant farming, which contributes significantly to agricultural policy, is controlled by a few elites in the city.¹⁷ In fact the city controls what happens in the rest of the country. The whole country has become an urban periphery, which is influenced by the development taking place in the city.¹⁸

Due to the concentration of power and development in city centers, there has been a heavy flow of migration from rural areas into the city.¹⁹ Up until towards the end of the century when Shorter's text was published, this migration has been responsible for population growth in

¹⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 41-44.

¹⁸ Ibid., 40-41.

¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

the cities. Migrants hoped that the city will offer them opportunities to better incomes and lifestyles. However, the influx was too great for an even distribution of wealth.²⁰ It resulted in many problems; chief among them was overcrowding leading to insanitary conditions in squatter camps and slums.²¹ The migration also created gender and age imbalances as more males than females migrate and as more young people migrate.²² The imbalances created many problems connected to sexual and family morality. Prostitution was rife and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV were rampant.²³ These were compounded by other challenges: drugs, crime and street children.²⁴ For Shorter, such conditions contributed to the primarily negative view of the city found in Africa. For a long time, urban centers have been regarded as “oppressive, parasitical and proletarianizing, even as theaters of death...”²⁵

The view that cities in Africa are antithetical to human values is well captured in African literature in English. Alan Paton’s *Cry the Beloved Country*, Cypren Ekwensi’s *People of the City* and *Jaguar Nana* and Meja Mwangi’s *Down River Road* and *Kill Me Quick* are samples from Southern, West and East Africa, which chronicle the horrors of city life that depict this view.²⁶ Unlike these literary texts which remain unclear about any positive aspects of the city, Shorter’s

²⁰ Ibid., 13.

²¹ Ibid., 45-46.

²² Ibid., 12.

²³ Ibid., 51.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 13.

²⁶ Paton, Alan. *Cry, the Beloved Country*. New York: Scribner, 1962, Ekwensi, Cyprian. *Jaguar Nana*. African Writers Series ; 146. London: Heinemann, 1975. Mwangi, Meja. *Kill Me Quick*. African Writers Series ; 143. London: Heinemann Educational, 1973.

text is unambiguously positive about the city's potential. In spite of the many negative conditions, which he acknowledges, he emphasizes the good happening in these cities. He maintains that ignoring the potential of cities for positive human development is unrealistic.²⁷

Shorter has a positive attitude towards the city. He is critical of the assumption that the development of the city brings conflict between rural and urban interests. He argues that "there are close socio-economic ties between urban and rural areas in Africa."²⁸ In his assessment, the rural is generally regarded as a home where customs, beliefs, structures and strictures of tribal traditions are preserved. This is why people who spent all their lives living in cities often prefer to be buried in the rural areas.²⁹ The city is considered to be colonial in origin and is seen essentially as a workplace.³⁰ Its development, especially given the squalid living conditions and lifestyles that have been the source of the city's negative image, is an antithesis to the traditions found in rural life.

He is critical of attempts to protect and preserve village life in some forms.³¹ He describes these attempts as forms of cultural romanticism.³² The city is a necessary and crucial factor in the development of the village in the rural areas, in the same way that the village is important for the city. The two reinforce each other as migrants in the city keep strong connections with their rural homelands and with those in the city from the same rural homeland. People use the city as an

²⁷ Ibid., 14.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 7 and 15.

³⁰ Ibid., 18.

³¹ Ibid., 14.

³² Ibid., 14.

economic base and the rural homeland as the source of social and cultural values.³³ The rural also acts as a social safety net of many individuals who fail to make it in the city.³⁴ It is also a subsidiary source of food for the town dwellers.³⁵ The city offers an alternative economy and opportunities for those from dry and arid areas, where it is difficult to survive on agriculture.³⁶

The positive attitude towards the city is also articulated in Shorter's assessment of the city's effect on culture. Contrary to the widely held view that the cultural disorientation among the urban dwelling Africans is due to urbanization, Shorter argues that "the city does not provide a new culture, rather it gives people a consciousness of an extra-cultural dimension which is not easily integrated with ethnic tradition."³⁷ Furthermore, the city "transforms ethnic identities and gives them new scope and new areas of application."³⁸ He attributes the cultural disorientation to "the fact that Africans are living in two semi-encapsulated worlds at the same time. At the level of the industrial technical, or of the leisure ethic, they accept foreign ideas and norms, while at the domestic level they remain true to their traditional ideals, values and world views."³⁹

Urbanization has become a principal vehicle of modernization, which plays a part in some cultural disorientation. However, this disorientation does not mean urbanization or modernization is anti-culture.

³³ Ibid., 15.

³⁴ Ibid., 16.

³⁵ Ibid., 18.

³⁶ Ibid., 17.

³⁷ Ibid., 26.

³⁸ Ibid., 31.

³⁹ Ibid., 26.

Modernization is not necessarily a negative principle; rather, it is the “ability to transform scientific knowledge into technology” and is at the core of international socio-economic systems of which Africans are a part.⁴⁰ It is a currency that can serve any or every cultural system. The major challenge in Africa is that the modernization that comes through the urbanization is not value-free. It carries the values of the Western cultures that control modernization, and some of these are negative. Modernization ends up being an instrument of Western domination.

Nonetheless, this scenario does not negate the opportunities that modernization brings, because in spite of all the many challenges that African cities encounter, “they are not just places of dereliction and despair.”⁴¹ They are a base for dialogue and sharing of lived experience among different ethnic cultures. They also bring together people of diverse cultural backgrounds and help people to go beyond the cohesive principle found in the rural areas to an associative principle. The cohesive principle is about commonly imposed and accepted norms of behavior, whereas the associative principle is about people adopting “alien norms, or invent their own.”⁴²

Shorter expresses the same positive attitude towards the city in his view of shantytowns and slums, which are riddled with all sorts of inhuman conditions.⁴³ Even though he describes them as hell on earth, he regards them as a sign of ingenuity in the process of city development. Shantytowns are insecure, temporary and illegal housing structures. They differ slightly from slums, because some slums are legal but consist of deteriorating sub-standard housing. Shantytowns are a result of municipalities’ failure to provide adequate housing for the growing

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 27.

⁴² Ibid., 29.

⁴³ Ibid., 47- 56.

urban population. Municipal authorities pass laws as a way of trying to keep them in check, but they continue to grow. They are generally viewed as rubbish heaps, and the people who live in them are treated as such by the elite in the city. But they continue to thrive as a subculture that represents an important and creative aspect of urbanization from below. Shorter's point is that there are creativity and values in the shantytowns that must be embraced by the Church if it is to be part of the development of the city.

Shorter's qualified criticism of Soyinka's portrayal of the city, as "great brass monster that swallows up the younger generation" is another example of his positive attitude towards the African city.⁴⁴ In his play *The Swamp Dwellers*, Soyinka portrays the young people who succeed in the city as lost. They win success at a huge price of turning their backs on humanity. Those who fail are regurgitated into swamps outside the city. Shorter considers this portrayal as pessimistic at best, but not anti-urban, because success is still possible in the city. He proposes that the church should build on this possibility of success through cooperation with the rich and the poor.

Urbanization as described by Shorter involves a number of tensions, paradoxes, contradictions and extremes. It is an unprecedented concentration of people within a locality, where old traditions encounter new and alien socio-economic processes giving rise to extreme wealth, poverty, despair, hope, and creativity. The major impact of these dynamics is captured in his analysis of Otieno's burial saga.⁴⁵

Silvanus Otieno was a Kenyan lawyer who died in 1986. Although his rural home was a village among the Luo in western Kenya, he had spent most of his life in Nairobi where he had

⁴⁴ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 6-7.

married a woman from another tribe. When he died there was a conflict between his wife and his family from his ancestral village about where he was to be buried. His wife wanted him to be buried in Nairobi, where they had made their home, but his family wanted him to be buried in the his rural village. The case dragged in the courts, until it was finally ruled that he be buried in his rural home. He was buried in his village, in the absence of his wife and children.

For Shorter, what lies at the core of the case are a couple of interrelated questions: “Why should a modern, educated urban dweller who liked Shakespeare, classical music and bottled beer be subject to the customs and beliefs of a rural village?” “Why should he not escape the structure and strictures of tribal tradition?”⁴⁶ He locates the answer in “the nature of African urbanization, which consists of a close bond between the urban and rural areas, a bond that not even the elite urban majority can evade.”⁴⁷ The African city as a major modernizing vehicle gives rise to a modern African man or woman who lives at the crossroads of what is old and what is new, and has to continually devise ways of integrating the two. He or she cannot escape the past, neither can they evade a future riddled with tension between the old and the new that came with colonialism.

A slightly alternative approach to the city in Africa is taken or proposed by Mugambi.⁴⁸ Just like Shorter, he agrees that the majority of Africans continue to consider themselves rural dwellers, dwelling in the city for employment.⁴⁹ He gives more examples of the struggles around

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ JNK Mugambi *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After Cold War*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publisher’s Limited, 1995

⁴⁹ Ibid., 76.

burial showing how the rural background has a strong hold on the African in the city. He also notes the predominance of Christian missionary enterprise in rural areas.⁵⁰ However, unlike Shorter whose emphasis is on the creativity of those on the margins and how they shape and change the life in the city, Mugambi takes a cautious top down approach and emphasizes the needs to critically engage processes such industrialization, secularization, modernization and contextualization and to be cautious of the new Christian movement from North America. His main argument is that Africa need not follow what has happened in Europe and elsewhere. He wants to show that when engaging social process in Africa such as urbanization, it is important to be sensitive to the African context which is different from Europe's.

As regards cities, Mugambi argues that large-scale urbanization that seems to be taken, as a model is not the only option.⁵¹ There are other possible human settlements for large populations. In one section, his proposal is that there be some way of limiting the size of cities.⁵² The major difference between Shorter and Mugambi is that the former viewing the urbanization process from the perspective of those from history is optimistic about how Africa, in spite of the many challenges in urban centers, is becoming part of the urban development across the world, whereas Mugambi is critical of the urban development, maintaining that unless there is a critical engagement with global processes affecting Africa, the urbanization in Africa will only disadvantage the continent.

Whether one adopts Shorter's emphasis of those at the bottom and periphery in shaping urbanization in Africa and sees Africa gradually becoming part of global urban process or

⁵⁰ Ibid., 68.

⁵¹ Ibid., 75.

⁵² Ibid., 59.

Mugambi's emphasis on the professional and administrative engagement with bigger issues that affect urbanization such as industrialization and secularisation and try to delineate the unique ways Africa can be urbanized, one cannot escape the need to develop a theology that goes beyond reviving or protecting specific identities or experiences peculiar to Africa from colonial forces and influences. Mugambi's efforts to underscore the unique ways that African can adapt are important. They need to be taken into consideration, but they do not take away the fact that people in cities are not necessarily searching for what distinguishes that which is African from what is European; Africans are struggling to find new expressions of traditional values within social processes introduced by colonialism. Their conditions and situations require theological reflection that goes beyond the use of identities and values shaped by traditional legacies as key in understanding Christian faith (Mbiti and Nyamiti). Such a situation is also instrumental in pushing African theology beyond thinking of how best the Christian faith can address experiences of deprivation caused by colonial forces (Jean Mac-Ela and Katongole). Urban social processes in Africa make new demands on theology. There is need to develop a new theological imagination, different from the colonial imagination explored in Chapter 1. These can be teased from the few texts on the church and city in Africa. By theological imagination, I am referring to ways through which theologians envisage and articulate the human experience of God in particular situations. The next section explores the development of such an imagination in four of the five texts mentioned in the previous text.

Dynamics in Theological Reflections on the City

Shorter's main objective in his work that has been discussed in detail in the previous section was to show a way for the Church to contribute to helping people in African cities adapt to the

urbanization processes.⁵³ In the second section of the book, he went further to explore and propose ways that the Church can be part of an inevitable growth of the city, through a survey of various Church activities across Africa in different parishes and countries.⁵⁴ The few other theological texts reflecting on urban experiences take a similar approach. They are basically essays on how the Church has been engaging particular issues that affect people in the different cities. The same issues of slums,⁵⁵ diseases,⁵⁶ and the situation of women⁵⁷ found in Shorter's text appear often in these reflections. There are other issues such as alcoholism, youth, care for creation, and community building that is addressed in the same texts.

Although the texts are primarily about how the Church can help in transforming urban space or how it can find a solution to the challenges that Africans experience in the city, they are an important instance of a significant shift taking place in theological imagination. They show a subtle movement away from recovery, recognition and rehabilitation of a "genuine" African experience that could be used as a framework for an African theology to a grounding of theological reflection on experiences through which Africans embrace new social and political processes that come as a result of colonialism. There is also a gradual change in how African

⁵³ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁴ Ibid., chapter 5-7

⁵⁵ Wanjiku Churi, "Squatters' Houses" in Kelly, *The Church in Town, 1977* and Orabator "This is our Home" in Nwoye ed. *Urban ministry in Africa*, 2010.

⁵⁶ Helen Nkabala Nambalirwa, "HIV and Aids as an Urban Challenge: The way Forward for the Church in Uganda" and Anne Nasimuyu-Wasike, "The Influence of Traditional Beliefs About Sexuality in the Spread of HIV and Aids in Western Kenya" in Nwoye, ed *Urban Ministries in Africa*. (2010)

⁵⁷Sr Andrea Reagan "From School to city," Kampala: GABA publication, 1973. Sister Edel Bahati, "Eldevale home for girls," in Kelly *The Church in Town* (1977). Sister Therese Tinkaissimire "Katanga and "Kisenyi Women Slum Dwellers" and Phelomena Njeri Mwaura "African Instituted Churches and Women in Urban Kenya" in Nwoye, ed *Urban Ministry in Africa*, (2010).

experience is viewed in these texts. African experience is no longer looked at as a situation that needs redemption from negative colonial influences; rather it is regarded as a continuous commitment to the construction of community from diverse experiences. Urbanization, through which African experience is reviewed, is not regarded as foreign to Africa, but as an integral part of African experience with challenges that can be overcome. In theological reflection on the city, emphasis is placed on an ongoing process of interaction and re-creating within African experience, not on finding or establishing a unique African experience to ground theological reflection. The dynamics of this movement are the subject matter of this section. It is a first step towards establishing how urban experience leads to a shift in theological reflection on the continent.

Adam K Arap Chepkwony's interpretation of urbanization dynamics is similar to that of Shorter. He attributes the growth of the city to the migration from rural areas. He also notes the cultural disorientation that Africans in cities experience and the various economic and social hardships endured by the majority of migrants to the city, especially young people. Like Shorter, he considers the alienation from "associations based on cultural perspectives" as the major crisis in the cities.⁵⁸ Unlike Shorter, however, who views the situation of urban migrants as the development of a subculture of creativity that should be embraced by the Church, Chepkwony describes the city as state of *anomie* that needs alleviation. This term is taken from Durkheim's theory of *anomie*, which means "a breakdown of social order as a result of the loss of standards and values."⁵⁹ The state of anomie in African cities is characterized by disruption of African

⁵⁸ Adam K A Chepkwony, "An African Response to Urban Ministry in Nwoye. *Urban Ministry in Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2010, 41.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

traditional values of relationships. When people move to cities, their traditional ties are cut off; and traditional values of relationships are disrupted. Chepkwony concludes that the Church has failed to help Africans build these relationships.⁶⁰ He attributes this failure to the theology followed by missionaries, based on a Western worldview that focuses on the individual.⁶¹ His main suggestion is that the Church should be imaginative about helping people living in the city to find ways of maintaining cultural values, especially those that promote relationships or community building. The search for ways to maintain cultural values in the city is the basis of what he calls alleviation.

Alleviation as the task of the church in the city is found in a number of texts about the church in the city. The six brief reports compiled in *The Church in Town: Re-thinking African Urban Apostolate*, in which John Kelly reflects about the role of the Church in the urban mission, are a good example of alleviation. The reports are about activities of Church communities that try to rectify the disintegration of community in urban areas. The first is about building urban centers for the people in the city so that they can interact more and get to know each other. The second is about a model of a cooperative union from a mission station that can be adapted in the city. The third is about youth clubs for street boys who survive through volunteering as parking boys. The fourth is about homes for girls who come to the city without any relatives in the city. The fifth is about how to work as a team in a youth apostolate. The last is about community building through improving houses. The key phrases in these reports, community centers, cooperative union, youth clubs, homes and hostels, team work and community building, are an indication of a sad situation of fragmentation and disruption of traditional values and

⁶⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁶¹ Ibid., 44.

relationships. They are a sample of how a lot of Church communities try to alleviate the disintegration in African cities. Their aim is to build communities through mending broken relationships.

Like Shorter's proposal of embracing creativity in the city, alleviation is a response to the sad situation in African cities. However, embracing and alleviation have very important subtle differences, which can help in identifying the shift that happens when theology reflects on the dynamics in the city. Alleviating the state of *anomie* and engaging creativity in the slums or among the poor are not exclusive approaches. They both acknowledge the misery in the city and offer some practical steps to address them. Embracing creativity in the city is a step further than alleviation. It pays more attention to the processes of change taking place in the city and tries to engage them in the development of new structures and relations that make the city. It is unlike alleviating, which is either protection of certain groups within the city population such as women and youth. Alleviation is close to the attempts of recovery, recognition or rehabilitation explored in the first chapter, which were about maintaining certain traditional values and using them as basis theological reflection. It is about protecting the marginalized in the city. Embracing the creativity of the urban centers, on the other hand, is not just about protecting those on the periphery or the slum dwellers, but is a way of incorporation. It is what Shorter calls urbanization from the bottom, which does not follow standard or conventional processes of urbanization. Its starting point is not a particular plan like those followed by municipalities and favored by the elites in urban areas. It is an attempt to take unconventional initiatives, especially those in the slums, and make them part of the city's development.

One example of this incorporation is that of Orobator's analysis of religious communities in slums in "This is Our Home: Insertion Religious Communities in Urban Slums as a

Framework for New Understanding of Ecclesial Ministry.” The analysis is a closer look at three religious communities that have inserted themselves in Kibera, considered to be the biggest slum in Africa, with an estimated population of one million people. As the title shows, the text is about urban ministry. Orobator’s analysis is part of the discussion that has preoccupied theological reflection on the city for decades. The main phrase in the title, “This is our home” is taken from a statement by a parishioner from one parish in the slum who said “We are not like animals to be looked at like on Safari, this is our home.”⁶² The statement was made as a criticism of many groups, especially NGOs, who use a lot of money to try and improve the situation of the people in the slum, but without substantial results. It is a critique of some forms of alleviation that are adopted by NGOs.

Orobator’s point is not to criticize the NGOs, but to show an approach that can be taken by the Church, which can overcome this problem. This is the approach taken by three religious communities who have located themselves in Kibera. They are religious communities focusing mainly on the formation of their own members. One community is the Xaverian Missionaries of Yarumal. Another is The Little Sisters of Jesus. Both are communities of students and teachers. There is also the congregation of the Missionaries of Charity Brothers who have been in the area for more than 25 years. They run a house of formation, a regional house and a social outreach program from the slum.

This insertion, contact and immersion is considered to be an important methodological school by proponents of the pastoral circle.⁶³ For The Xaverian missionaries, the pastoral circle

⁶² Ibid., 71.

⁶³ A. Orobator, “This is our home” in Nwoye, *Urban Ministry in Africa*, Nairobi: Pauline Publication, 2010, 65.

played an important role in their choice to locate to Kibera. For Orabor, a powerful basis for this approach is the Incarnation. It is a concrete expression of how to follow what happened when God became man. It is also a sign value or prophetic witness for a solidarity that transforms, and it acts as a bridge over social and spatial demarcation between the poor and the rich. Unlike alleviation, which is more about preservation and protection, these insertions are about being part of change from the experience and perspectives of those on the periphery. The focus is on what the experience of those on the periphery bring to formation of future priests . The process of experience becomes paramount. The focus is on becoming rather than being.

The move towards becoming part of the change and focus on change itself is best captured in theological works that attempt to develop hermeneutical or conceptual frameworks upon which urban ministry must be based. There are only a few such works because there are fewer theological works on the city in general. One early attempt to provide such a hermeneutical and conceptual framework is that of J.M. Kelly's *The Church in Town: Rethinking the African Urban Apostolate*, 1977, which I have mentioned above. Kelly uncovers a number of changes which came as a result of Vatican II that have contributed to the Church's self awareness and progress in evangelization. A brief summary of the main changes helps to identify how the hermeneutical in his text is one instance of the shift in theological imagination in Africa, away from the colonial imagination.

Three major changes in Vatican II were about the Church's vision of humanity, how the Church related to the world, and how the Church understood its ministry.⁶⁴ The vision of humanity after Vatican II emphasized the dignity and integrity of humankind. It was unlike that

⁶⁴ John Kelly "The Church in Town Rethinking Urban Apostolate," Spearhead no. 47 Eldoret; Gaba Publication, 1977, 25 -29.

of the pre-Vatican II Church that focused on the fallenness and sinfulness of humanity. Kelly notes that this change was a source of uncertainty and confusion, but he maintains that within this confusion is an opportunity to deepen one's faith in the working of the Lord. Alongside the shift in the view of the humanity was the move from viewing the world as a place that people should escape to a recognition that the world has its own complex processes that were established by God. These processes are bigger or wider than the Church; therefore there should be a way of working within them. This shift is best captured by Pope John' XXIII's distinction of secularization from secularism. The former is an acknowledgment of the autonomy of the world and its complex processes, while the latter is movement that is hostile to religion. After Vatican II, the Church embraced the former. According to Kelly, this was the most fundamental change, and other changes developed it. These shifts led to a new thrust in ministries with the Church identifying more with the biblical image of the Jesus the Servant than with that of Christ the King.

These changes were instrumental in bringing about a new self-understanding of the Church after Vatican II. The pre-Vatican II Church understood itself as the only means of salvation for fallen humanity. Hence, it viewed its mission in terms of helping fallen humanity to renounce the world, Satan, and sin. After Vatican II, there was a big change as the Church began to understand itself as a part of the broader processes of the world.

Not only is this shift important for understanding the function of the Church in the city, it also reflects a shift in theological imagination in Africa. Theological reflection is expanded in these considerations. It is not confined to seeking ways of making the faith relevant to a particular group, or finding unique expressions of faith in such groups, but also it is about how the faith interacts with the complexity of world processes that the Church should serve and how

all groups are part of these processes. It does not take away the uniqueness of the particular groups or culture. It just emphasizes the ways that the groups are part of larger processes.

Another example of this change in theological imagination is in the introductory text in Diane Stinton's *Urban Ministry in Africa* (2010). This text is an exploration of the biblical foundations of urban ministry. Its premise is that Jerusalem serves as an image or paradigm of urban theology, and it focuses on the significance of Jesus' lament for Jerusalem. Unlike Babylon, which was associated with paganism, imperialism and oppression of the people of God, Jerusalem was viewed as YHWH's city of peace and justice. God chose Jerusalem as his own city; but there continued to be injustice and rebellion to God in the Jerusalem; hence Jesus' lament. It was a grief that Jerusalem was responding negatively to God's initiative.

Stinton maintains that the lament was not so much about the negative response to God's initiative in Jerusalem; rather it was about God's resolve to transform the city in spite of the negative response. In her analysis of Jerusalem in Luke and Acts, she outlines how Jerusalem remains a central place where the narrative of Jesus evolves. In the end, Jesus embodied and replaced Jerusalem. He personally fulfills the original hope of God's revelation by becoming the source of salvation and blessing for all nations. She ends by drawing parallels between how Jerusalem functioned in Luke and Acts and the narrative of the missionary's relationship with the city in Africa. In both cases there is gradual engagement with the city, which leads to its transformation.

A similar biblical foundation for urban ministry is also given by Emile Choge in the same volume that Stanton introduces. He catalogues the number of times that the city appears in the Bible and lists positive and negative characteristics of the city. Like Stinton, he maintains that the

main thrust in the biblical narrative is that God comes to transform Jerusalem. He also proposes this biblical dynamic between God and Jerusalem as the foundation for an urban ministry.

The foundations proposed by both Stinton and Choge show a shift in theological imagination on the continent in that they are not focusing on process of urbanization peculiar to the continent or a peculiar way of understanding faith in this specific situation. Instead, they focus on general processes in cities in the Bible that can be used to understand processes in different cities; and they proffer them as foundations for the work of the church in African cities. Just as in Kelly's overview of changes brought up by Vatican II, these biblical foundations do not focus on the uniqueness of African cities. Their main target is more on how the African cities are part of larger global processes. Stinton, Choge, and Kelly accept that urbanization in Africa is here to stay and that that is changing the continent as African societies try to adapt to a global phenomenon. Their work is not about how to prevent it or contain it; rather, it is on how to work with the process. Theology of the city in Africa turns to Christian sources that are helpful in engaging processes of change, not those that proffer dogmatic propositions from the perspective of particular groups.

These three short texts are not comprehensive analyses of urban phenomena. Neither do they offer an in-depth account of what is happening in theological reflection as it encounters urban experiences. They are introductions to theological works that reflect on how the church should respond to the phenomena of the urban, and they proffer some insights into the conceptual foundations for the works in the different texts. A more comprehensive analysis of the conceptual and hermeneutical frameworks of theological works on the urban that can help to identify the change taking place as African theology is in "Doing Urban Public Theology in South Africa: Introducing a New Agenda" by Ignatius Swart and Stephan De Beers (2014). Like the

three texts explored above, it is an introductory article in a collection of various texts that explores different urban circumstances. Its focus is on post-Apartheid South Africa. It differs from the three texts discussed above in that it is going beyond developing a conceptual or hermeneutical foundation that can be used as a basis for engaging with the urban phenomena. It is not a simple movement from church documents or the Bible to a particular urban situation, but a discourse on how best to understand hermeneutical and conceptual framework used as basis for church's engagement with the city should work. Its primary objective is to expand the discourse on that which urban ministry grounds its activities. It is more about development and operations of hermeneutical conceptual foundations than a search for foundations that support urban ministry.

Their text is part of Public Theology in South Africa, and its proposal is an expansion of developments in the discipline. According to the special issue of the *International Journal of Public Theology* 5 (2011), public theology is a well-established discipline in South Africa. Swart and de Beers situate themselves within the different conceptual differentiations among theologians working within area of public theology in South Africa. Theologians working in public theology in South Africa have different paradigms. Some focus on scholarly practice. They emphasize “interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary and transdisciplinary modes of scholarly practice.”⁶⁵ Some prioritize economy, health, race, or other social challenges. Others place emphasis on different publics, the academy or the Church. Others use dogmatic perspectives such as Christological claims as an entry point. Swart and de Beers' objective is to “introduce

⁶⁵ Swart and De Beers “Doing Urban theology in South Africa, introducing a new Agenda.” HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies Volume 70, Issue3, 2014. 5.

a new agenda” within these approaches. Their agenda is to provide a paradigm within public theology in South Africa that can best address the situation of urban phenomena.

Swart and de Beers begin by endorsing one historian’s observation that South African cities have evoked diverse discourses, which have given rise to contesting images and ideas about the city.⁶⁶ Then they proceed to list a number of groups and organizations contributing different interpretations to the discourse.⁶⁷ There are literary works that focus more on urban cultural shifts. Government has come up with a national commission that has produced a national development plan that prioritizes urban development. There are also numerous organizations and think tanks that belong to political parties or university centers that try to represent alternative views and visions. There are also ad hoc movements that participate in this discourse in different ways. Churches and faith-based organizations are also part of this discourse. Swart and De Beers proffer these diverse views as a way of demonstrating that the urban situation in South Africa is a “distinctive and contested development.”⁶⁸

They argue that public theology, a discipline that is well established in South Africa, has not been part of this discourse about the urban public and the context in which it is situated.⁶⁹ Instead it has focused on paradigmatic issues like definitions, methodology and epistemology and has neglected the concrete and specific ever-mounting urban challenges that those being addressed by views summarized in the previous paragraph. There is a lagging behind in South Africa’s public theology. It is lagging behind some of its global counterparts in its own discipline

⁶⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 3 and 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.

and other “distinguishable scholarly and research communities from other disciplines as well as some activist communities, which are often very innovatively engaged with urban challenges.”⁷⁰

Above all it is detached from concrete urban contexts, which are an important locus. Swart and de Beers are proposing a new paradigm that can help public theology address this lack.

What they are proposing is close to Orobator’s recommendation in his study of the religious communities in Kibera. Their proposal is a way of embracing creative processes in the city. However, they go further than Orobator in that they are focusing on different discourses on the concrete situation in the city and their significance for new paradigmatic and hermeneutical debates in public theology. Their proposal is unlike Orobator’s approach, which is about a particular pastoral approach of insertion and how it can transform ways of understanding urban ministry. Swart and de Beers are exploring paradigmatic changes that have to take place in public theology for it to engage the concrete experience in urban areas. They construct a new paradigm through a number of steps.

First, they endorse Paddison’s criticism of political theology.⁷¹ Paddison argues that political theology is in danger of being an adjunct of secularism as it operates within the agenda dictated by the state. But they also criticize theological politics, Paddison’s alternative to political theology. Theological politics is a notion that theology must use its own resources to express the political. An example of theological politics given by Paddison is the theology of Hauerwas, who argues that justice or love is best rendered through specific attention to the Gospel, not trying to make them intelligible through appeal to some external criteria. For Swart and de Beers,

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 7-8.

theological politics leads to “hermeneutical simplicity and conservatism.”⁷² It collapses theology into doing what the Church says, and it does not leave room for interdisciplinary conversation.

To overcome this failure, they endorse Lategan’s proposal of an “interactive constructive mode” in theological discourse.⁷³ It is a mode that recognizes that there are different modes of discourse and that no one discourse is superior. The strength or effectiveness of each mode is determined by its relation to the purposes for which it is employed. In a way, Lategan proposed a democratic mode that gives space to “intra- textual analysis, rediscovery of tradition...and apologetics of a more subtle or more aggressive kind.”⁷⁴ When operating in this mode, it is important to know which public one is dealing with and what is the mode being used. The modes should be complementary and must be valued for their supportive contribution. This mode requires that theology take a participatory style which involves moving beyond pre-occupation with the self and validity of its claims to focusing on taking responsibility on what is proposed in different modes.

Finally, Swart and De Beers add a hermeneutical approach proposed by Elaine Graham.⁷⁵ She was a member of the Church of England Commission on Urban Life and Faith (CULF). It is from her experience as a member of the commission that she articulated what Swart and De Beers endorse as an important ingredient for public theology in its engagement with other modes. She proposes what she calls bilingualism, which means theology should be able to speak its own language as well as that of other discourses and that it must make its language accessible

⁷² Ibid., 9.

⁷³ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 11.

to a wider audience. Taking bilingualism into consideration means that public theology of the urban has to engage with other discourses that are not necessarily theological. Bilingualism avoids the problems associated with political theology highlighted by Paddison, where theology becomes an instrument for secularism. With bilingualism, theology engages with other discourses without compromising its own principles and makes sure that its internal discourse is comprehensible and accessible to others. It does not abandon its own critical, independent mindset and values.

The complementarity of the modes is further articulated in Swart and De Beers' proposal of a "fusion of horizons" explained in a second article in the special collection on theological scholarship on the urban situation in South Africa that they introduced in their first article.⁷⁶ In this article they identify a counterpoint in scholarly, intellectual and activist engagement with the urban. A "fusion of horizon" happened when the urban public theology that they are developing relates itself to this counterpoint and is shaped by "ideas, visions, conceptualizations, methodological orientations and practical agendas that emanate from the counterpoint."⁷⁷ This "fusion of horizon" is part of what they call a "praxis-agenda" which is about "giving impetus to action oriented, problem solving and normatively inclined discourses 'from below' in which different actors from the urban grassroots linked to local communities of different kinds, urban social movements and not least urban faith communities - will become primary interlocutors."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ S. De Beers and I. Swart "Towards a Fusion of Horizons: Thematic Contours for an Urban Public Theological Praxis-Agenda in South Africa', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 70(3) Art.#2812, 9pages.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

To illustrate this counterpoint, they outline five interrelated themes that have emerged in the discourse of the city in scholarship in South Africa and beyond.⁷⁹ The first is about unprecedented urban migration in southern urbanism. Different scholars have treated this subject in various ways. Secondly, there has been reflection about urbanization from below and the right to the city of all people, which consists of debate about how best to deal people operating in the informal sector. Some propose eradicating them, but others insist on finding ways to incorporate them in the urbanization process. Thirdly, there has been substantial literature on reclaiming the commons. This is about how to deal with individuals and groups who advance their own interests. Fourthly, there is also literature on making good cities. It is mainly about an all-encompassing approach that involves all actors in city development. Finally, there is literature from faith-based communities and religious leaders. Swart and De Beers' suggestion is that a public theological praxis-agenda has to find ways of engaging with what has been articulated by different individuals engaged with the city.⁸⁰

In short, Swart and de Beers are proposing ways for a dialogue of hermeneutical and conceptual frameworks from different disciplines that are working on the situation in urban areas. This is based on their observation that the urban development is distinctive and contested. It is not simple linear development that can be adequately understood by a single discipline. Their proposal would require that the conceptual frameworks developed by Kelly, Stinton and Choge do more than just support pastoral activities of the Church. In view of Swart and De Beers' analysis, such frameworks should be engaged with other disciplines that are also looking at urbanization in South Africa. Swart and De Beers are expanding the scope for hermeneutical

⁷⁹ Ibid., 2-8.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 8.

and conceptual frameworks are used to engage urban space. These hermeneutical and conceptual frameworks that are used to interpret the urban need to be more than a simple movement from a Bible or ecclesiastical interpretation of the city to a situation in a city. They must recognize the contestation over urban growth and address it by relating their conceptions to other interpretations from other scholarly disciplines and activists engagements.

This expansion takes African theology beyond the attempts explored in the first chapter, where the expression of faith within particular or peculiar African experiences was the major subject. The major focus of the frameworks that are developed in theological reflection on the city is to try to capture dynamics within the Bible and the tradition that can be used to engage dynamics taking place in African cities through an engagement with other contestations or interpretations from anyone with interest in the city. Theology of the city in Africa is not only about protecting, preserving, or adding, but also about being part of change taking place on the continent.

Summary of Chapter

Through a review of sporadic theological literature on the city and a summary of dynamics captured in this literature, this chapter has given a general idea of urbanization in 20th century Africa and how it affected the socio-political and economic life in the different countries in Africa. It was an urbanization that was marked with a lot of challenges for many Africans as they struggled to find new expressions of traditional values in the developing cities, which were fast becoming permanent centers of development. In spite of the challenges, Africans continued to migrate to the cities in the hope of a better life, leading to a worsening of living conditions. Growth of slums, disease and other social ills were some of the major challenges in the new cities.

A small corpus of literature on how the Church ought to respond to the situation began to emerge. Much of the literature focused on alleviation, suggesting pastoral approaches that seek ways of protecting vulnerable people in the city. These approaches are in line with the general trend in African theology of recovery, recognition and rehabilitation of disrupted pre-colonial African traditions and values. There are also other approaches that go beyond alleviation. These approaches are not about protecting and preserving or rehabilitation, but about the processes of change through which Africans adapt. They are best represented by works that attempt to develop conceptual and hermeneutical frameworks that can be used to support pastoral activities, which could help Africans to be part of the changes that take place as a result of the urbanization processes. A more rigorous theological articulation of the latter approaches is by Swart and De Beers who insist that the hermeneutical and conceptual frameworks that theology develops in responding to the situation in the cities should engage with other discourses on the same phenomena.

The approach being proposed by Swart and De Beers and others who try to explore ways of embracing the changes taking place in the city indicates a new direction in African theology. It focuses on embracing the change that the development of the city is bringing to African communities. With this focus there is movement away from concern about revival, recovery, recognition or rehabilitation of that which is African. The concern in the theology that deals with the urban is about how that which is local and traditional engages with what is foreign and modern. It is not about ending a particular disenfranchisement; rather, it is about establishing an ongoing process of incorporating the disenfranchised in space at each given time. It is a theology that has moved out of a colonial imagination, in which all considerations are in view of the other who is hostile or a threat to the self.

Two important factors for theological reflection emerge from this literature. First, the importance of Church in engaging the city is emphasized. Almost all the texts make reference to pastoral work. Second, the importance of relating theology to the contestations about the urban in different scholarly disciplines as well as activists engagement is underscored by Swart and De Beers. These factors are key in the further investigation of how the city affects theological reflection, which constitutes the rest of this dissertation. The two factors will be explored further in chapter 3 and 4. The third chapter will focus on how to engage other players interpreting the city, and the fourth will focus on how the Church become part of the wider discourse.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETING A CITY IN AFRICA.

“In my Father’s house there are many mansions...” (John 14:2).

Introduction

Through an overview of theological works of the city in Africa, the previous chapter outlined the general dynamics of urbanization across sub-Saharan Africa. It also examined how the encounter with urbanization has led to a new direction in theological reflection in Africa. The examination established that in its reflection on the city, theology in Africa engaged the process through which Africans are becoming part of the global economy and social processes. It began to move away from engaging with the skewed understanding of Africa in Western discourse on Africa. The chapter ended by outlining a proposal from Swart and de Beers about engaging the processes in the city. They proposed that urban theology has to engage contestations or interpretations about the city from different sources. This chapter builds on Swart and de Beers’ proposal. It reconstructs the social history of a particular city through an examination of contestations or interpretations from different academic disciplines, individuals, and groups involved with the chosen city. This reconstruction is an attempt or an example of engaging what Swart and de Beers call the ‘fusion of horizon,’ a way of relating theology to different engagements with the

urban.”¹ The dynamics mapped in this example will be used in Chapters 4 and 5 as location for identifying and constructing specific ways of developing the new direction in African theology established in Chapter 2.

Cities in Africa

The vastness of the continent, the complex ways that the different cities on the continent have developed, and the volume of literature on the African city make it difficult or almost impossible to adequately investigate urban experiences. The best possible way forward is to choose a city that has characteristics that are common in many countries on the continent. Such a choice can be made through a critical analysis of different approaches in African urban studies. A survey of the classification of cities or the characteristics in the different approaches and how they overlap is helpful in identifying a single city that can be used as an entry point into urban processes across the entire continent.

There are three major overlapping approaches that can be identified from the vast literature on urban studies in Africa. These are typological classifications, chronological or historical studies, and socio-economic analyses. Typological classification tries to identify or group different cities according to some common characteristics found in them. O’Connor, who identifies six overlapping types of cities in Africa, gives a good example of the typological approach.² A chronological or historical approach studies the different historical dynamics behind development or the eras during which cities developed. A recent work demonstrating this

¹ S. De beer and I. Swart “Towards a fusion of Horizons: Thematic contours for an urban public theological praxis- agenda in South Africa’, HTS *Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 70(3) Art.#2812, 9pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i3.2812>. 1.

² Antony O’ Connor, “*The African City*. Africana Publishing Companies, New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1983. 28 -41.

approach is Fruend's compact and comprehensive history of African cities.³ There are other studies that could fit in this approach, which focuses on development of particular cities at a particular moment in history.⁴ Socio-economic analysis considers the various economic and social challenges in the development of different cities.⁵

The different approaches are not exclusive. Each approach eventually considers or explores the dynamics dominant in other approaches. For example, a typological approach will have to consider the historical, political, and economic aspects within different types. What O'Connor observes about the types that he identifies could be said of any approach. He observes that the cities are moving towards convergence, what he calls a 'hybrid city,' which encompasses elements of different types, and that cities change and converge rapidly, such that any classification quickly becomes obsolete.⁶ In light of this insight, any approach using some classification is only good as a starting point. Thus, examining one city within any one of the different approaches is best taken as an entry point into the dynamics emphasized by other approaches. It is one way of entering into the complex processes found in different cities across the continent. The use of a particular city to explore dynamics across the continent works well in sub-Saharan Africa because colonial experience has introduced some level of homogeneity to a

³ Bill Fruend, *The African City: A History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁴ Peel, J. D. Y. "Urbanization and urban history in west Africa" *Journal of African Studies*, (1980) 21, 269- 277. Ranger, T. O. *Bulawayo Burning : The Social History of a Southern African City, 1893-1960*. Oxford: James Currey, 2010.

⁵ Comhaire, Jean Louis Léopold *Urban conditions in Africa: Select reading list on Urban Problems in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press, 1952. Miner, Horace Mitchell ed. *The city in Modern Africa*. New York: Fredrick K Praeger, 1967.

⁶ Antony O' Connor, "*The African City*. Africana Publishing Companies, New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1983. 311-312.

number of cities. It is a manageable way into the complexity of urbanization in Africa. The insights from the particular city can be expanded or revised as different cities are studied.

In this chapter I, will look at the case of Salisbury, now Harare in Zimbabwe, which Yoshikuni calls a “citadel of colonialism.”⁷ It is just like most colonial cities that rose at the onset of colonialism in the last quarter of the 19th century. Colonial cities were founded by Europeans for the purposes of administrating the colony. O’Connor notes that one distinctive feature of these cities is that “there is much striving after European cultural norms, in dress, diet and so on.”⁸ He also observes that the layout of the central part of these cities resembles that of European cities. A comparison of the layout of the central part of London and that of Harare supports for O’Connor’s observation. Key institutions such as the Anglican Church, parliament, high and Supreme Court form key structures at the core of the city. The Cecil Square (now African Unity Square) and Harare Gardens are an attempt to recreate Parliament Square and parks like Hyde Park in London. In O’Connor’s typology, Harare is considered a European city. It is a special case of a colonial city.⁹ It is a European city in Africa built for Europeans’ purposes. It is a true colonial city, constructed without much regard for preexistent settlements and was mainly for the administration of the colony.

Furthermore, Harare is a city with “location” or locations. These are areas that were created to house Africans by colonial governments; and, according to Davenport, such areas are

⁷ Tsuneo Yoshokini, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe; A Social History of Harare before 1925*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2006, 72.

⁸ Antony O’ Connor, *The African City*. Africana Publishing Companies, New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1983, 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

widespread in colonial cities.¹⁰ Many Africans urbanized through locations. This dissertation studies experiences in the first location to be established in colonial Zimbabwe, known as Rhodesia then. It was established in Salisbury, the colonial Capital of Southern Rhodesia founded in 1890 and became Zimbabwe in 1980. The location is now known as Mbare and is referred to as a high-density suburb, in official parlance; but it is close to what is known as a neighborhood in the United States. The general population in Zimbabwe refers to it as a ghetto. The different references point to its volatile and dynamic nature that cannot easily be captured by a single term or designation. When it was established it was named Harare, the name that was given to the Capital of Zimbabwe after independence. It is a good place to examine how Africans engaged the complexity of colonial experience. As has been demonstrated in the first chapter, colonial experience has been the major influence on contemporary African theology. Therefore, this chapter is a reevaluation of colonial experience through experiences in the city. It is basically a biography of the city that maps the *elerbnis*¹¹ and *efaharung*¹² of colonialism that occurred in the city, using the proposal by Swart and de Beers.

Studies of Colonial cities in Africa

The growth of colonial cities in sub-Saharan Africa is closely connected to the rise of global economy. The tragedy of this connection is articulated by Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane in his criticism of some approaches in studies on African cities. Magubane is critical of studies that view African cities in terms of industrialization, as was the case in Europe. Such studies suggest

¹⁰ Davenport, "Rhodesian and South African policies for Urban Africans: Some historical similarities and contrast" in Rhodesian History vol. 3, 1972, 63.

¹¹ Experience as lived reality or occurrence that happens to people.

¹² Experience as sense impressions and cognitive judgment about lived reality and occurrences that happens to people.

that there has been a de-coupling of industrialization and urbanization in Africa. They attribute the poverty and rise of shantytowns in African cities to this de-coupling. They propose some kind of industrialization as a way of developing African cities. For Magubane, African cities are not a result of industrialization, as was the case in Europe. They grew as centers of exploitation that supplied Europe with raw materials. The relationship between an African city and Europe is like the relationship between town and country in Africa. The latter is a periphery of the former. This relationship was well articulated by Alyward Shorter, discussed in Chapter 2. Just as rural Africa is shaped by events in the city, the structures and economics of the city in Africa are “conditioned by the developments and needs of the European economies to which they were subjected as producers and processors of raw materials.”¹³ The form of industrialization in African cities is dependent on foreign technology as it develops and strengthens the industrialized nation.

Magubane does not seem to offer any practical way forward. Instead, he endorses a statement by Harvey that there is need for a revolutionary theory that charts a way out of “urbanism that is based on exploitation to an appropriate urbanism for human species.”¹⁴ In other words, he is suggesting a development for a new theory to guide urban studies. This chapter is not a development of such a theory, but it does build on Magubane’s claim that African cities are dependent on processes from elsewhere. That is why it connects urbanization in Africa to colonialism.

¹³ Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, “The City in Africa: Some theoretical Issues” in *TheCcollected Essays of Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane*. Trenton , NJ: Africa world Press Inc. 2000, 330

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 310.

The fact that dynamics in African cities are dependent on what happened elsewhere was identified by Joan Vincent as far back as 1977. Just like Magubane, Vincent underscored the importance of “dependency theory” in understanding the urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa. She noted that dependence theory was accepted by a number of studies done between 1973 and 1975 as a hook on which particular and empirical studies on the city in Africa were hung. However, she is critical of “dependence theory” in that it is too “economistic” and “lacking in historical sense, unappreciative of the variations in political structure within the satellite countries.”¹⁵ Through a review of African urban studies that focuses on complex social processes in the dependent polities, she points to a new approach that goes beyond the overly “economistic” dependence theory.

This chapter is in line with the approach pointed out by Vincent. It focuses on the social, cultural, and political processes in Salisbury, from the foundation of Salisbury/Harare as the capital of Rhodesia in 1890, up to 1953, when southern Rhodesia became a federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland (now Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi). This is an important period because it is about urbanization, “...the process whereby people acquire material and non-material elements of cultural behavior patterns and ideas that originate in, or are distinctive of, the city.”¹⁶ It is different from what happened in the second half of the century, which is more about urban growth rather than urbanization. Placing the social, cultural and political processes at the center of understanding urban history is not new in the study of Salisbury. It has been rigorously followed by Yoshikuni, who maintained that approaches that

¹⁵Joan Vincent, Urbanisation in Africa. *Journal of Common Wealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 14, Issue. 3, (1976), 288.

¹⁶Alward Shorter, “*The Church in the African City* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991 , 7-8

emphasize the role of political economy “can be too rigid and reductionist in grasping urban realities.”¹⁷ He opted for an approach within the social history school, which considers culture as a resource used by people to interact with their environment. He calls it a ‘bottom up approach.’¹⁸ Such an approach is in line with Swart and de Beers proposal of a “urban public theological praxis agenda giving impetus to action-oriented, problem-solving and normatively inclined-discourses ‘from below’” in which different actors from the urban grassroots-linked to different communities- will become primary interlocutors.”¹⁹ It is an approach that gives a more comprehensive account of how Africans experience the city than studies that prioritize global political economy.

Salisbury was not free from the impact of global political economy highlighted by Magubane. This has been discussed in a number of studies that account for the development of Rhodesia and Salisbury.²⁰ However, they are not explored in this chapter because they do not pay adequate attention to the agency of the human subjects on the ground. For example, Phimister emphasized the role played by global capital in hemorrhaging and destabilizing the African population in Rhodesia of its resources and wealth, and Rakodi underscores the importance of

¹⁷Tsuneo Yoshokuni, *Black Migrants in a White City: A Social History of African Harare, 1890 - 1925*, Harare: Weaver press, 2007. 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ S. De beer and I. Swart “Towards a fusion of Horizons: Thematic contours for an urban public theological praxis- agenda in South Africa’, *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 70(3) Art.#2812, 9pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i3.2812> . 1

²⁰ Ian Phimister, *An Economic Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class struggle*. London: New York, 1988. Carole Rakeodi, *Harare : Inheriting a Settler-colonial City : Change or Continuity?* World Cities Series. Chichester [England] ; New York: J. Wiley, 1995. 254-275. Giovanni Arrighi, “The political Economy of Rhodesia.Arrighi, Giovanni. *The Political Economy of Rhodesia*. Publications of the Institute of Social Studies. Series Maior, v. 16. The Hague: Mouton, 1967.

policy and planning of Salisbury for it to overcome the challenges of its colonial legacy. These approaches place emphasis on the external forces such as capital, policy, and administration. This chapter is more about experiences of the people in the city. As stated above, its objective is to map the complex *erlebnis* and *erfahrung* that constitute the African response to colonial factors that shaped the city. Therefore, it takes a bottom up approach. It takes as a primary source the way people responded to the movement of capital, policies, and the planning of the city, which were dictated by the bigger colonial project. Hence, it is in line with the approach in social history. However, it tries to avoid the problems faced by social history highlighted by Scarnecchia who makes reference to the danger of moving away from politics and class analysis in a number of social histories in Southern Africa.²¹ Politics and class analysis are incorporated through the examination of social processes that gave rise to early forms of political organisations.

Chapter Outline

The chapter begins with an outline of the development of Salisbury constructed from various sources across different disciplines. The outline captures key events and policies that were important in the development of Salisbury, and which affected mainly Africans in the city. These events are subject to different interpretations, but the outline will not discuss or analyze how scholars interpret these events. It simply records events as reported by different people who write about Salisbury because it is a presentation of the *erlebinis* of Africans in the colonial city captured in different texts. The *erlebinis* is further explored through different interpretations or perspectives of African urban experience in the second section. These interpretations are a kind of an *erfahrung* of the city that developed later. In other words, an analysis of the interpretation is

²¹ Scarnecchia Timothy, *The Politics of Gender and Class in the Creation of African Communities*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1937-1957. UMI Dissertation Services, 5-12.

an attempt to capture *erlebnis* in the city through later *erfahrung*. The *erfahrang* in the city taking place at the same with the *erlebnis* being explored will be considered in the next chapter. The second section will begin by discussing nationalism through which the discussion of urban experience is framed. Then it will consider the perspectives of European settlers, to which the *erlebnis* captured in urban historical studies that are part of nationalistic historiography are responding. It also looks at how the literary works, poetry, and musical compositions portray the same *erlebnis*. The purpose of the chapter is to show the complex nature of the colonial experience.

An Outline of the Development of Salisbury (Harare)

Salisbury was established on 13 September 1890 with the raising of the Union Jack on what has become Africa Unity Square, known as Cecil Square then. This was a culmination of Cecil John Rhodes's imperial dreams.²² Rhodes was an Englishman who had gained wealth in the mining towns of Kimberly, where diamonds had just been discovered.²³ He entered the Cape Colony parliament in 1881 and became the prime minister of the Cape Colony in 1890, the year his men raised the Union Jack in Salisbury. He is alleged to have dreamt of a British colony from Cape to Cairo. This dream is illustrated in the cartoon "the Rhodes colossus" which captures his proposal to build a telegraph line from Cape to Cairo.²⁴ To the Englishmen, who shared his dreams, like the journalist Ian D. Colvin, Rhodes "never cared for money either for itself or for the pleasure it is fabled to give. He sought for money to accomplish his ends, and these ends were not selfish,

²² Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill Fated People*, London: Heinemann, 1972, 83.

²³ Ian D. Colvin. Cecil John Rhodes 1853-1902. London T C and E CJack, 1913, 18.

²⁴<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20759/20759-h/20759-h.htm>.

but nothing less than the good of his country.”²⁵ But to African journalists like Vambe, Rhodes was a dishonest man²⁶ who used devious schemes to occupy Zimbabwe.²⁷ There are many books written on Rhodes, but a general consensus in the post-colonial era is that he was an unscrupulous imperialist who championed British colonialism in southern Africa.²⁸ The beginning of Salisbury can be traced to his ambitions.

Rhodes endeavored to keep other European powers from the continent. He used his influence and power to dupe Lobengula, King of the Ndebele Kingdom, to sign a concession, which was to give him mining rights in the territory north of Lobengula Kingdom, which was occupied by various Shona speaking tribes.²⁹ He later used this agreement to obtain a royal charter from the British crown, which gave him power to claim and exploit, on behalf of Britain, the resources in the land north of the Limpopo river.³⁰ The land north of the Ndebele kingdom that Rhodes sought to occupy had seen the rise and fall of great kingdoms and states that were predominantly agriculturist and pastoralists.³¹ Chief among them were Mupungubwe, Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa, and Torwa/Rozwi. The Ndebele from whom Rhodes obtained a concession was a Nguni tribe from the South that settled southwest of what became Zimbabwe about 60

²⁵Ian D. Colvin. *Cecil John Rhodes 1853-1902*. London T C and E CJack, 1913, 24.

²⁶Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill Fated People*. London: Heinemann, 1972, 60.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁸This is the view best illustrated by the Rhodes must fall

²⁹Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill Fated People*. London: Heinemann, 1972, 77-80.

³⁰ Sabelo J Ndlovu Gastheni, “ Mapping Cultural and Colonial Encounters, 1880-1930s” in *Becoming Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009, 46.

³¹ Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, “Reflections on Pre-colonial Zimbabwe c850-1880s” in Raftopoulos, Brian, and Mlambo, A. S. eds. *Becoming Zimbabwe : A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2009.

years earlier, and related in different ways with the Shona speaking tribes. Beyond the borders of these states were smaller groups who, even though they interacted with these states, were outside their control.

Rhodes, following European scholars and explorers, perpetuated the myth that all the land north of the kingdom was under the rule of the Ndebele. That is how he came to use the concession signed by Lobengula, the Ndebele King, to claim that he had authority to occupy Mashonaland. He formed the British South Africa Company to administer the colony,³² and recruited men with different expertise who were willing to undertake this expedition.³³ They were promised mining claims and land when they reached Mashonaland.³⁴ They formed the pioneer column, which trekked from Cape Town to Mashonaland, skirting the Ndebele Kingdom.³⁵ The column was led by Courtney Selous, a British explorer and hunter who knew the terrain very well and whose vexing double standards were key in the occupation of Zimbabwe.³⁶ Among them were Jesuit and Anglican missionaries who came as chaplains. They represent the controversial association of missionaries and colonists discussed in Chapter 1, and their actions in the colonisation of Zimbabwe have been an important theme in Zimbabwe historiography.³⁷ The

³²Ian D. Colvin. *Cecil John Rhodes 1853-1902*, London T C and E CJack, 1913, 50-51

³³ Ibid., 51.

³⁴ Robert Blake, *The Pioneer Column, Its Origins and Implications*. Dugmore Memorial Lecture; 4. Grahamstown: Settlers National Monument Foundation, 1973, 23.

³⁵Ian D. Colvin. *Cecil John Rhodes 1853-1902*, London T C and E CJack, 1913, 53-54.

³⁶Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill Fated People*, London: Heinemann, 1972, 88.

³⁷ Much has been written about the role of missionaries attitude towards African and how they helped Rhodes gain treaties from local chiefs and their complicity in the colonisation of Zimbabwe. Vambe has a generous assessment of the missionaries. He gives the benefit of the doubt by claiming that they did not suffer any "crisis of conscience" resulting from contradiction between Catholic faith and

column arrived on the foot of the hill in Chief Harare's territory on 12 September 1890, and they raised their flag on the 13th of September 1890, in the midst of pomp and ceremony about two miles from a small kopje that was very significant for the local people.³⁸ They named the settlement Fort Salisbury, in honor of the British prime minister, who had sanctioned the occupation.³⁹

The Shona speaking tribes who resided in Mashonaland were under various clans led by different chiefs.⁴⁰ The place where they raised the flag was under the jurisdiction of Chief Mbare, who had displaced Chief Neharawa, known as Harare (one who does not sleep).⁴¹ The nearby kopje was used as a watchtower to look out for enemies from a distance. The initial response from the Shona speaking tribes was mainly of indifference. They saw the whites as traders and gold seekers who would go away after they had gotten what they wanted like the Portuguese had done before.⁴² It was not long before the pioneers were at loggerheads with the Shona speaking tribes. As soon as the pioneers had raised the flag and began to disperse to look for mines and farming areas, they were in confrontation with the locals, or "natives" as they referred to them.⁴³

colonial racial philosophy. (Vambe 96). A more critical attack of how they robbed the African of his being is given by Mhoze Chikovero. *African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe*, chapter 1-3.

³⁸ G. H. Tanser, G. H. *A Scantling of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia (1890 to 1900)*. Salisbury: S. Manning, 1965., 26 -27.

³⁹Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill Fated People*,. London: Heinemann, 1972, 92.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹G. H. Tanser, *A Scantling of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia (1890 to 1900)*. Salisbury: S. Manning, 1965., 14

⁴²Ranger, T. O. *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-97; a Study in African Resistance*. Evanston [IL, Northwestern University Press, 1967, 46

⁴³ The word "native" is what the White settlers used to refer to local people, who are general referred to Africans. The Africans in this part of the continent are now known as Zimbabweans. This dissertation uses "native" whenever it is expressing colonial perspective and "African" to express the

The company was no longer taking care of them, and it had no proper administrative structure to regulate the activities of the pioneers.⁴⁴

The pioneers clashed with the locals about ownership, land use, and their way of coercing Africans to provide labor for their endeavors. Up to this point, the myth that sustained them was that the Shona were dominated by the Ndebele; and the whites were doing them a favor by protecting them from the Ndebele, whose King had given the company permission to operate in Mashonaland.⁴⁵ Even though it was clear to the whites like Selous who had known the tribes for a long while that the majority of the Shona did not consider themselves a conquered people, and they never considered themselves under any authority, the white settlers maintained this myth. So when the Ndebele rebelled against company occupation in 1893, which was successfully crushed by the whites settlers because they had superior weapons, the company considered itself the rulers and protectors of the Shona speaking tribes and the Ndebele.

Lobengula had burnt his capital after the failure of the rebellion and moved to a new location, where he died shortly afterwards, and Rhodes went to negotiate with his *indunas*, (advisors). It was a way of protecting the charter, which had been accepted by the British crown, based on the lie that Lobengula sanctioned their activities. After the rebellion, the Company sought to find ways of managing and controlling all the Africans who they now assumed were under their rule, since the Ndebele Kingdom was no more. They introduced the Native Affairs

viewpoint or experience of the locals. The Europeans who came to settle and colonise Zimbabwe, are referred to, by their kith and kin, as the pioneers. In nationalistic discourse, they are referred to as settlers or the whites. This dissertation occasionally, uses “pioneer” when it is expressing a colonial perspective; and it uses “settler” when it is expressing nationalistic viewpoint; but in general, it uses European as a way of giving a general picture of the colonial relationship, which was mostly between Europe and Africa.

⁴⁴ Tanser, 33 and Ranger 52.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill Fated People*, London: Heinemann, 1972, 57.

Department in 1894, with a chief native commissioner in charge with native commissioners in charge of different districts. The department was to collect tax from the natives for a new administration.⁴⁶ It was to help the Company find a way of getting the much-needed labor from the natives. The introduction of tax was to force Africans to work for money needed to pay tax. The process of setting up the department was problematic, as the native commissioners were ill equipped; and they did not fully understand their responsibility. Their situation was exacerbated by the fact that many Shona chiefs did not consider themselves to be under Lobengula or the company. The result was a rebellion of the Shona speaking tribes in 1896. Again the rebellion was successfully crushed because the Company had superior weapons, and the Company and the settlers established themselves as the sovereign rulers of the land between the Limpopo and the Zambezi. This was the birth of Southern Rhodesia, which became Rhodesia when Northern Rhodesia gained independence in 1964; it eventually became Zimbabwe in 1980.

After the defeat of the Shona tribes and the Ndebele, the company assumed authority over all the people in the colony. It began a difficult process of governing and controlling Africans. The process comprised what came to be known in white settler parlance as ‘the native question.’⁴⁷ In Salisbury, the company faced major challenges in continuing with the development that had been going on since the foundation of the settlement in 1890.⁴⁸ It sought new ways of managing the growing township. In 1897, it created a Town Council, which replaced

⁴⁶Ranger, T. O. *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-97; a Study in African Resistance*. Evanston [Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1967, 67-77.

⁴⁷Sabelo J Ndlovu Gastheni, “ Mapping Cultural and Colonial Encounters, 18880-1930s” in *Becoming Zimbabwe*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009, 61

⁴⁸G. H. Tanser, *A Scantling of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia (1890 to 1900)*. Salisbury: S. Manning, 1965, 167-193.

a Sanitary Board, which had been created in 1892.⁴⁹ In its first year, the Sanitary Board had created a native location on the commonage that was outside the developing townships.⁵⁰ A European sanitary inspector was appointed superintendent of the location with a “native” as headman.⁵¹ The Town Council decreed by a Native Location Ordinance of 1906 that all Africans were to stay in the ‘location’. It stipulated that all natives except those living at their employers’ premises must move to the location. According to Yoshikuni, who made the most comprehensive study of the early history of this location to date, this was the beginning of an official ghetto.⁵² This location was to be the center of African experiences in the city. As has been stated in the introduction of this chapter, the location is an important institution through which most Africans were urbanized. Hence, in its analysis of African experiences in the city, this chapter will dwell on experiences in this particular location of Salisbury.

In 1923, the whites living in Rhodesia were given a choice to become part of the union of South Africa or to form a “Responsible Government” which would rule the colony on behalf of Britain. They chose the latter because they wanted to avoid Afrikaner dominance in South Africa.⁵³ In its administration of African population in the colony, the responsible government continued what British South Africa Company had started. It came up with acts and policies that created ghettos for Africans in the cities. In 1925, the responsible government appointed a land

⁴⁹ Ibid., 192-193.

⁵⁰ Tsuneo Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Social History of Harare before 1925*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2007, 22

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Yoshikuni, Tsuneo. , 2007. 9

⁵³ Carole Rakodi. *Harare : Inheriting a Settler Colonial City : Change or Continuity?* World Cities Series. Chichester [England] ; New York: J. Wiley, 1995. 12.

commission to investigate the best uses of land in Rhodesia. In its implementation of the commission recommendation, it enacted the Land Apportionment Act in 1930. The act established a racial designation of land.⁵⁴ Land was divided into native areas, European areas, forest areas and unreserved land. Europeans were not supposed to reside in native areas except for the benefit of the natives; likewise, natives were not supposed to live in European areas. Certain locations in the cities (which were generally European areas) were to be set up by government or local authorities and classified as native areas. The act was amended in 1941. In the amendment, it made provision for local authorities to avail houses for natives in the cities irrespective of their status. Up until then, there had not been any significant legislation about African housing in the city. The reason for this lack was mainly because of the dominant thinking that a native was a temporary inhabitant of the city, who would return to his home after a few months' work.⁵⁵ By the 40s, it was becoming clear that this assumption was proved obsolete.

Another factor that contributed to the issue of native housing was that after World War II the establishment of manufacturing industry required a permanent labor force.⁵⁶ The question of native housing in the city had to be tackled, and it was addressed by the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (NUAARA) of 1946. The act further reinforced the creation of ghettos for African labourers that had been carried forward by the Land

⁵⁴ Gloria C. Passmore, *Local Government Legislation in Southern Rhodesia up to September 30th, 1963.*, Salisbury Dept. of Government. University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1966.

⁵⁵ Murray Cairns Steele, *The Foundations of a "Native" policy Southern Rhodesia, 1923-1933*, dissertation available on <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/3043>, 465.

⁵⁶ A S Mlambo, "From Second World war to UDI, 1940-1965" in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009, 81 -82.

Apportionment Act. It obliged councils to provide and administer houses for blacks.⁵⁷ It also gave the same local authority to administer regulation of pass laws. These laws were established as early as 1892, when the first location was established. They required that every black person in the city have a document that showed he/she were legally allowed to live in the city.⁵⁸ The document had to show that they were employed. Through NUAARA, councils were to regulate the operations of pass laws. The act gave Africans some form of representation in the local council by providing for a Native Advisory Board, which was to give Africans some form of representation in the running of the location. The idea of Advisory board was conceived by Europeans as a safety valve to ventilate native feelings and opinion.⁵⁹

In 1947 a Native Urban Areas Act (NUAA) was passed. It was a further consolidation of the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (NUAARA), a way of controlling and restricting the presence of Africans in the city. Africans' urban experiences were also affected by other acts that were not directly connected with the city, such as the African Husbandry Act (AHA) of 1951. AHA was meant to enforce best ways of managing land use by Africans.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, it had the adverse effects on African communities as it alienated people from the land.⁶¹ It contributed to the increase of rural-urban migration, which resulted in

⁵⁷Patel, Diana H., R. J. Adams, and D. Masarirambi. *Chirambahuyo : A Case Study in Low-income Housing*. Zambezi; v. 11. Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1981, 7.

⁵⁸Tsuneo Yoshikuni, 2007, 22.

⁵⁹ Timothy Scanchia, 2008, 34.

⁶⁰ Gloria Passmore, "Historical Rationale of Community Development in the African Rural Areas of Rhodesia" Salisbury: Dept of Political Science, University of Rhodesia, 1972, available on <http://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/Journal%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Zimbabwe/vol2n1/juz002001007.pdf>, 63

⁶¹ Ibid.

overcrowding in cities and the need to provide houses.⁶² Apart from government acts, political developments such as the general strike of 1948 played a significant role in shaping African urban experiences. According to Lunn, the significance of 1948 has yet to be fully grasped.⁶³ However, his presentation of what is known of the strike reflects that beyond the neat acts and regulation, there was a complex response to what white settlers envisaged with their acts and regulation. The strike exposed tension and division among the Africans who were making the city their permanent home.

By and large, the regulation of natives in the city as well as those beyond the city, the type of houses provided for them, and the political unrest around housing and labor issues supports Patel and Adams's assertion that "Blacks were only tolerated in town as workers and not as dwellers. They were in the town but not of the town."⁶⁴ But by 1953, when Southern Rhodesia joined Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Salisbury had a considerable African population that could not be easily confined to the location by mere laws or any native policy. Natives were not only in town, but they were of the town, shaping the developments taking place. The rest of the dissertation will analyze how engaged they were with the developments in the city and became of the town.

⁶²A S Mlambo, "From Second World war to UDI, 1940-1965" in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the pre-colonial Period to 2008*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009, 83.

⁶³Jon Lunn, "The meaning of 1948 General strike" in eds. B RAftopolus and T Yoshikuni, *Sites of Struggle: Essays: Essays in Zimbabwe Urban History*, Harare: Weaver Press 1999. 164.

⁶⁴Patel, Diana H., R. J. Adams, and D. Masarirambi. *Chirambahuyo : A Case Study in Low-income Housing*. Zambeziana ; v. 11. Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1981, 7.

African Experiences in Salisbury

The urban dynamics in Salisbury cannot be understood apart from the economic and social processes that shaped the making of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The role of the British South Africa Company in carrying forward the colonial project on Britain's behalf followed by the gradual rise of nationalism as a response to colonialism, forms a general framework of African experience of urbanization. Historical studies on urban experience, especially those that focus on the experience of Africans in the city, are part of the nationalistic historiography. Therefore this section will begin with a brief discussion of the general development of nationalism through an overview of nationalistic historiography, before a reconstruction of African urban experiences through different interpretations/contestations of Salisbury. The review is helpful in showing the complexity of responses to colonialism, of which the different interpretations of African urban experience are important constituents. The use of different interpretations and contestations to construct African urban experiences is in line with Swart and DeBeers' proposal that urban theology in Africa should engage the counterpoint of different interpretations or contestations of the city. As already mentioned in the summary of this chapter, the interpretations and contestations reviewed in this section consist of views of colonial administrators, analyses in historical texts that focus on experiences of Africans in the Salisbury and images and portrayals of the city in literary works, poetry, and musical compositions.

Nationalism and African Experiences in Salisbury

The general interpretation in what is now known as "patriotic historiography" is that the establishment of British South Africa Company rule in Mashonaland was the beginning of the great disruption of colonialism in Southern Rhodesia. Patriotic history, according to Ranger (who coined this term), focuses on Rhodes, the British, and the African rebellions of 1893-94 and

those of 1896–97. In Ranger’s analysis, patriotic history is generally a celebration of the African struggle for independence; and it emphasizes the role played by ZANU PF and its leaders like Robert Mugabe in this struggle against colonialism.⁶⁵ The development of patriotic history is subtle and complex, but its major characteristic is narrowness and oversimplification of the history of the nation. Its major objective is to serve the interest of ZANU PF government, which has ruled the country since independence in 1980. In response to some allegations that he is actually its chief architect, Ranger is critical of patriotic history, and he dissociates his work from it.⁶⁶ He locates his work in what he calls nationalistic historiography, which is about the history of a nation.⁶⁷ Patriotic history regards any history that is not political as irrelevant and is explicitly antagonistic to academic historiography.⁶⁸ Ranger recommends the development of an alternative historiography. He proposes an academic nationalistic historiography that engages the complexity of the history of a nation. Such a historiography does not only focus on the political, nor is it in service of a particular agenda. It must probe the various experiences that make up the history of the nation.

Rafotopoulos overview and analysis on nationalistic historiography⁶⁹ shows that Ranger’s work is important for understanding the history of a nation, and it goes further to demonstrate that it is not so much an alternative history that is needed, but an appreciation of the different

⁶⁵ Terence Ranger, “Nationalistic Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle Over the Past of Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June 2004) pp. 215-234. 218-224.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, . 218.

⁶⁹Raftopoulos, Brian. “Problematising Nationalism in Zimbabwe: A Histographical review” *Zambezia* 26, No 2 (1999) 115-134.

interpretation of the history of the nation that has developed since the sixties. Ranger's work played a significant role in the two phases of the nationalistic historiography that Raftopoulos reviews. The first phase began with the publication of Ranger's book *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* in 1967, and it ended with the attainment of independence in 1980. The second is within the post-independence era from 1980 to the eve of the new millennium. In the first phase, Ranger's books were the first and most influential form of what Marxist scholars termed an Africanist scholarship. An Africanist discourse emphasized and celebrated how Africans resisted colonialism. It was eventually challenged by the radical Marxist interpretation, which emerged in the 1970s that put emphasis on class struggle.⁷⁰ Although the Marxist interpretation brought to the fore some important issues such as labor which were missing in Ranger's work, it did not do much to replace the Africanist position; and it had its own limitations. One of its major weaknesses was the failure to confront issues of race and nationalism.⁷¹ Ranger's work was also challenged by revisionist historians who argued that it "fed so much nationalist nostalgia and mythology."⁷² In the second phase, 1980 to 1997, the period Ranger says patriotic history begins to take shape; there is a diversification of interpretation of the history of the nation. Ranger continued to contribute to the nationalistic historiography. His contribution went beyond apologetic texts that came out immediately after independence that justified the coming to power of a certain section of the ruling regime.⁷³ Nonetheless, he was criticized for emphasizing the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 119.

⁷¹ Ibid., 120.

⁷² Ibid., 120 -121.

⁷³ Ibid., 121.

unity in the struggle and for generalizing an experience from the areas he studied.⁷⁴ Criticisms of Ranger form part of an expansion of the diversity in interpretation of the history of the nation.

Much of the nationalistic historiography in the first phase focused on what was happening in rural areas, where Africans were confined by the colonial policies. It did not involve experiences in the cities. Raftopoulos ends with a summary of a growing corpus that focuses on experiences in urban areas. This corpus is an addition to the complex interpretation of how Africans reacted to colonialism captured in the Africanists' position represented by Ranger, in the radical Marxists' emphasis on capital and labor, and in the revisionists' focus on differentiation among different groups and in different areas. Raftopoulos describes the entire nationalistic historiography as "a divergent perspective on the experiences of nationalist ideology."⁷⁵ The reflection of urban experiences is a strand within this divergent perspective. It is complexity within complexity. In short, the nationalistic historiography is a complex interpretation of complex responses to colonial experience. Urban experience is a complex part of that response, and this section is an exploration of this particular complexity within the bigger and more complex history of a nation. It is a reconstruction of what has been described above as *African erfahrung of the city*.

Divergence in nationalistic historiography has continued to expand since Raftopoulos reviewed it. A most recent thoroughgoing offering is by Mhoze Chikowero.⁷⁶ Just like radical Marxists' and revisionists' approaches, Chikowero decenters discourse on the history of the

⁷⁴ Ibid., 122- 123.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 132.

⁷⁶ Chikowero, Mhoze. *African Music, Power, And Being In Colonial Zimbabwe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

nation from the interpretations such as those found in patriotic historiography that traces the birth of a nation to what ZANU PF achieved through war. However, he goes further than the two approaches in that he brings to the center the category of music and culture that has been overlooked by Marxists and revisionists and was underdeveloped by the cultural interpretation of some scholars who tried to engage it. For Chikowero, those scholars who tried to study music and culture disregarded the epistemological and “professoriate” processes in African traditions and among ordinary people. His objective is to “demonstrate that the recent history of Zimbabwe reveals much more than its celebrated aesthetic ingenuity by reorienting discussion beyond the cultural rubric of mere comparison and explanation (of styles, structures, and forms) and firmly locating the power of song and its historical significance in its ability to reaffirm African being through engagement with radicalized violence of colonial dehumanization and extraction.”⁷⁷

One objective in nationalistic discourse, especially in patriotic historiography is the quest for Africans to retain, maintain, and protect their identity and values from colonial machinations. Through a close look at the nationalistic historiography that focuses on the city, this chapter will show that response to colonial machinations was not only about maintaining or protecting African being, but it involved scripting African being on the historical processes resulting from the encounter with the colonialist. In showing how urban Africans tried to script their life on the bigger narrative that was unfolding in their time, the chapter critiques a presupposition, strong in Chikowero’s interpretation and lurking in some interpretation of the nation’s history, that there was a universal, deliberate and conscious logic that informed all missionaries and all those who acted as agents of colonialism in Zimbabwe. This presupposition

⁷⁷ Ibid., . 3.

that the destruction of African culture and being followed a clear logic is close to what was discussed in Chapter 1, where prominent theologians emphasized the need to recognize, recover and rehabilitate disrupted African identities. Whatever African identity one wishes to construct or reconstruct will be incomplete if it is dissociated from efforts by some or most Africans to adapt and engage and transform the changing circumstances brought about by the colonial process. These are the efforts being mapped here.

In the nationalistic discourse of the 1960s, which will not be discussed in this chapter because it is outside the period under review in the dissertation, the scripting or adapting of African being into new political and economic processes brought about by colonialism was labeled ‘sellout politics.’ Those who embraced, converted or engaged with colonial forces were labeled *vatenges* (sellouts). This chapter will not discuss the bankruptcy of such a label. However, its discussion of how Africans tried to claim urban space in the first half of the 20th century, will show that what has been labeled ‘sellout’ was actually a legitimate way that Africans have always tried to build community and society. In fact, this practice started before the imposition of colonial rule. Pre-colonial states like the Mutapa and the Rozwi had something similar to colonial tendencies. The names say it all. *Kutapa* is to take forcefully and *Kurozwa* is to destroy. During that era, the conquered did not just fight or run away. Engagement and compromise was another form of response to the rise and fall of great states in the pre-colonial period. What is discussed here is a dynamic with a long history in Zimbabwe, and it is not peculiar to it.

Africans’ Experiences in Salisbury: European Settlers’ Perspectives

Settler Historians

The complexity of urban experience did not begin with nationalistic historiography. Neither was it an experience of Africans. European settlers who ruled and controlled the city had their own

complex challenges, and they contributed to the complexity among the urban Africans. Hence, we begin with perspectives of the European settlers who ruled the lives of the Africans in Salisbury. Ferguson⁷⁸ and Tanser,⁷⁹ who write gloriously of the settlers' heroic exploits during the occupation of Salisbury, are agreed that it was no easy task for the Europeans who settled in Salisbury. Ferguson, who writes about 17 years after the foundation of the colony, acknowledges the many challenges in developing this colony, but he is positive about its great potential. He glorifies the contribution of the pioneers and encourages more Europeans to come and take advantage of this opportunity to civilize. He was writing for those who intended to settle in the new colony. He presents it as a country with great wealth that could benefit the settlers. Writing 60 years later, about the same early days of the colony and focusing on Salisbury, G. H Tanser continues to give glory to the founders of the colony and of the city. Unlike Ferguson, who focused on the colonies wealth and overlooked the tensions within the pioneers and the British South Africa Company, Tanser is more attentive to the struggle that the pioneers had to go through, especially the disagreements with the company. Ferguson had presented the beginning of Salisbury as a simple act of courageous men who, as soon as they reached Mashonaland, began the great task of building the city and the nation.⁸⁰ Tanser makes it clear that the dispersal was not easy. There were several tensions between the company and the pioneers in the first two

⁷⁸Fergus Ferguson, Fergus W. Ed. *Southern Rhodesia: an account of its past history, present development, natural riches, and future prospects. With Special Particulars for Intending Settlers, Numerous Illustrations and much General Information.* Comp. from the most authentic sources expressly for the South African Publishing Syndicate, Port Elizabeth and London. London, Printed by W. H. & L. Collingridge, 1907.

⁷⁹G. H. Tanser, G. H. *A Scantling of Time : The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia 1890 to 1900.* Salisbury : S. Manning, 1965 and *A Sequence of Time : The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1900 to 1914.* ref

⁸⁰ Ferguson. 10.

decades of the colony.⁸¹ The pioneers needed more from the company. Nonetheless, Tanser is like Ferguson in that he celebrates the achievements of the settlers.

Both Ferguson and Tanser have little regard for the Africans who lived in this area, whom they refer to as natives. Ferguson endorses the view that the magnificent pre-colonial settlements such as Great Zimbabwe were constructed by Phoenicians.⁸² He holds the classic colonial view that tribes in pre-colonial Zimbabwe were barbaric,⁸³ and that pre-colonial Africa was a dark continent.⁸⁴ He views the Ndebele as a warlike people who are unable to settle under a peaceful regime who needed a thorough subjugation,⁸⁵ and he considers the creation of reserves for the Mashona to have been a great favor for them.⁸⁶ For Ferguson, the Rhodesian natives have an “inborn indolence,” and they are not aware of the necessity of work to a large extent. They work in view for specific objects.⁸⁷ In short, he considers the coming of the whites as a blessing for the natives.⁸⁸ In his short overview of major townships such as Salisbury, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare and others, he does not mention the natives’ contribution and presence.⁸⁹ Just like Ferguson, Tanser has little regard for Africans. He describes the first rebellion against the settlers as a murderous

⁸¹ Tanser, 33.

⁸² Ferguson, 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 10 and 105.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

act and he calls the Mbuya Nehanda, the spirit medium who inspired the rebellion, a witch.⁹⁰ He also does not mention the importance of the natives in the city. Ferguson's and Tanser's views of local African are representative of the pioneers' view of the natives in the city. The pioneers were creating a paradise for themselves. What mattered to them was fame and fortune. They never thought of the city as a place for Africans who had inhabited the land for thousand years. That is why they created a location for them.

Native Policies

The view that African natives do not belong to the city was gradually reinforced by native policies adopted by different governments in the colony. The different administrations from 1890 adopted policies that led towards making reserves permanent homes for the "natives." The reserves were created by the British South Africa Company that ruled the colony from its foundation in 1890 to 1923. According to Peter Duignan, an ardent apologist for the Company, the creation of reserves was a blessing for the natives because it eventually led to their development.⁹¹ Steele argues otherwise. He views them as centers that were created to find best ways of making Africans serve the economic system that the colonists were introducing. In view of the conditions that eventually developed in the city and in the colony, Steele has a more accurate interpretation of what happened during the colonial rule than Duignan. In his examination of the native policy from 1923 to 1933, Steele argues that the reserves were meant to be temporary because the "settlers" thought they would disappear with the expansion of

⁹⁰ Tanser, 197.

⁹¹ Peter Duignan, *Native Policy in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1923*. 1961 PHD Dissertaion Stanford University. 221- 223

European economy, which would need more native labor.⁹² He goes on to trace how the responsible government, which took over from the Company, gradually made the reserves a permanent home for the Africans. This move came about in an attempt to protect the settlers' interests through control of natives. The gradual establishment of the reserve as a permanent home for the African was to be a foundation of native policy followed by Godfrey Huggins, who advocated for a full segregation of Africans.⁹³ Huggins was the fourth prime minister of the colony, from 1933 to 1953, when he became prime minister of the federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland. What emerges from Steele's analysis is that the major aspect in colonial native policy was control and restriction of Africans. Initially this control was meant to be temporary, but it became permanent, as whites settlers demanded the advancement of their interests.

Unlike Steele, who understands the creation of the reserve as a result of policies that tried to control the natives, Gloria Passmore sees the policies in terms of development for the natives. Passmore writes positively about the colonial government's development policy for Africans in the reserves.⁹⁴ She details the efforts of the native affairs department to influence "African rural population to follow more progressive ways of living."⁹⁵ But she acknowledges at the end that not much progress was achieved. Most of these efforts were met with apathy. She concludes that

⁹²Murray Caines Steele. *Foundation of Native Policy 1923-1933* PHD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1972. 8.

⁹³ Ibid., 495-496.

⁹⁴ Gloria C Passmore Historical Rationale of the policy of Community Development in the African Rural Areas of Rhodesia" <http://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/Journal%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Zimbabwe/vol2n1/juz002001007.pdf> accessed 10 June 2017.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 61.

what was needed was to find ways of inspiring the “rural people not only to participate in measures for their own advancement but to pursue them with initiative, responsibility and persistence.”⁹⁶

In spite of their different views of how policy affected the natives, both Steele and Passmore concur that the settlers came to consider the reserve to be the place for the native. They also concur that there were many challenges in the reserves. For Steele, the problem lies with the segregation policy that was first and foremost about controlling and restricting natives⁹⁷ Passmore, on the other hand, connects the lack to development among natives to the failure of policy makers to make the native embrace development.

Steele goes further to clearly demonstrate that the city was meant for the white settlers and that the natives were only welcome as occasional laborers. As was the case all over the colony, the movement of natives in the city was to be controlled and restricted.⁹⁸ Just like Steele, Passmore acknowledges that the city was designated for Europeans. In her catalogue of legislation of local government in southern Rhodesia up to 1963, she notes that there was a tacit belief in local legislation that “the African was essentially a rural dweller, present in town as a temporary worker who would in due course return to his home in the country.”⁹⁹ Her summary of the of Native Urban Areas Act (NUARRA), one of the key act concerning lives of natives in the city will give an idea of the kind of how much control the Europeans had. She writes:

⁹⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁹⁷ Murray Caines Steele. *Foundation of Native Policy 1923-1933* PHD Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1972. 146 and 504.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 464.

⁹⁹ Gloria C Passmore, *Local government legislation in Southern Rhodesia up to September 30th, 1963*. Salisbury Dept. of Government. University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1966. 19.

The African (Urban areas) and accommodation and Registration Act compel employers to provide free accommodation for African workers either in licensed private premise or in an African township. A section of the act now repealed, formerly provided for the registration by local authorities of all service contracts entered into by employers with African workers. The Act places upon local authorities the obligation of equipping and maintaining any African urban area established under the Land Apportionment act, and of making adequate provision both for single and family accommodation. A fixed rental is established for all standard accommodation regardless of size. Payment is the responsibility of the Employer. (A higher rental may be charged for special accommodation to meet the needs of the well to do, the employer paying a portion and the African tenant the balance of the rental due in such a case). The Act requires the appointment of an African advisory board for every African township under local control. Local authorities in proclaimed areas are required to carry out the compulsory identification, vaccination, medical examination, and treatment of Africans falling under their jurisdiction. Provision is made for the establishment by local authorities of employment bureaux for use of African work seekers and Employers. An African revenue account must be maintained by each local authority for the receipt of all revenue from Townships. The money may only be utilized for financing services rendered by local authority in African township.¹⁰⁰

This legislation appears as if it was for empowering and protecting the native because it emphasizes the responsibility of employers and of the local council. A careful examination will show that it was more about control because all power is invested in employers and local authorities. The African Advisory Board, which the Act stipulated had a minimum number of Africans, whose appointment was at the discretion of local authority.¹⁰¹ Passmore adds that by 1961 most of them were ineffective and open to political influence.¹⁰²

Native Administrators

EG Howman

An analysis of the views of administrators and Europeans who provided social welfare is also helpful in uncovering the dynamics of the settlers' control of Africans. An examination of a few

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰² Ibid., 20.

of the administrators at different times from 1890 to 1953 shows that they differed in their approaches in dealing with natives and although there was development in how they understood what their duties entailed, one enduring conviction among them was that they were convinced that they were helping the natives to live a better life. A close examination of some their interpretation and implantation of native policy shows that whatever they did, it was less about developing or empowering natives, and was more about controlling and restricting them.

One important colonial administrator was E.G. Howman. He was an official in the native department, worked as a native commissioner, and spent time working in the native location in Salisbury. He was also later appointed a chief labor inspector in Tanganyika. In his 1938 presentation at a conference in Salisbury, Howman highlighted a number of problems that the natives were facing that needed attention.¹⁰³ He noted that the location was only sufficient for a quarter of the 25,000 natives who lived there.¹⁰⁴ It had a hospital with no ventilation and it needed a bigger hospital. There were no shops in the location. The rents were too high for most of the natives. The government control and prohibition of kefir beer was causing problems. There was poor diet due to scarcity of food and venereal diseases were widespread. He recommended that the word "location" be dropped and replaced by a native town because there was need to make the location a town for the native, rather than just a dormitory. This recommendation was passionately rejected by one of the delegates.¹⁰⁵

Howman's recommendations were intended less for the benefit of the Africans. They were more about control and restrictions of natives so as to develop the city and the colony. For

¹⁰³NAZ/S 1N 45 R Urbanized native in Southern Rhodesia by Howman EFG.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 78.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 96-97.

E.G. Howman something needed to be done to improve the situation in the location so that labor would be available in the town.¹⁰⁶ He was afraid that if nothing was done, the natives would leave and the progress of the city would not develop because native labor was important for the development of the city. Another reason why the natives were important for the city was because his earnings could be spent in the city. He estimated that the £20,000 paid as native wages could benefit the city. He suggested that a superintendent be put in charge of the native location and be given more power,¹⁰⁷ and that he be assisted by strong “police boys” to manage and control the location.¹⁰⁸ It seems these suggestions were followed. The superintendent became demi-god in the location. How he ruled the location is captured in the character of Katsekera (superintendent) and his police boys in Saidi’s novel *The Old Bricks Lives*, set in 1953-1963, the early days of the federation. E.G. Howman also suggested that women’s movements should be monitored strictly¹⁰⁹ and that children between 10 and 16 years should not be allowed in the location.¹¹⁰ He was critical of forming native councils because “the native is quite unused to democracy.”¹¹¹ He had to wait until his mentality had completely changed. In short what really mattered to E.G. Howman was that the native was available to work, that he spent his money in the city, and that he paid taxes. The welfare or development of the native was a way of attaining these goals. It was a kind of social engineering.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 79- 80.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 89-90.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 80 -81.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 89.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 93.

In 1943, E.G. Howman was the chairman of the committee that was set to investigate the economic, social and health conditions of Africans working in urban areas. They carried out their investigations in six cities, including Salisbury. The report that it produced in 1944 expands on a number of problems that he mentioned in his 1938 presentation. It repeated his view that the location should not be viewed as a temporary home for the African.¹¹² It reiterates the problem of women running away from husbands and fathers from the reserves and coming to town unaccompanied.¹¹³ A number of areas that needed to be addressed so as to improve the situation of the native that had been covered in the 1938 presentation are repeated in the 1943 report. It suggested ways for controlling women and children.¹¹⁴ It recommended that the African hospitals be improved.¹¹⁵ It strongly suggested the need to improve the diet of Africans.¹¹⁶ The need to control illicit brewing was restated, and municipal authorities were discouraged from charging exorbitant prices that only a few natives could afford.¹¹⁷ It also suggested that adequate housing be provided for the Africans.¹¹⁸

As in the 1938 presentation, these recommendations were for the good of the European, not the native. The report said nothing about putting the African in charge of his own life. It invested all the power of change in the hands of employers, the council and the government. It

¹¹²Southern Rhodesia. Committee to Investigate the Economic, Social Health Conditions of Africans Employed in Urban Areas. *Report*. Salisbury, 1944. 5.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 4-6.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14- 15.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

advised against setting an “indiscriminate minimum wage based on arbitrary calculation of minimum standard of living,” but instead it recommended that wages be correlated to productive efficiency.¹¹⁹ It only suggested a certain minimum wage as a way of protecting bona fide native workers from itinerant casual wages wanting to make a quick buck.¹²⁰ Thus, as in the 1938 presentation, the native is only valued as a productive tool. Its recommendation that employers provide enough food for the Africans and that a bigger and better hospital be provided appear as genuine concern for the welfare of the native, but in actuality; it was more about giving responsibility to the employers to feed their workers, not to empower them so that they can provide for themselves. It recommended that an advisor be appointed to represent Africans’ interests with regard to the implementation of an industrial conciliation act.¹²¹ It does not suggest that they represent their own interests. The report talks about the need to provide adequate and affordable houses and not comfortable homes.

The native is presented as an object that needs to be taken care of so that he becomes a better tool for the development of the country, as the report itself clearly states: “It is against this background, so briefly sketched above, that the committee desires its recommendation to be placed and to urge the serious necessity for coordinated planning and deliberate control of urban life. The European, by his demand for labor, is responsible for the uprooting of the old traditional standards of African life; on him, therefore, devolves the responsibility of recreating new standards in the hearts, minds and actions of the people; he cannot expect such standards to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹²¹ Ibid., 2.

materialize from a policy of laissez faire, nor from the narrow confines of classroom, courthouse or gaol.”¹²²

HRG Howman

E.G. Howman’s views about controlling natives reached a subtle and sophisticated level in the works of his son HRG Howman. Just like his father, Roger Howman worked for the native department and was an effective native commissioner. He worked for the government until the early 1980s. The last few years of his career, he worked for the government of independent Zimbabwe. He was the one who read his father’s paper at the 1938 conference because he could not be present due to a new appointment in Tanganyika. According to Gloria Passmore, who glowingly writes about his achievements, Roger was responsible for the final 1943 Howman report, produced by the commission that was chaired by his father.¹²³

Roger Howman’s proposals and approaches were more developed and considered than those of his father. He was committed to the participation of natives in their affairs; however, there remained an element of control that did not involve so much restriction. Ranger’s account of Roger’s views on how native boxing should be controlled sheds light upon his idea of control and how it was different from the restriction that dominant among some administrators.¹²⁴ It was generally agreed that the control of African recreation was an important way of making sure that the native uses his spare time constructively. All Europeans agreed that the control should be

¹²² Ibid., 6.

¹²³Howman, Passmore, and Passmore, Gloria C. H.R.G. Howman on Provincialisation in Rhodesia, 1968-1969, and Rational and Irrational Elements. Cambridge African Occasional Papers ; 4. Cambridge: African Studies Centre, 1985. Xiv.

¹²⁴ Terence Ranger, “Pugilism and Pathology: African Boxing and the Black urban Experience in Southern Rhodesia” in Mangan, Baker, William J., and Mangan, J. A. *Sport in Africa : Essays in Social History*. New York ; London: Africana Pub., 1987.

extended to boxing, which had started spontaneously among the natives. The chief native commissioner, Bullock, felt something more needed to be done. There was need to understand more about what was going on in African boxing. His suspicion was that it was fomenting tribal tension. He commissioned Roger Howman, a sociologist in the native department at the time, to do a sociological analysis of the native boxing.

In his report, Roger Howman concluded that the migration of natives to the urban areas and the way they had adapted to the new life had led to some kind of pathology. The urbanized native had been had been disrupted when he came to town. The personal and warm face to face contacts had been replaced by “impersonal, superficial touch and go contacts.”¹²⁵ The strange behavior within boxing was an expression of this disruption. Howman ended by recommending that there be a practical planning that makes sports such as boxing cater for the native’s emotional needs. He considered these emotions to be important for social control. Bullock was not convinced with the report.

According to Ranger, Howman misunderstood what was going on in boxing. The problem was not the pathology caused by disruption of native’s traditional life. The real problem that disturbed Bullock and other administrators was that the way Africans had adopted boxing involved a kind of creativity among natives. Howman had pointed to this creativity in one undeveloped statement in his report. He had noted that the “receiving native culture attaches its own meaning and function to the new form.”¹²⁶ For Ranger this statement points to an adaptive creativity among Africans. It is such creativity that disturbed colonial administrators. This adaptive creativity is key in understanding the African response to the control that was being

¹²⁵ Howman and Passmore, 209

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

imposed by the colonial regime. Roger had some useful insights in the development taking place among natives, and as his next major research indicated, he shows signs of commitment to this development

In 1953, Roger Howman was seconded to study African local government in British East and Central Africa in view of developing such structures in Southern Rhodesia. He produced an important comprehensive study of development of local governments in those areas and suggested ways of developing such governments in southern Africa. Part VII of his report focuses directly on the situation in urban areas. He is very cautious in suggesting a creation of a native local government in key native urban areas such as the location in Salisbury. Instead, he suggests a continuing of the advisory board “as a purely representative board concerned only with the Native Residential area. It would not be regarded as representing urban opinion, or as a possible local government body.”¹²⁷ Howman was aware and cautious of how this advisory was being used to advance certain political agendas and interests of certain groups and not the development of natives in the location.¹²⁸ This was an important observation that shows an awareness of the complexity of the African community in the location which became clear in the political tensions and division among Africans that developed from the mid 50s.

Unlike his father, who seems to suggest that all these interests should be taken care of by the Europeans, Roger seems to take important steps in charting a way towards making sure the Africans represent their own interest. However, he maintained the position of his father that the colonialists had the burden of helping the natives go through this process. In Part III of his

¹²⁷Howman, H. R. G. *African Local Government in British East and Central Africa; Principles and Practice*. Herdrukrecks Van Die Universiteit Van Suid-Africa, 4. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1963. Part VII, para 78.

¹²⁸ Ibid., para 79.

report, where he presents his study of local government and electoral procedure, he makes a statement that indicates that he shared his father's view that it was the white man's burden to control the development of the native in the location. He writes:

We need that elite, the freely chosen leaders of the people. We need to harness its motive power in a constitutional form and direct it into a consciousness of citizenship, of civic responsibilities, to form a community with people whose will it embodies. The five stages set above should allow for the natural changes in public opinion to bring out the emergent elite upon which the future depends, and these stages may vary from district to district and even from community to community, for they are essentially an expression of internal growth, not external impositions.¹²⁹

The statement shows that Howman is attentive to the different interests developing in the native communities and suggests that they be given room to develop. However, he considers the burden of making this happen to be the responsibility of the white man, just like his father who held that it is the responsibility of the European to address the destabilization he had caused to the native.

Percy Ibboston

One colonial official whose contribution was highly recommended in the 1944 Howman report is Percy Ibbotson. He played a significant role in advancing the development of welfare societies.

He claims that the origin of the native welfare societies was the initiative of Europeans who were touched by the plight of the natives.¹³⁰ Such a claim was a serious misrepresentation of facts.

West notes that Welfare Societies in the 1920s started by Africans who had spent sometime in South Africa.¹³¹ The beginning of the Rhodesia Native Association was an initiative of locals who

¹²⁹ Ibid., Part III, paragraph 179.

¹³⁰ Percy Ibbotson, "Native Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia, *Race Relations Vol 9. Issue 2, 1942, 71.*

¹³¹ Michel West Michael. *The Rise of an African middle Class, 1898-1965.* Indiana. Indiana University Press, 2002, 31-31.

had begun to embrace the new cash economy.¹³² Ibbotson was aware of the *Jairosi Jiri* Association for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, founded by Jairosi Jiri, which he helped to secure funding¹³³ Thus, his claims that welfare for the native was a settler's initiative, are false. They reflect his sense of self-importance that guided his approach towards the welfare of natives and his establishment of the Federation of African Social Welfare Societies in 1936 can best be understood as a way of controlling African initiatives.

In 1942-1943, Ibbotson conducted research about the lives of natives in the urban areas.¹³⁴ His survey of urban African conditions in Southern Rhodesia similarly identifies the same challenges in the Howman report of 1943. He recommends changes similar to those suggested by Howman. Again, these changes appear as if they are positive steps towards recognizing importance of the native in the city, but in fact they are restriction through welfare disguised as development and are based on Ibbotson's thinking that unless something is done to raise the native, the native will swamp the European.¹³⁵ Such thinking was an expression of his fear that the European might end up like an African, "backward and generally indolent"¹³⁶

¹³² Tsuneo Yoshokuni, 2006, p87

¹³³ June Farquhar, *Jairosi Jiri, the Man and His Work*. Makers of Zimbabwe ; 4. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1987. 29.

¹³⁴ Percy Ibbotson. "Report on a survey of urban African conditions in Southern Rhodesia," by Percy Ibbotson. August, 1942-June, 1943. Bulawayo, The Federation of Native Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia, 1943

¹³⁵ Percy Ibbotson. Urbanization in Southern Rhodesia Africa; *Journal of the International African Institute*, 1 April 1946, Vol.16(2), 74-75.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

Review of Native policy and Administration

The manner in which the general native police was interpreted by the administrators such as EG Howman and his son Roger, and the way it was carried forward by self-proclaimed social welfare pundits like Ibbotson was about restricting the Native to the reserve and controlling the native in the urban area. Underneath this control, there was some creativity taking place. In his analysis of how the native commissioner, Bullock, tried to control boxing, Ranger points out how Roger Howman stumbled upon an insight to which he was probably oblivious. He noted that there was an adaptive creativity that was taking place when the native came to town. This insight is also found in Roger Howman's proposal that there must be a way of including the native in his administration, which he proposed in his 1953 report. This creativity has been noted by several scholars who articulated the African response to the control and restriction in the city. In his study of the rise of middle class in Zimbabwe, Michael West argues there is a small minority who managed to defy that the lifestyle that their colonial rulers thought was suitable for them.¹³⁷ Scarnecchia's study of gender and class through urban processes in Salisbury from 1937 to 1957 echoes a similar view. He underscores the role of Africans in the urbanization of Salisbury. He argues that "the use of urban space was not determined by the state. Instead such space was contested in different ways by men and women by the relatively well off and the respectable, by the poorest and the least respectable."¹³⁸ Scarnecchia goes beyond West to show that it was not only a small group of elite who defied what colonists were imposing. The poor and the marginalized in their own limited way scripted their own lives in defiance of colonial control.

¹³⁷ Michael West. 2002, 1.

¹³⁸ Timothy Scarnecchia, , 1993. 1.

The next section is an exploration of how this creative adaptation and defiance took place in the location in Salisbury.

African Experience in Salisbury: Perspectives from Urban Nationalistic Historiography

The Nationalistic historiography that focuses on urban experience has a number of themes that are dealt with in different ways by the different scholars. This section will focus on three dominant themes emerging in the urban nationalistic historiography that focus on African urban experiences in Harare, the location in Salisbury, which was outlined above. Political developments, gender struggles and the influence of Christianity are the major themes that emerge in the articulation of the creative ways Africans adapted to the development of Salisbury. They provide broad frameworks through which we can understand everyday dynamics in the native location. Michael West notes that the African middle class who dominated political life in Zimbabwe “had a strong urban bias.”¹³⁹ They worked and lived in colonial cities. He also notes that there was a reasonable number of middle class citizens existed in rural areas and African purchase areas, but these were appendages to what was happening in the cities. His observation validates a point made by Shorter, discussed in Chapter 2, that in colonial cities the whole country becomes an urban periphery. The colonial city was a center from which colonial enterprise shaped the dynamics of the entire colony. Hence, the focus on the colonial city in this dissertation is a way of locating the investigation of how Africans reacted to colonialism at its central point.

¹³⁹ Michael West, 2002, 6.

Politics in the in Salisbury African location

This section will show through the struggle for urban space that took place in Harare that the demand for respectable and dignified space was a key factor in the political life prior to 1953. Political developments in the location were slow. Initially the Africans tried to avoid the location because of the control and the inhuman conditions to which they were subjected. The location operated like a boarding dormitory for high school kids as this description indicates: “Tenants had to be regularly employed; that is to say, the African was given ‘privilege’ to hire a hut from the council only in exchange for his service to town Economy. Failure to keep one’s hut clean constituted a crime. Visitors could not remain in the location for more than twelve hours. A relative or a friend who wished to stay with a tenant had to buy an official permit. People could not leave the location after 9pm. The police and other manager staff were empowered to enter any hut for inspection. Business of any kind was prohibited; and so forth.”¹⁴⁰ As a result of these controls a considerable number of the huts remained vacant. The council enacted laws that forced people to move into the location, which included a creation of a church reserve near the location as a way of attracting Africans to the locations.¹⁴¹

Eventually, the number of people in the location increased, and some residents gradually became permanent. From that time on, Africans began to present their grievances to the authorities instead of moving out. They protested against the appointment of a superintendent who was more severe and aggressive than the previous one.¹⁴² They resisted the control on brewing and possession of African beer in the location. For a long time the council had wanted to

¹⁴⁰ Tsuneo Yoshokini, 2006. P. 41

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴² Ibid., 51.

have full monopoly over brewing and selling of African beer. At first the residents responded by shunning the beer brewed by the council and continued to brew their own beer or get it from areas outside the location.¹⁴³ Eventually they resorted to illegal brewing in defiance of council orders.¹⁴⁴ Alongside the resistance to beer brewing control and restrictions was a movement towards solidarity. Residents came together to support fellow members against authorities. Residents started registering their grievances in form of public protests and letters to present their concerns that were sent to the council, higher authorities and residents.¹⁴⁵

Another way that Africans avoided the strict regulation in the location was to move away and live on the European farms around the city. The movement ushered an important stage in political development of the location in that it created forms of settlement that authorities eventually imitated in the development of the location as a way of attracting Africans to the location. Africans formed small communities on European and mission farms on the periphery of the city. Yoshikuni calls it the beginning of a black suburbia.¹⁴⁶ The farms afforded more freedom, and they were cheaper. They also provided small pieces of land on which gardening took place. The gardens were an important alternative source of income that helped some Africans resist being absorbed into the cash economy as laborers.¹⁴⁷ The landowners did not care much what the people did as long as they paid their rent and did not interfere with their resources such as the trees. Some farms, especially those close to town, became centers for

¹⁴³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 58 and Scarnecchia, 1993. 74-78.

¹⁴⁵ Yoshikuni, 2006, 58.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 66.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 72-73.

recreation as people congregated in these places to buy beer that was forbidden in the location.¹⁴⁸

The major disadvantage in these “suburbs” was that people had to travel long distances to go to work in town. In response, the government tried to develop housing for married couples in 1922.

The new location was an attempt to create an official suburb.¹⁴⁹ In imitation of what was happening in the settlement on the urban periphery, the houses had space for gardens so as to allow the Africans to continue with “market gardening”. This was an effort to stop the settlement on the peri-urban farms and was an attempt to develop a stable labor force. It took a while for the new location created by the authorities to replace the peri-urban African suburbs, as Africans continued to live there. They were officially prohibited by the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, but remained in place for several years. They eventually disappeared towards the end of the 1940s when the government tried to create more locations for married couples in the location and beyond.

The peri-urban African suburbs represent African ingenuity in adapting to the new economy that was being imposed.¹⁵⁰ Africans had lost land and were being forced into a money economy. They were being forced to sell their labor to obtain their money. With the establishment of peri-urban suburbs, Africans managed to continue with their traditional agrarian life and also be part of the new economy. They resisted a full absorption into the new cash economy. They used their farm produce to gain the cash they needed to pay taxes and purchase other goods that the new economy was introducing. Africans devised a system of dual participation in the proletarian system and in their traditional peasant lives. They used the new

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 71.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 72-74.

system in the city to build their traditional lives on the periphery. This form of adaptation has endured up to the present, because even though people have permanently settled in the cities and the cities are growing, the connection with the rural is still strong. Many use their income to develop their rural homes.

The rise of peri-urban suburbs in Salisbury is one concrete expression that is helpful in understanding Shorter's view, discussed in Chapter 2, of the relationship between the country and the city. Shorter was critical of the view that there is conflict between rural and urban interests. He argued that "there are close socio-economic ties between urban and rural areas in Africa," with the rural regarded as a home where customs, beliefs, structures and structures of tribal traditions are preserved and the city viewed as colonial in origin and treated essentially as a workplace. The case of the rise of black suburbia as articulated by Yoshikuni shows that even though the relationship between country and city appears as Shorter describes it, underneath this relationship was a conflict. The city was a threat to the traditional African way of life, and Africans were developing ways of managing this conflict. The development of the relationship between the city and country was not so much a reinforcement of each other; rather it was an act of creativity on the part of Africans who were responding to the disruption caused by development of the city through maintenance of traditional lives whilst participating in the money economy.

In Yoshikuni's analysis, the creation of new locations created social differentiation.¹⁵¹ The people who eventually took residence in the new location were the African elites, while those in the old location remained the poorest of the poor and were considered lawless and immoral. As

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 77.

will be shown later, when I look at gender and religious issues in the location, the differentiation was complex and varied; it was not only between the elite and the poor. However, these two broad divisions make it easier to understand other divisions in the location. The division between the relatively well-off and respectable Africans and the poorest and the least respectable identified by Yoshikuni is explored further by Scarnecchia, who has an in-depth account of how the different groups within these divisions participated in the shaping of urban space from 1937-1957. Scarnecchia's study shows that even though those on the periphery did not take leading roles in voicing and articulating African grievances, they played a significant role in the political life of the community. They were located on the "margins of urban space—both physically and socially" where dramatic and visible struggles took place.

The people who lived on the periphery in and around the old location were mostly migrant workers from Northern Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa and Nyasaland. They performed the dirtiest work and were ridiculed by the local Shona speaking Africans and other elite Africans in the new location. There was animosity between the groups. Those in the old location continued to grow as the council continued to provide substandard accommodation for the growing population in the poorer section of the location. In the 1940s the council began the construction of hostels to make sure that they could manage the workers.¹⁵² The hostels had single rooms with common toilets, bathrooms, kitchens and eating spaces. There were no spaces for recreation or relaxation. Each room could fit about 12 men per room using bunk beds. Only men were allowed in the hostels. The arrangement gave rise to a number of social ills that made the old location a very depressing place.

¹⁵² Ibid., 58-64.

One reaction from those living in this part of the location, which started as far back as the 1920s, was the formation of dance groups and burial societies.¹⁵³ It was a way of building solidarity and asserting their identity as human beings with values and dignity. They were resisting the view of them as “bucket boys,” men who cleaned the buckets that were used as toilets. Another was the adoption of lifestyles that irked the authorities and some elites in the second location. This involved illegal brewing of African beer, cohabitation, homosexuality, prostitution, and using dance and sports such as boxing to assert their identities and express their humanity.¹⁵⁴ It was a way of showing that the inhabitants were not merely labor, which is what the Europeans wanted to make them. As Scarnecchia points out, some acts, especially brewing beer, as well as lifestyles of notorious individuals such as Dhuri the boxer, represented an expression of disdain of European laws.¹⁵⁵ The elite Africans, especially the ones educated in the missions, tended to take the position of the authorities, especially with regard to the presence of unmarried men in the location.¹⁵⁶ After the 1948 general strike, those elite living in the Old Bricks, a part of the old location built in 1937 to replace the Kaytor Huts, pushed that they be separated from the hooligans in the hostels.¹⁵⁷ The construction of National, a housing unit for married Africans built in 1948-9 in fulfillment of Native Urban Areas Act of 1947, was a fulfillment of the desires of the elite who wanted to be separated from the hooligans in old

¹⁵³ Yoshikuni., 124.

¹⁵⁴ Scarnecchia., 64-94.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 92.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 136.

location. National was an extension of the new location. It was an opportunity for many to escape the horrible conditions in and around the old location.

The construction of National was to bring about an important phase of political development, as the elite and the poor jostled for space and respectability in the new location. The politics that was to develop with the establishment of National centered around affording decent and respectable space to residents of the location. To people like Mzingeli and his colleagues in the ICU, it involved making it possible for the least and the poor to be part of the new respectability that National provided; whereas to some elites like Mnyanda, it was about protecting privileges for the civilized. The politics of this era was about reforming the restricting council and government regulation and affording respectability and dignity to Africans in the city. It was different from politics that emerged in the late 50s which was about removing the colonial system whose dynamics continue to haunt Zimbabwean politics today.¹⁵⁸

Another political development through which Africans asserted their presence in the growing city was through strikes and labor protests. According to Yoshikuni, the strikes in Salisbury were part of a larger process of solidarity taking place among the migrant laborers who were emerging as a social class in the location. Through mutual benefits societies, the migrants “pooled resources for commonweal and strove to solidify a moral order within their communities.”¹⁵⁹ The mutual benefit societies forged “values of ‘Patriotism,’ fraternity,

¹⁵⁸ Scarnecchia’s *The Roots of Urban Violence in Harare and Highfields*, Rochester NY, University of Rochester Press (2008) and Sachikonye’s *When the State Turns on its Citizens*, Auckland Park SA Jacana Media (2011), are two of the best studies that capture the transition to a new form of politics in the late fifties., different from what is described in this chapter.

¹⁵⁹ Tsuneo Yoshokuni, 2006. 136.

reciprocity, obligation, thrifty seniority, and many others.”¹⁶⁰ The protest against unjust wages, work procedures and prices of commodities that occurred after World War I and helped to bring the workers together was a further development of the values which were expressed through mutual aid societies. The protests and strikes were ways of taking the moral order in the mutual aid societies to a higher plane. Since the post-World War I strike, which Yoshikuni analyses, labor protests have continued to be an important part of political life in Zimbabwe. There have been a series of strikes including the famous 1948 general strike whose significance is a subject of interesting debates.¹⁶¹ Just like Yoshikuni noted about the 1918 strike, the subsequent strikes were not solely about external stimuli at the workplace, but as part of growing concerns of a community forging values for itself.

Gender Issues in the African Location in Salisbury

In his 1938 report, EG Howman writes about the need to control and restrict women. In doing so, he expresses the elitist and colonial view of respectability, which regarded women as respectable only when they were either married or under a male guardian. This is the view upon which the colonial administrators based their position that only married women were to be allowed in the location. The administrators only recognized marriages registered with the colonial authorities. All those who were married and lived with their wives were required to register their marriages with authorities. In spite of this requirement, women of different statuses resided in the location and contributed to the developing political consciousness. According to the figures given by the superintendent of the location in 1936, only a small fraction fulfilled the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 137.

¹⁶¹ Jon Lunn, “The meaning of 1948 General strike” in eds. B. Raftopolus and T. Yoshikuni, *Sites of Struggle: Essays: Essays in Zimbabwe Urban History*, Harare: Weaver Press 1999.

requirement. It was reported, “out of the 800 women in the location, 650 lived with male partners, of these 150, or 23% had registered marriages. Of the remaining 500 with unregistered marriages about 300 were regarded as respectable women,” while those frequently changing husbands were about 100 in number. He numbered the professional prostitutes as 50.”¹⁶²

The women were part of the political development that demanded a change in the use of urban space. In his analysis of the rise of middle class, West notes that women played an important role in how each class understood itself, but they were in the background most of the time supporting what the best of their class held.¹⁶³ In 1920 a woman was arrested for brewing beer, and all the women went to see the superintendent and demanded that they be allowed to brew beer and that the rents should be reduced and that they be allocated with plots for gardening.¹⁶⁴ This event is one of many incidents where there were some women who took leading roles in the demand for respectable space in the city, as well as in the efforts to subvert the colonial and elitist gender ideology that regarded a woman respectable only when attached to a man through marriage. They were not just in the background.

Scarnecchia¹⁶⁵ and Barnes¹⁶⁶ proffer important insights into the different ways this gender ideology was subverted by African men and women during the struggle to occupy and define space in Salisbury. They are part of a growing scholarship expanding on our understanding of the

¹⁶² Ibid., 54.

¹⁶³ Michael West., 2002, p 7.

¹⁶⁴ Tsuneo Yoshokini., 2006.. 57-58.

¹⁶⁵ Timothy Scarnecchia, *The politics of Gender and Class in the Creation of African Communities, Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1937-1957*. UMI dissertation Services, 1993.

¹⁶⁶ Theresa Barnes *“We Women Worked so Hard” Gender, Urbanisation and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956*, Harare. Boabab Academic, 1999.

issue of gender in colonial Zimbabwe. Some key texts in this discourse are Schmidt's *Peasants Trader and wives: Shona women in the History of Zimbabwe 1870-1939* (1992) and Jeater's *Marriage Perversion and Power: The conversion of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894 - 1930* (1993). In this section I use only the texts by Scarnecchia and Barnes because of their focus on Harare in Salisbury. Scarnecchia analyses the gendering of urban spaces by authorities as well as by African men and women. Barnes underscores the efforts of women in what she calls social reproduction, by which she means a "multilayered effort in the domain of gender and social power."¹⁶⁷ Social reproduction is distinct from nationalism in that it is a less deliberate and coherent struggle against colonial conquest than nationalism, which was mainly about replacing the colonial regime.

In Scarnecchia's analysis, different kinds of women had ways of making their presence felt. There were "*mapoto* wives," "skokian queens," respectable married women, prostitutes, and young single girls. "*Mapoto* wives" were women who cohabited with men without any of form legal process such as registration.¹⁶⁸ This is the group that suffered most from some of the men they lived with and from the controls of the authorities.¹⁶⁹ The skokian queens were the women who ran big business through a syndicate of illegal brewing. They combined the business with control of prostitutes.¹⁷⁰ Some, like Emma Magumede, became famous and were community icons. Some prostitutes were said to have made a lot of money, especially when the hostels that

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., xvii.

¹⁶⁸ Scarnecchia, 1993 64.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 105.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 74.

prohibited women were built, which made it difficult for men to have a “mapoto wife.”¹⁷¹ Respectable women who lived with their husbands seemed to be better than the rest, but as Theresa Barnes notes, their situation was not much different because whatever the women did, whether formal or informal, legal or illegal, had to be “intertwined with personal relationship with men.”¹⁷²

Although Theresa Barnes has demonstrated that there was never one opinion about women in town,¹⁷³ the general and dominant trend among the authorities and the majority of men was to blame women for the vice in the city. The European authorities endeavored to remove at least bad women, meaning unattached women, from the location. E.G. Howman was one of the earliest authorities who proposed ways of controlling the women. From his report, it is clear that he detested the presence of African women in the location. He used some of his time as a superintendent in Salisbury to control the immigration of women to the location.¹⁷⁴ One major strategy used to control them was through the Native Urban Areas and Registration Act of 1946. Even though it proposed the improvement of housing for natives, it was not meant to help the Africans. It was a way of creating a stable workforce.¹⁷⁵ According to Huggins, its main purpose was to bring labor efficiency.¹⁷⁶ Marriage was considered a way of making the workforce stable. Therefore, whoever lived in the location had to be married, and the marriage was supposed to be

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 171.

¹⁷² Theresa Barnes, 1999.54.

¹⁷³ Ibid., Chapter 3.

¹⁷⁴ Scarnecchia, 1993, 96.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 123.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 120.

registered. Marriage certificates became a precious commodity for acquiring a house in the National section built in 1949. Some people devised ways of forging certificates while others had marriages of convenience just to get housing.¹⁷⁷ All in all, the system tried to domesticate women through marriage, and it disregarded the plight of many.

Single women posed a challenge to the idea of creating the respectable space that the authorities were trying to build. They were also constantly harassed by the many single men. After long deliberations, hostels for single women were constructed in 1941. Though they had better facilities than the male single hostels, they had the same regulatory regime informed by the general notion that women had to be controlled. The hostel was not a home but a kind of protection zone from the hooligans in the location.¹⁷⁸ They operated like high school dorms. Most women stayed out.¹⁷⁹ However, some were happy to move there because it gave them the respectability that many desired.¹⁸⁰

The desire for and emphasis on “respectability” (or what Barnes would call righteousness,¹⁸¹ viewed mainly in terms of a registered marriage, was to play a crucial role in the political development.¹⁸² The challenges and problems of unattached women soon became key issues for early community leaders such as Mai Musodzi’s Helping Hand Club and Charles

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 139-141.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 225-226.

¹⁷⁹ Barnes, 84-85.

¹⁸⁰ Scarnecchia., 227.

¹⁸¹ Barnes, chapter 4.

¹⁸² Scarnecchia., 147-155.

Mzingeli's Mzingeli's ICU.¹⁸³ These leaders were among the elite living in National section built in 1949. Unlike some elite leaders, like the editors and contributors of the local newspaper *African Weekly*, who looked down upon the poor and the unmarried in the location, these leaders joined with the poor classes to confront the racism and congregation.

Theresa Barnes's account of African women's work and differentiation¹⁸⁴ and her analysis of paradigms of "righteousness"¹⁸⁵ show that the struggle for respectability should be understood beyond the registered marriage. Beyond the need for a registered marriage was a quest for an expression of dignity and self-respect. It was not merely a simple process of having a registered marriage and moving into National section. The situation in town was bad, but "...African people in Southern Rhodesia towns were not content merely to exist, nor were they content to survive randomly. They sought to survive in an acceptable manner: to live properly...to live properly was to live according to one's own African Priorities. This formulation is not meant to suggest an attempted return to a frozen, primordial African identity, but rather one that seized available components and tried to mold them into something recognizable and satisfying."¹⁸⁶ Barnes's observation is close to Yoshikuni's on the growth of dance clubs and the rise of fashionable traits among those who did the dirtiest jobs. Their sense of fashion and style in their dances was a way of showing that they were smart people, not dirt bucket boys. This echoes Shorter's view, mentioned in the previous chapter, that the city is not anti-culture but provides the local culture with an extra dimension.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 156-195.

¹⁸⁴ Barnes, Chapter 2.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., chapter 4.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 22.

The quest for respectability was part of a wider cult of domesticity developing in the entire colony as Victorian values made their impression on the Africans. In his account of the rise of the middle class, Michael West describes how missionaries, colonial authorities and African elites came together to promote the 18th and 19th century European division of labor that portrayed a woman as a perfect homemaker. A woman was to stay at home and beautify the home as a suitable family space while the husband went out to fend for the family. The development of this domesticity was not smooth, as some Africans embraced this domesticity but resisted some of its demands such as monogamy and abolition of bride wealth (*roora*).¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the Victorian values were the ideal after which most strived. In the location, they became a paradigm of respectability, which played a significant role in shaping social and political life. As will be shown later, prominent mission-educated women like Mai Musodzi, who played a significant role in the early days of the location, were influenced by this domesticity. It was an important frame of reference for them as they tried to reach out to other women.

Christianity in the African location of Salisbury

Among the people who arrived in Salisbury with the pioneer column were two chaplains: Fr. Hartman, S.J., and Canon Balfaour of the Anglican Diocese of Bloemfontein. The Wesleyans, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Salvation Army also arrived in the first two years of the colony and were given land and financial support by the Company to start mission stations in the country.¹⁸⁸ Hallencruetz observes an interesting pattern in the land granted to the missionaries; it

¹⁸⁷ Michael West. 81-92.

¹⁸⁸ C. J. M. Zvogbo *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1996. 3-6.

was complex and seems to have served a strategic purpose.¹⁸⁹ The Christian mission farms formed a kind of a circle or laager around the Township. In the north was the Salvation Army farm in Mazowe Valley; to the northeast was the Catholic mission of Chishawasha, to the southeast lay the Methodist Epworth farm; and in the south was the Anglican St. Mary's Mission of Hunyani. A Review of the Roman Catholic mission of Chishawasha in the next chapter will show that these locations of the church reflected an important position of the church between the white city and the black rural communities.

The Anglicans formed a Mashonaland diocese in 1891 and started different mission stations in the colony, including in Salisbury. Rhodes contributed 600 pounds for their expenses. Five Dominican nuns led by mother Patrick Cosgrave arrived in Salisbury in 1891 and started the first hospital in the township. 1892 the Jesuits, led by Fr. Prestage, established themselves at Chishawasha and had a chapel in town at the place run by the Dominican nuns. The Wesleyan Methodists were given five stands in Salisbury Township, and they built their church in 1892. The success of these missions was closely connected with the establishment of the colony. The efforts of missionaries before the coming of the The British South Africa Company were not successful as few Africans converted. It is argued that the missionaries needed the company in as much it needed them. The company was to provide with material support and protection, and the missionaries gave Rhodes the moral support he needed to convince the people in England that he had a noble mission of civilizing Africans.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Carl F. Hallencruetz, "Religion in the City in Raftopous" in Brian and Yoshikuni Tsuneo, eds. *Sites of struggle: Essays in Zimbabwean Urban History*. Harare: Weaver Press, 1999.

¹⁹⁰ C. M. Zvobgo, 1996. 2.

The church farms outside the city contributed to the growth of black suburbia that developed in the early years of the city when Africans were resisting restriction and control in the location and moving to the surrounding farms. The church farms had more advantages than private farms. The accommodations were cheaper, and they also provided some education.¹⁹¹ They contributed in developing the black middle class who ended up taking leading roles in the political life of the location. Bammi Mkandiwire from Methodist Epworth farm was instrumental in the formation of Rhodesian Native Association, one of the earliest political organizations which represented the interest of the natives.¹⁹² Elizabeth Musodzi from Chishawasha played an important role in representing the lives of women in the location. Some important political figures such as Charles Mzingeli came from other Christian missions in the country.

In 1909, the council created a church reserve just outside the location in line with the segregation policy which started in 1906 when it ruled that all natives in the city must move to the location.¹⁹³ The Catholics and the Salvation Army were the first to move into the reserve and start substantial work among the natives. Others like the Dutch Reformed Church and the Presbyterians moved there shortly afterwards. Before the establishment of the reserve, most Africans from the locations had services in town. The creation of a church reserve was a way of keeping Africans out of town as well as making the location attractive to Africans. This move made the location a religious and educational center, which eventually played a vital role in the political life of the location. Hallencruetz's kaleidoscopic presentation of religion and politics in the location details how church leaders, just like political leaders, engaged political issues that

¹⁹¹ Yoshikuni, .(2006) 69.

¹⁹² Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁹³ Yoshikuni, 2006 44-45.

affected their communities.¹⁹⁴ In Hallencruetz presentation, the pastors' participation in political processes is more clear than their engagement with doctrinal and dogmatic issues. Pastors like Fr. Burbridge, Mathew Rusike, S. Chihota and Nemapare had become key community leaders. Lay people like Charles Mzingeli, Elizabeth Musodzi, E. Nari and H. Phiri who had strong associations with the church endeavored to blend their faith with political participation. The decision to create accommodations for married people and improve the conditions in 1922 was initiated by the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference.¹⁹⁵ The influence of members like Fr. Burbridge who worked in the location might have been behind this initiative.

The historical account and sociological quantification African faith experiences in the city given by scholars like Yoshikuni, Hallencruetz, and C.M. Zvogbo are crucial in taking theological reflection on the continent to another level. An engagement of lived faith experiences in the church with political and gender issues within the counterpoint of control, restriction and response which have been outlined in this chapter expands theological reflection in that it is unlike experience as it has been explored in chapter one which was about trying to revive and restore lost experience; but it is about experience as it transforms and is transformed by the encounter with the other. It is about the dynamism that experience goes through in its response to colonialism. The rest of this dissertation charts a way towards this direction. It begins, in the next chapter, with lived faith experience within the dynamics mapped in this chapter. Then in the final chapter it establishes how this lived faith experience can help in finding ways to take theology beyond the revival or rehabilitation of disrupted or lost Africa experience.

¹⁹⁴ C Hallencruetz: *Religion and Politics in Harare, 1890- 1980*. Upsalla, Swedish institute of missionary research, 1998.

¹⁹⁵ Yoshikuni (2006) 75.

Summary of Chapter

Following the proposal of Swart and De Beers that African theology has to engage with the counterpoint in different interpretations of the city, this chapter has constructed the experiences of Africans in Salisbury from its foundation in 1890 to 1953 using perspectives or interpretations from colonial administrators and historical studies. Due to the vastness of the continent and differences in cities, my exploration was limited to the city of Salisbury as a way of demonstrating how other interpretations of how other cities in the continent could be explored. Salisbury (now Harare) was chosen because it is a special kind of colonial city founded for colonial purposes. It is a European city in Africa. Thus, it was an ideal place to explore the 19th century colonialism that has been key in shaping contemporary African experience.

This chapter has shown that experience in Salisbury was mainly about restriction and exclusion of Africans from the cities by European founders and the African struggle for inclusion and quest for dignity and respectability. African men and women competed in various ways to seek a place of dignity and respect within the restricted space. These processes in the city are different from efforts in African theology that operated within colonial imagination, which was about restoring African being disrupted by colonialism and using it to articulate Christian faith on the continent. It ended by suggesting that the presence of the Christian church in these processes of claiming space and integrating African life in the developing cities is key in taking African theology beyond its preoccupation with recovering or rehabilitating experiences and identities that can be used to best understand and articulate Christian faith in Africa.

Appendix

The experiences explored in this chapter are from before 1953. This appendix offers a glimpse of what happened to these experiences afterwards, using perspectives from literary, poetic and

musical compositions. The significance of literary and musical compositions needs more discussion than can be offered here. For our purposes it suffices to remember Aristotle's statement about poetry being more philosophical than history.¹⁹⁶

African experience in Salisbury:

Literary and Poetic perspectives

Literature in English and Shona, both prose and poetry, started emerging in the 1950s. This literature is generally a lamentation of city life, contrasting it with rural or village life. Its assessment is helpful in giving us an idea of what happened to the dynamics described above after the period examined in this chapter. These literary works do not have the hope found in the period prior to the fifties. *The Old Bricks Lives* is a historical novel by William Saidi, who once lived in the location. It is set in the years of federation from 1953–1963, after the building of the National section of the new location, when many were still struggling to move out of the Old Bricks, the houses that replaced the Kaytor huts which were built in 1938. It is a story of injustice, struggle and survival for many of the people, even after they moved out of the old bricks. At first the control of the Africans in this locality is best represented by the figure of *Katsekera*, who does not even appear in the novel, yet who seems to dictate how life should be lived in the location. *Katsekera* is the Nyanja word for the superintendent of black townships. The name means “one who closes,” and it comes from his power to close the houses of those who fail to pay their rent. He represented the European's authority and control of all natives in the location. Then it is represented by the colonial government, which banned National Democratic Party (NDP), one of the first national political party for Africans. In spite of this control, a determination to claim

¹⁹⁶ Aristotle's Poetics. Trans. by S. H. Butcher (Internet Classic Archives n..d. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.mb.txt>,

urban space prevails in the midst of violence and frustration. People in the Old Bricks are trapped in a kind of a hole, but they do not run away. They continue to claim the space claimed by the whites. One ends up living with a white man in the Highlands, a white man's suburb.

The Old Bricks Lives is different from other depictions of the city found in Shona novels from the late 50s in that it stresses the spirit of endurance in spite of the dehumanizing control and restrictions, most probably because it was written after independence. Shona novels written from the 50s to the 70s paint a picture of despair and hopelessness, encourage people to be cautious in the city, and advise them to come back home to the village. In *Kumazivandadzoka*, by Marangwanda, a young boy escapes from his widowed mother who had raised him alone, goes to town, turns to evil ways and is lost in the confusion that makes the city.¹⁹⁷ The tragic moment is when he denies his mother, who has followed him in desperation. His case reflects that of many young people who get lost forever in the city. In *Murambiwa Goredema* by Solomon Mutsvairo, published the same year as *Kumazivandadzoka*, another young man goes to town and gets in similar problems.¹⁹⁸ Fortunately, he finds redemption when he goes back to his village. The same theme of redemption in the village is repeated by Mungoshi in *Kupindana Kwemazuva*, where a man who was doing well in the city and had a loving and caring wife, abandons his wife because of the woman whom he lived with in the city.¹⁹⁹ He eventually returns home after the tragic death of his daughter and lives peacefully with his wife.

Muzukuru wava kuenda Kuharare is a Shona poem capturing the words of an old man advising his grandson who is going to the city. Although he outlines the dangers in the city, he

¹⁹⁷ Marangwanda, John W. *Kumazivandadzoka*. Salisbury: Longmans of Rhodesia, 1959.

¹⁹⁸ Mutsvairo Solomon M. Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1959.

¹⁹⁹ Mungoshi, Charles. *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva*. Gwelo, Rhodesia: Mambo Press, 1975.

does not discourage him, but only warns him.²⁰⁰ *Country Dawns and City Lights* by Musayemura Zimunya does not have the hope in *Muzukuru wava kuenda kuHarare*.²⁰¹ It is all about the decadence of the city that has taken over the country and death of the country. There is no hope of coming back to the village. The same despair is expressed in *Shabbeen Tales*, a series of articles published by an award-winning writer, Chenjerai Hove.²⁰² They sum up the gloomy picture of the city captured in a good number of literary depictions of the city.

The loss of hope in the city in literature after the 50s is most probably the reflection of a deteriorating relationship between Africans and authorities who remained intransigent to the demands of Africans for respect and space. It was compounded by the rise of a confrontational breed of nationalism, resulting in violence and eventually leading to the war for independence, finally attained in 1980.

African Experiences in Salisbury: Perspectives in Music

Yoshikuni points out that the development of music and dance in the 1920s was a major force for bringing people together and giving them some form of self-expression.²⁰³ Music and dance were an important part of the mutual aid associations that developed in the 1920s. Mhoze Chikowero, whose views about music are closer to Yoshikuni's, goes further to argue that African music is more than just dances. In one sense, he is reacting to scholars who celebrate these dances as achievements of colonial governments in giving Africans an opportunity to express themselves.

²⁰⁰ C Bera, "Muzukuru wavakuenda kuHarare" in Rhodesia Literature Bureau. *Gwenyambira*. 1st ed. Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979.

²⁰¹ Zimunya, Musaemura. *Country Dawns and City Lights*. Zimbabwe Writers. Harare: Longman Zimbabwe, 1985.

²⁰² Hove Chenjerai. *Sheeben Tales: Messages from Harare*. London : Serif Books, 2013.

²⁰³ Yoshikuni, (2006)123

He challenges insiders and African scholars to rigorously demonstrate how music was at the core of resistance to colonial control and “witchcrafting” of the African people, which is what he sets out to do in his book.

In line with Chikowero’s proposal, I will briefly review some images of the city from the music of the past 30 years and relate them to the general processes of urbanization sketched above. Just like the literary works reviewed above, the music reviewed here is not from the period that this study focuses upon; but it is helpful in showing what happened to African urban experiences in the period beyond 1953 and it captures a dimension of the experience that is missing in the literature reviewed above. It captures the slow and painful rhythm of embracing of the city that took place after 1953; something that the literary works did not describe. Ranger once remarked that books do not have as much impact on change in Zimbabwe as TV and radio.²⁰⁴ This review of music is an attempt to engage that medium that has been key in communicating history to the ordinary people.

A general overview of popular songs recorded in this period, especially those from the 70s onwards, shows a slow and gradual embrace and celebration of the city. Initially, there is a cautious attitude towards the city, which is treated as a “hunting zone.” It is not home, but a place where people gain wealth and come back home to the village, just like people used to go and hunt in the olden days.²⁰⁵ Young men are cautioned to be careful when they reach towns and to avoid

²⁰⁴ Terence Ranger, “Nationalistic Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle Over the Past of Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June 2004), 215-234. 218-224.

²⁰⁵ Patso Patso, “Tozivepi-Zimbabwe Stars,” Youtube video, 4:35, December 23, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-c60nA-0mA>.

becoming like lost people who have forgotten where they came from.²⁰⁶ These songs depict the earliest attitude that was imposed by Europeans. They wanted to make it clear that a native's place is in the village. He is only welcome into the city as a tool of the industrial revolution in Africa.

In most songs about the city, women are treated as one of the greatest dangers. They are at best distractions²⁰⁷ and at worst destroyers.²⁰⁸ The city is a major factor in the breakup of marriages.²⁰⁹ As soon as a woman becomes used to town life, she no longer respects her husband and disregards traditional values. This depiction of women is limited. It does not see beyond what scholarship of women in town has shown that what was actually happening in the city was a quest for respect and dignity by both men and women, who expressed this quest in different ways.

A major change of attitude towards the city took place with the rise of a genre called Zim dancehall, which is inspired by the dancehall music from Jamaica. It is a music that is popular among young people who have come to take the location as their home and who identify themselves with the label "*magheto youths*" (ghetto youths). They consider the location a ghetto and a home. The music does not gloss over the challenges that are still rampant in the city; however, it does depict how the spirit of dignity continues in the midst of deprivation and

²⁰⁶ Masvingo Stars- Topic, "Mazivandadzoka," YouTube video, 7:44, November 18, 2014,

²⁰⁷ Jairoso, Leonard Dembo- Dambudzo, Youtube video 3:25, October 21, 2017.

²⁰⁸ Nyamutatatanga Makombe, "New Black Montana-Mukadzi Wemapoto," Youtube Video, 5:32, August 19, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyPQs2MC5Ac>.

²⁰⁹ Nyamutatanga Makombe, "Job Mashanda and the Muddy Face – Mai Mandigona," Youtube Video, 3:42, Nov 19, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9_gn5t_0x0 and "New black Montana- Mai Nyembezi," YouTube video 3:57, October 7, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYbDuACUPeU>

poverty. *Rukesheni* is a song by Wallace Chimuko, also known as Winky D, which is a celebration of how the young people in the location are ruthless, no-nonsense characters; it is similar to a 'wild west'.²¹⁰ In *Mabhebhi ekusabhabhu*, Winky D celebrates how the young people from the location are those who in spite of their depressed backgrounds can woo beautiful girls from the suburbs, which are formerly European areas now occupied by the black bourgeois.²¹¹ King Shaddy, who gained fame from depicting the hustle and shenanigans of people in the location, has as his signature chant *makorokoza pamusawu*. This is in reference to boys who congregate around a *musawu tree*, a common tree in the location. King Shady portrays these young men as heroes in contrast to the general view of these boys as *bhonirukisheni*.

Bhonirukisheni was a derogatory word used to describe anyone born and raised in the "location." Anyone born in these places was a "born Location," hence *bhonirukisheni*. The word symbolizes the dehumanizing existence associated with urbanization. Zimdancehall is a bold statement about the location. It recognizes not only that people are born and die in the location, but also that the location is a home to many. It recaptures the spirit of many who have made the city their home. Just as rural villages like Zvimba, Murehwa, Chendambuya, Chirimuhanzu, Nkayi or Silobela are places of significance with deep ancestral roots, the locations of Mbare, Highfields, Kambuzuma, Mufakose, Mpopoma and Luveve embody an important process of struggle that should be taken into account in understanding a contemporary African. Winky D, King Shaddy, Stunner, Extra Large Maroja, and Killa T represent a crop of young men giving dignity to people previously denigrated as *bhonirukisheni*.

²¹⁰D Boy1997, "Winky D-Rokesheni" YouTube video, 4:55, November 30, 2008., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFz18IfAmGM>.

²¹¹ Twimbo, "Winky D.-Mabhebhi Ekusabhabha," YouTube Video, 3; 37. Jan 21, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqVFY22oQLY>

CHAPTER 4

FAITH IN A CITY IN AFRICA

You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. (For they could not endure the order that was given... Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect... (Hebrews 12:18–24).

Introduction

This chapter is about mapping the structure of faith in the urban processes explored in Chapter 3. It is part of the second stage of understanding and incorporating urban experiences into theological reflection. The first stage was the review, in Chapter 2, which summarized 20th century dynamics of urban experiences in Africa through an examination of how the city is engaged in African theology. The general urbanization across the continent captured in theological reflections on the city showed that the rise of the city in 20th century Africa brought new and unprecedented challenges to African cultures and traditions. Much of the theological reflection on the city has been about developing effective pastoral responses to the challenges. Ultimately the reflection is about the church and what it must do to help people not only cope with the crisis caused by the rise of the city, but also help them to be part of the developing urban culture. In line with this development, the structure of faith to be mapped in this chapter is that of faith experiences in the church's relationship with the experiences in the city. It is different from explorations of faith by modern scholars like Rahner, Schleiermacher or Balthasar, who

explore faith through an analysis of structures of consciousness within individuals and how they relate with the divine. This chapter is about faith as it is experienced in the church, and about how it relates to social processes that gave rise to the city in Africa.

The exploration of the relationship between faith experiences in the church and urban processes is a further development of Swart and de Beers' proposal. Their proposal was one of the approaches of engaging the city that was discussed at the end of the exploration of how theology engaged the city in Chapter 2. Unlike theologians who explore the city in the Bible and used it to understand the contemporary African cities, Swaart and de Beers proposed that African theology must relate itself to the counterpoint of the different interpretations or contestations of the city. A counterpoint is a point or thesis of conjunction of independent voices. It is a metaphor from music referring to how independent instruments and voices find harmony at specific points. Another metaphor used by Swart and De beers to refer to the counterpoint is fusion of horizons.

Two important elements emerge in Swart and De beers' proposal: first, the establishment of a counterpoint or fusion of horizons through examination of different interpretations or contestations of the city; second, theology's engagement with the counterpoint. Chapter 3 was about the former. Through an analysis of different interpretations of Salisbury from its foundation in 1890 to 1953, it outlined African experiences in the city and established that the growth of Salisbury was not a deliberate dehumanization or destruction of African being, as some of the discourse on 20th century colonization of Africa would suggest. Rather, it involved a concrete process of restriction and control that disrupted African culture and a process of resistance to the restriction and control by Africans, which involved some form of integrating African values in the urban space that the European colonists claimed. This restriction and control and the response to it is the counterpoint around which interpretations or contestations

evolved. This chapter is about the second element of Swart and de Beers' proposal, which is about theology engaging the counterpoint coming from different interpretations or contestations of the city. It engages the counterpoint through mapping the structure of faith at the intersection of the interpretations used to establish the counterpoint in the experiences of Salisbury. As indicated in chapter 3, Africa is vast; therefore, the focus on Salisbury in this dissertation demonstrates a way of engaging different interpretations that could be applied (with adjustments) to other cities on the continent.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the hermeneutical categories being used in mapping faith in the city and how they are to be employed, followed by a section that gives a history of the coming of Catholic Church to what eventually became Zimbabwe, its establishment of mission stations and how it eventually moved to the African area in Salisbury. The short history helps to situate the exploration of the faith in the city in the wider missionary enterprise in colonial Zimbabwe. The rest of the chapter will be on faith experience in a particular church in Salisbury, the Roman Catholic Church. It does not cover all the churches. Just as experiences in Salisbury were used to demonstrate what could be done for other cities across the continent, the focus on the Roman Catholic Church demonstrates how experiences in this particular church can be used to explore other experiences (with adjustments).

Hermeneutical Categories

Mapping is generally a geographical term usually used to denote the physical location of things. The sense of mapping used in this chapter involves more than physical locations. It involves different ways space and relations of different objects and subjects within it are understood. Flanagan's summary of how maps are constructed is helpful in giving an understanding of

mapping in this dissertation.¹ Using the case of Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat in 1955, Flannagan illustrates different ways of understanding spaces in mapping. There were three kinds of spaces involved in Rosa Parks' defiant act. The first was the physical space. This concerns quantity: the bus with its dimensions and measurements. The second space is concerned with design, namely, how the front and the back of the bus were designed differently, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. The third is about the history, cultures, policies and ideologies that had given meaning to these spaces, dictating how people should behave and act in them. In this case, the spaces were defined by segregation laws and the different ways people responded to them. Rosa Parks' action was part of the lived space that transformed the quantified and the designed in the bus and beyond.

In Flannagan's analysis, Edward Soja, a leading cartographer has a well-developed articulation of the different ways of understanding space. Following Lefebvre's analysis of how space is perceived, Soja identifies three kinds of understanding space that can be found in a city which correspond to the three spaces identified in the Rosa Parks incident. There is perceived space (material physical space), conceived space (the advantages or disadvantages attached to the different designs of material and physical space), and lived space (how historical and cultural practices give meaning to space).² Each space has its own epistemology or layer of interpretation. Epistemologies that privilege the first space are quantitative and positive, detailing the dimensions of what is to be mapped. The second space epistemologies overlap with the first space epistemology, but they are different because they are more about how the first space is

¹ James W. Flannagan "Mapping the biblical world: perception of Space in Ancient South Western Asia" in *Mapa Mundi, Mapping Culture Mapping the world*. Ed Jacqueline Murray Working Papers in Humanities 9; Windsor: Humanities Research Group, University of Windsor 2001.

² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

conceived or interpreted. They are mainly ideational and are dominated by imagination about how to represent the first space. Second space epistemologies are the domain of planners, engineers and architects. Third space epistemologies examine lived experiences or social practices such as Rosa Parks' action; they are full of meaning, emotion and struggles. After Rosa Parks' action, the bus with its dimensions, its back and front with its advantages and disadvantages became a different space of the civil rights movement in the United States. Third space epistemologies are an examination of how these lived experiences re-present space, and they are critical in understanding how space is socially constructed and experienced dynamics. Flannagan's article is basically about highlighting the importance of third space epistemologies.

The analysis in Chapter 3 was a mapping or an understanding of the space that became Salisbury, and it involved mainly first and second space epistemologies. The first was the sketching of the physical location of Salisbury and creation of the African location on the commonage of Salisbury. The details on the housing system's restriction and control of Africans and the response to the control and reaction were mainly a second space epistemology. It was about how Africans conceived the location assigned to them. The struggle for dignity and respectability in the physical space to which they were confined was mainly about redesigning this space to make it habitable. This chapter is a close examination of third space in the African location from the perspective of lived faith experiences. It is a third space epistemology investigating how the lived experience of the divine "re-present" the same spaces described above. Its focus is on how faith experienced through church in the location contributed to making the location a space of struggle with meaning and emotion.

Towards the end of Chapter 3, I summarized the physical location's churches and outlined their relationship with some of the political processes. This chapter analyzes how one of

the churches, the Catholic Church, contributed to the lived experience that gave meaning to the people living in the location. Just as was the case in Chapter 3, which focused on one city in Africa as a demonstration of one way of implementing Swart and De beers proposal of engaging different contestations of the city, this section is also an example of using a particular church experience to map the third space. It does not exhaust the contribution of all the churches. Hallencruetz's voluminous survey of churches in Harare and how they related to politics shows that the contribution of various churches in Salisbury, especially in the location where Africans were urbanized, requires more than what this chapter can cover.³ The many churches and their experiences in Harare require more space and time if one is to have a full understanding of how the sacred space evolved in this city.

The mapping of faith experiences in social processes is not a new thing in the Catholic Church. Kelly, discussed in Chapter 2, pointed out the momentous changes that took place at Vatican II when the Church reflected on its relationship with the world. A quick survey of the documents of Vatican II will show that its focus was not on the metaphysical nature of the church; rather it was on the socio-political environment of those who gather around Christ. It had very little creedal language, and it used language of ethical responsibility, especially in *Gaudium et spes*. Although Vatican II does not use the language of lived faith experience in social processes that I have used here, it can be considered a major effort of the contemporary Church to relate the experience of faith to political and social processes.

The image of the people of God, one of the key metaphors used by Vatican II to describe the Church, captures some of the dynamics of the various documents of Vatican II; the image

³ Carl, Hallencruetz: *Religion and Politics in Harare, 1890- 1980*, Upsalla, Swedish institute of missionary research, 1998.

describes how people live their faith in the world. (*LG*, chapter II). *Lumen gentium* discussed how the people of God should be organized and what is expected of them. *Sacrosanctum concilium* is about how should they worship. *Gaudium et spes* is about how they should relate the world. *Nostra aetate* is about their relationship with other non-Christians, etc.

As a whole, the documents of Vatican II try to include all experiences of being church. Hence, its interpretation has been heavily contested. The emphasis on the people of God and their relationship with the world is not universally accepted. Gutierrez, on one hand, representing a new theological movement of liberation, emphasizes the importance of engaging the social processes that affect people in the present era. He argues that Vatican II made some significant steps in addressing the classical question about the kingdom of God and the building up of the world; however, he maintains that it did not go far enough because it remained too general and did not pay enough attention to particular situations.⁴ He proposes that the “task of contemporary theology is to probe this question further and confront the concrete challenges of the present.”⁵ Ratzinger on the other hand, taking a more traditional position, is critical of the emphasis on the people of God, as he argues that it reduces the Church to a sociological entity.⁶ He argues that the key image of the Church at Vatican II is that of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, as found in *Lumen gentium*.

Ratzinger’s emphasis on the Mystical Body is a reaction to the impact that the image of people of God was bringing to the understanding of Church. The image of the people was

⁴ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History Politics and liberation*, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1974, 46.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *Church Ecumenism and Politics New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co.* 1988, 21.

bringing new energy in theological and pastoral circles. His intervention is part of the discussion about the people of God in the world, bringing attention to the dangers of overemphasizing it. The exploration of personal faith experiences in this chapter some ways of investigating the relationship of the Kingdom of God and the building of the world emphasized by Gutierrez. it avoids the problem highlighted by Ratzinger because of its emphasis on the transcendency of God as it is being experienced in the social processes.

The investigation in this chapter of lived faith experiences in Salisbury is one way of exploring this question from Vatican II about the Kingdom of God and the building of the world. However, it goes beyond Vatican II in that it is not about general principles that need to be followed in order to negotiate this relationship using third spaces epistemologies in Salisbury, but it is about how people engage with what the official Church says must be followed. It is an investigation of different ways of engagement of the Church with the world through an exploration of how some individuals experienced the relationship between the Church and African experiences in Salisbury. It is about finding the story of God as it is lived in urban areas by individuals and their ecclesial community in Salisbury.

I will look at the personal experiences of three figures who lived in Harare during the early days of the development as inroads into the structure of faith in the city. Just as Flannagan used the story of Rosa Parks to illustrate presence of third spaces, I will use personal experiences to illustrate the experience of faith in the Church as part of third space in Salisbury. The figures I will consider are Fr. Burbridge (1870-1946), Mai Musodzi (1885-1952) and Charles Mzingeli (1905-1980). All three lived in the Harare African location in Salisbury during its development in the first half of 20th century and were members of St Peter's Harare, the first African urban parish in Salisbury (and therefore the first African urban parish in the country). I chose these

three in particular because of their association with the themes in the three major areas of politics, gender, and Christian faith that were uncovered in the exploration of African experience of Salisbury in the previous chapter.

The focus on personal experience is a further development of *erfahrung* discussed in the introduction and mentioned in the previous chapter. *Elerbnis* and *Erfahrung* are different ways of understanding experience that guided the development of Chapter 3. As noted in the introduction and in the previous chapter, *elerbnis* is experience as lived reality or occurrence that happens to people while *erfahrung* refers to experience as sense impressions and cognitive judgment about lived reality and occurrences that happen to people. The *elerbnis* and *erfahrung* in Chapter 3 was mainly about social and political processes that shape the history of the city. It focused on the restriction and control of Africans and the response to the restriction. This chapter is about the *erlebnis* and *erfahrung* of the transcendence of God in the social processes. It is about the lived faith experience in historical and social processes.

The History of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe 1879 - 1913

Both Shorter and Mugambi note that the 19th century missionaries to Africa concentrated their efforts in rural areas outside the city centers.⁷ This was mainly because many Africans were still rural. They gradually moved to the cities, which were becoming centers of influence where Africans were slowly establishing themselves. The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe was no different. It established itself in areas outside the city centers, but it was not long before it too moved to urban centers. In this section, I will follow this process in Rhodesia, with special

⁷ Alward Shorter, *The Church in the African. City* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991, 62-65. and Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction; African Christian Theology After the Cold War*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995, 68.

reference to the movement of the Catholic Church to Salisbury. This movement into city is similar to the movement of Africans from the reserves into Salisbury explored in the previous chapter; however, it is different in that while Africans' entry into the city was restricted, the church freely moved to the city and shared in the struggle of the many Africans who were trying to claim space in town.

Albert de Jong's summary of the rise and fall of Catholic missionary activity in the 18th and 19th centuries provides a helpful background to the coming of the Catholic Church to pre-colonial Zimbabwe.⁸ Enlightenment ideas, the French Revolution and the rise of nationalism in Europe had led to a decline of the patronage that the Church received from princes and kings in Europe. The princes and kings had supported missionary activities in the new world in the past; and with the decline of their influence, that support gradually ceased, leading to conflicts. One effect of the tension was the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. Later, however, a revival of missionary spirit in Europe began in the early 19th century, led by the laity, which involved the rise of many missionary movements in Europe.

The Catholic Church, through Propaganda Fide, gradually took responsibility for the missions from kings and princes. The Society of Jesus, which was restored in 1814, also became part of the revival of missionary efforts. In 1879, after some protracted negotiations with Jesuits and the vicar apostolic based in the Western Cape in South Africa, Propaganda Fide created and entrusted the Zambezi Mission to the Society of Jesus. It was to evangelize an area that covered most of southern Africa, including present-day South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi,

⁸ Albert De Jong CSSp, "The revival of missionary activity in the 19th Century" in Edward P. Murphy, *History of the Jesuits in Zambia : A Mission Becomes a Province*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2003.

Mozambique and part of Botswana. At this time, these territories did not exist as national territories. The national territories were created in 1884-85 when European nations gathered in Berlin to partition Africa. Missionaries played a role in the partition. Like many explorers in Africa, they provided information about the interior of Africa, which encouraged European imperial desires.

The initial Jesuit missionary efforts in Southern Africa are well documented in the letters that the first men to go on this mission sent to their families in Europe.⁹ Information is also found in diaries, and this has been studied in great detail by a number of historians.¹⁰ The first men to go on this mission began their journey from Grahamstown in South Africa in April 1879. Their aim was to establish a mission on the shores of Lake Bangweulu, where the famous David Livingstone, who had inspired a lot of enthusiasm among the missionaries, had died. That journey was to be the beginning of a decade of disasters. The unwillingness of the kings to allow them to begin missions among their people, the distances and the rough terrain to cover, and tropical diseases made the mission impossible.

The missionaries' first stop was to see Chief Khama of the Barotseland, who was a Christian. He politely and firmly told them that he was happy with the London Missionary Society and that he needed no other missionaries. They moved further north and came to Bulawayo, the capital of Lobengula, king of the Ndebele. He had been bothered by many

⁹ Depelchin, Croonenberghs, Wakerley, Roberts, Croonenberghs, C., Wakerley, Véronique, and Roberts, R. S. *Journeys beyond Gubuluwayo, to the Gaza, Tonga and Lozi : Letters of the Jesuits' Zambesi Mission, 1880-1883*. Avondale, Harare: Weaver Press, 2009. Gelfand, Michael. *Gubulawayo and Beyond: Letters and Journals of the Early Jesuit Missionaries to Zambesia (1879-1887)*. London, Dublin [etc.]: G. Chapman, 1968. Edward P Murphy, "First Zambesi Mission" in Murphy ed. *History of Jesuits in Zambia*.

¹⁰ Dach, A. J. and W. F. Rea *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe 1879-1979*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1979.

missionaries and hunters before the arrival of the Jesuits. He was happy to receive them and allowed them to set up a residence in his kingdom; but he made it clear that he did not care much about their education, and he was not willing to allow any of his people to convert. He allowed them to pass through his territory to the north, to Lewanika of the Lozi, who was initially happy to meet them and agreed that they could set up a mission, but did not follow up on his promises. They tried meeting with other lesser kings in the area, namely Mweemba of the Tonga (northwest of Ndebele Kingdom and southwest of the Lozi Kingdom) and Mzinla of the Nguni (east of the Ndebele Kingdom). However, these kings had other interests which had little to do with what the missionaries had to offer. In the meantime, disease and death were taking a toll on them.

It was only in 1889, when they joined Cecil John Rhodes, who had been granted a royal charter by the British crown and was assembling his pioneer column to occupy Mashonaland, that the Zambesi mission received a new lease on life. They attached themselves as chaplains to the column. On reaching Mashonaland, they were allocated some land where the famous Chishawasha mission still stands, a few miles outside Salisbury. They also had properties in Salisbury, which was only a township at the time. A year later, some Dominican nuns arrived and started nursing work among the settlers in Salisbury. Peter Prestage, who had labored in vain among the Ndebele and was convinced that the only way to achieve success was to dismantle the Ndebele Kingdom, returned to Bulawayo, where he had founded his ill-fated mission at Empandeni. There he reestablished his work. It became one of the two most important missions of the Catholic Church in the region. The process of founding missions across the country began to grow as it moved to other parts of the colony.

It was not long after the work begun that the Ndebele Rebellion of 1893/94 occurred. The Ndebele were conquered and Lobengula died; and not long after that, the Shona speaking tribes also revolted (1896/7). Again, they were conquered, and colonial rule was firmly established. The colonists began new ways of controlling and ruling the people. The traditional structures that were crucial in resisting the establishment of Christianity were now dismantled. The missions thrived because they were now dealing with a conquered people who did not have much of a choice but to embrace the new faith. The success of the missions after the conquest of the people by the colonists coupled with the inability and failure of the missionaries to appreciate, understand and tolerate the traditional values of the Africans, gives weight to the argument that missionaries were like the colonists in seeking to take advantage of Africans and dispossess them of their wealth. As Peadar has shown, the missionaries seriously misunderstood African culture.¹¹ His articulation supports the view that missionaries, just like the colonists with whom they worked hand in glove, sought to dispossess the African of his wealth. However, other factors need to be considered before this argument is accepted wholesale.

In his letter to the new missionaries of the Zambezi Mission, dated 28 December 1878, the Jesuit superior general Fr. Beckx expresses the ignorance that the missionaries carried with them to the mission. He writes, “in the interior of Africa are hundreds of thousands of men on whom the light of the Gospel has not yet shown, wretched slaves of the devil, marked for eternal death unless someone show them the way of salvation and bring them to the knowledge of Jesus

¹¹ W. R. Peadar, “Missionary Attitudes to Shona Culture.” Salisbury: The Central Historical Association 1970.

Christ.”¹² As later anthropological work has shown, this was a serious misunderstanding of the interior of Africa.¹³ However, beyond this misunderstanding was a principle and foundation that differs significantly from what enthused Rhodes and his men. Beckx understood this mission to be a mission from Jesus to save souls. He compared these men to the apostles who were missioned to the Gentiles. He also made it clear that they should avoid any material gains and be faithful to their vows. The focus on Jesus and his mission is the central aspect of the letter, indicating a clear and distinct principle and foundation, which was unfortunately entangled with the ambition of people like Rhodes. The debate about the association of missionaries and the colonists is inconclusive, as scholars continue to catalogue the sins of the missionaries and how they contributed to colonialism and its destruction.¹⁴ The best we can take from the debate is that it is important to always bear in mind that the mission of the church in Africa and elsewhere will not be separated from the struggles and the sins of the times and does not always work in the best possible ways.

Another indication that the missionaries had their own principle and foundation is the manner in which they established their mission after the occupation. They located themselves between the Africans communities and the European settlements. Although they were antagonistic to the Shona cultures that did not fit their theological views, they did not take the

¹² Letter of Fr. General to the Missionaries Leaving for Africa, 27 DEC 1878, Soci Sj Miss Conference, 1920-1935, Chivero, Prestage Diary 1884, Early days SA 1874-1878, Box 328. Jesuit Archives Harare.

¹³ Bourdillon, M. F. C. *Myths about Africans : Myth-making in Rhodesia*. Gwelo, Rhodesia: Mambo Press, 1976.

¹⁴ Chikowero, Mhoze. *African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe*. African Expressive Cultures. Bloomington ; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015 and Schmidt, Elizabeth. *Peasants, Traders, and Wives : Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*. Social History of Africa. Portsmouth, NH : Harare : London: Heinemann ; Baobab ; J. Currey, 1992.

commercial values and attitudes of the European colonists. The missionaries in Salisbury shared a lot with the colonists in terms of worldview and what they thought would be good for Africans, but some missionaries were at loggerheads with the colonial authorities over the treatment of “natives”; hence, they tried to create alternative Christian villages.¹⁵ Unlike the pioneers or settlers, who had come for gold who did little to improve the land they were allocated, the missionaries pioneered an impressive agricultural program that was to benefit them and the people whom they hoped to convert. Chishasha outside Salisbury became an ideal Christian community and it is from this experience that they developed the idea of creating Christian villages from which they hoped to spread the gospel and reach the villages beyond. The idea of Christian villages was enthusiastically taken up by some missionaries who considered them similar to the reductions in South America. The effort to create Christian villages eventually died in the 1930s because, as Dach and Rea note, the growing economy and the need for African labor was working against what the missionaries were creating. The economy needed African labor, and the administrators devised ways of forcing African to come and work in town. The major criticism of the Christian villages that the missionaries were trying to create is that they were bases from which the missionaries tried to socially and spiritually re-engineer African.¹⁶

Whatever their social ills and disasters, the mission farm and its Christian villages are a clear

¹⁵ Dach, A. J. and W. F. Rea *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe 1879-1979*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1979. 46-52.

¹⁶ Schmidt, Elizabeth. *Peasants, Traders, and Wives : Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*. Social History of Africa. Portsmouth, NH : Harare : London: Heinemann ; Baobab ; J. Currey, 1992. 155-179, and Chikowero, Mhoze. *African Music, Power, And Being In Colonial Zimbabwe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. 19-55.

indication that the missionaries had a vision that was very different from what the colonialist wanted.

The work of mission farms and the creation of Christian villages were meant to take Africans away from traditional cultures which missionaries considered to be pagan and devilish and to prepare them for a new life in Christ. It was also meant to protect them from the exploitative cultures that were developing in the emerging city, where Africans were being forced to live in the location with so many evils. One of the village's unintended consequences was that it prepared Africans for urban life. The mission was a miniature urban centers and those who came to live there looked beyond it to the city, which seemed to have bigger and better facilities. The mission life and education equipped them with the skills they needed in the emerging towns. Missionary-educated Africans joined other Africans who were forced to come to cities to provide much needed labor and to earn the money they needed to pay newly introduced taxes. They seemed to do better than the other Africans because they got jobs that were not labor-intensive, and when they came back home, their people admired them, which encouraged more of the Christian villagers to go into town. Vambe notes that the perception that those who went to town were better is one indication of the attraction the cities had for many Africans.¹⁷ As noted earlier, these mission-educated Africans were to play an important role in the life of the location.

It was not long after the establishment of the mission farms and Christian villages that the missionaries followed the Africans into the cities. On 17th of August 1909, the superior of the Zambesi Mission wrote a letter to the mayor and the Town Council of Salisbury requesting a

¹⁷ Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill-fated People: Zimbabwe before and after Rhodes* (London: Heinemann, 1972).

piece of land near the African location to construct a church for the natives.¹⁸ He made it clear that he did not want the land inside the location. He was aware of the noise and chaos in the location, and he felt a suitable place would be 200 yards outside the location. A short history written 25 years later made it clear that “the offer of a site inside the location was rejected on the ground of noise and nuisances. The resident priest who would live in the location would be driven mad.”¹⁹ The Jesuit superior wanted a place outside the location that would give the priest privacy, quiet and cleanliness. From the description of the native location in the previous chapter, it is clear these were absent in the location. A lot has been written about missionary activity, especially education, that it was about the indoctrinating the Africans and uprooting them from their roots but a close examination at this letter shows, as Hallencruetz has observed, emphasized the pastoral side of the work.²⁰ The letter led to the creation of a church reserve just outside the location in 1909. The Jesuits moved there and built a substantial structure in 1910, which became a key building (until it was dwarfed by the hostels built in the 1940s). It still stands today and is the oldest building in the area.

In 1965, fifty-five years after the African location had expanded and the national location had been built, the Catholic Church moved to the center of the location and built a new church. The construction of these two churches at different periods represents a gradual movement of the Church into all that is African. Missionaries initially wanted a space outside African culture

¹⁸ Letter of Monsignor Sykes to the Mayor” St Peter’s Mbare, 17th August 1909. Chich Pr, Fr Cochroft. Box 132, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

¹⁹ “History of St Peter’s Salisbury, 1910- 1935,” St Peter’s Mbare. Box 670 file a, Archdiocese of Harare Archives (AHA) Harare.

²⁰ Hallencruetz, “Carl F. Religion in the City in Raftopous” in Brian and Yoshikuni Tsuneo, eds. *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwean Urban History*. Harare: Weaver Press, 1999, 49

and outside of the growing urban space from which it hoped to convert souls. These spaces had their fair share of success initially, but these did not last long, because the new economy made the city an important center in the geo-politics. The Church had no choice but to move into the heart of African experience, into the location.

According to a plaque found in the Jesuit Archives and later replaced at the church on its centenary in 2010, St. Peter's Mbare was dedicated to God in May of 1910. St. Peter's was chosen because it was dedicated close to the feast of St. Peter. When the new Church was built in 1965, the old church became St. Peter Claver's and the new church St. Peter the Apostle. The 1929 Rhodesia Yearbook notes that African Churches were "less elaborate and well finished than most European churches."²¹ Compared to the kaytor huts that Europeans built for Africans at the time, the 1910 church was solid and beautiful, indicating that the missionaries intended a permanent, solid structure of faith. An anonymous history of the church indicates that by 1924, between 700 – 800 had been baptized and about 300 were under instruction.²² The church had about 12 outstations within a radius of 100 miles. These figures indicate a significant growth.²³ Within 15 years of its existence, the church was fast becoming the center for the African mission. Fr. Bernard Likorish, who had been working with the natives since 1908, was its first parish priest. He resided in the city center and cycled to the location for Sunday services. He also began an evening school, which was said to be successful. In 1913, Fr Alfred Burbridge, who was the first

²¹ *Roman Catholic Church*, Published in Rhodesia, Year book 1929, Prestage, History of Zambesi Mission, Great Dance, Box 41, File 5, Jesuit Archives Harare.

²² "An Anonymous History of the Mission to the Prefecture to about 1924," Prestage, History of Zambesi Mission, Great Dance, Box 41, File 5.. Jesuit Archives Harare.

²³ Dach, A. J. and W. F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe 1879-1979*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1979. 93.

resident priest, replaced Fr. Lickorish. Burbridge remained in the parish for 15 years. According to Dach and Rea, he is the one who built Catholic life in Harare.²⁴

An important observation in Creary's study of the domestication of faith in Rhodesia is that the process of entering into African areas was not only about missionaries bringing the Gospel or trying to domesticate the church, it also involved Africans making their own the faith that the missionaries brought.²⁵ Creary notes that the Africans were aware of the European influence in the missionary preaching of the Gospel that the missionaries were bringing; and in the short period, they were able to distinguish that from what is essential to the faith. They managed to claim a part of the new spiritual space the missionaries were creating apart from the European cultural artifice through which it was being presented. What Creary's study shows is that the Africans' response to the missionaries was to claim space in the church, similar to how they were claiming space in the location. The following sections will present how the different claims from the missionary and the Africans are related. Burbridge represents the missionary side, while Mzingeli and Musodzi represent the African side. It is within this relationship that we can map the lived experience of faith within Salisbury.

Alfred Burbridge 1870-1946

After Father Burbridge died in 1946, three obituaries appeared in three different periodicals. One was by the Chief Native Commissioner, Charles Bullock, who praised him for his love of the natives and his dedication in improving their lives.²⁶ Another was Dr. Michael Gelfand, a Jewish

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Nicholas M. Creary, *Domesticating a Religious Import: The Jesuits and Inculturation of The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, 1879-1980*. New York; Fordham University Press. 2011.

²⁶ C Bullock NC "The late Father Burbridge, A life of service," *Rhodesia Herald*, Nov 15, 1946.

medical doctor who carried out some anthropological work among the Shona, who like Bullock gave credit to Burbridge for love and knowledge of the natives. He described Fr. Burbridge as “one who was perhaps the finest anthropologist on the indigenous population of Mashonaland;” and he expressed deep gratitude about what he learnt about natives from Burbridge.²⁷ In fact many were convinced that he was knowledgeable of “native” customs to the extent that his advice was sought by scholars from Europe²⁸ A more critical obituary that shows Fr. Burbridge’s limitation was written by Chichester, the vicar apostolic, who later became the first Archbishop of Salisbury.²⁹ It noted that Burbridge was devoted to the improvement of the natives, but cast doubt on how much he understood. He wrote that

though Fr. Burbridge was certainly anthropologist with knowledge of some customs and ritual observances of the native, he could not question without suggesting and insisting upon getting the right answers, which were always the answers he wanted. Now the native has a high sense of humor and is very polite, so he will think maintaining white was black, if he considered that was the answer you wanted and did not consider any personal loss to himself.³⁰

As will be shown later, Burbidge’s writings reflect a serious misunderstanding of Africans. He was just like most missionaries of his time who came with misconceptions about Africa and Africans, but for the sake of the supernatural gave their lives for the “salvation” and service of the “natives.”

²⁷ Michael Gelfand, “Fr. Alfred Burbridge,” *The Shield: A Monthly Magazine of the Catholic Church*, Salisbury. February 1941.

²⁸ Letter to Fr. Burbridge from Renato Boccassiono, Assistant professor in Historico- Religious Research School of University of Rome ,, Italy, Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1. Jesuit Archives Harare.

²⁹ Aston Chichester “Fr Alfred Burbridge,” *Letters and Notices* (LL&NN vol. 55), 1947, Jesuit Archives Harare.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

However, this defect does not take away his zeal and commitment to the improvement of natives, which was noted by his community when he moved from Bulawayo to Salisbury, “We know that our wishes for success in his new sphere of work will be realized if his zeal meets with its due reward.”³¹ With a tinge of sarcasm, Chichester expresses Burbridge’s commitment to the natives in several places in his obituary of Burbridge. In one place he writes,

Many favours he obtained for the natives from the official world. For instance in 1926, he with others, but he more than any other, was responsible for the erection of married quarters in the Salisbury location. It would have certainly come at any other time, but it would not have been in done in 1926, had Fr. Burbridge not been on that particular committee.³²

From our discussion in the previous chapter, we noted that the beginning of marriage quarters was triggered by Africans who moved out of the location and resided in the neighboring farming area, beginning what Yoshikuni called the black suburbia. As an attempt to stop this development and create a population that would provide steady supply of labour, the municipality decided to create cottages for married people. This idea had been raised earlier by Missionary Conference, to which Burbridge was a member. But it was only taken up by the municipality after the issue of labour became acute. Chichester’s statement which seems to attribute the construction of the married quarters to Missionary efforts and people like Burbridge is actually clarifying the relationship between the missionary efforts and the municipal activities. It notes that the creation of marriage quarters was inevitable, with or without Burbridge; however, missionary and Burbridge’s efforts were crucial in the construction of these quarters.

³¹ Zambezi Mission Records, “Notes from Different Stations,”. *Zambezi Mission Record: A Missionary Publication for Readers at Home and Abroad*, Vol .5, London; The Manresa Press, 1914, 7.

³²Aston Chichester “Fr Alfred Burbridge,” *Letters and Notices* (LL&NN vol. 55), 1947,. Jesuit Archives Harare, 162

Chichester's comment shows that there were processes bigger than the church or missionaries in the location, and missionaries played various roles in different ways to influence them. The process of missionaries being part of bigger and wider process can be found in the history of the Zambesi mission summarized above. As noted in the previous section, Prestage and Hartman's attachment to Rhodes' pioneer column has been interpreted to mean that the Jesuits were accomplices to the colonial project. Their later projects and personal initiatives showed they had their own mission; and they operated within the scope of, and sometimes with, the political actors of their time. Burbridge was aware that he was part of the bigger processes. At one point when defending missionaries from the allegations that they were disrupting Africans' way of life, he noted that "natives mind response to an ever-changing environment, for which the missionary is only indirectly responsible."³³

How did the missionary enterprise become part of the "everchanging environment in Harare African Location in Salisbury?" Through an analysis of Burbridge's life, this section tries to answer that question. I begin with a brief narrative of Burbridge's biography, who he was and what he did, before examining some of his writings on the "natives," which are key in showing what informed his activities and their role in shaping space in the city. I end with an exploration of the significance of his life in understanding the lived experience of faith in the development of the urban space that eventually became Salisbury then Harare.

Who was Burbridge and what did he do?

"Until you mention him, he was just a name in the catalogue." These were the words of Fr Brian Enright S. J., the archivist at the Jesuit archives in Harare when I asked if I could get anything on

³³ Alfred Burbridge, "Missionary and Heathens Customs: Advice of onlookers: criticism that is futile and Mischievous" *Rhodesia Herald* Friday August 20, 1926.

Alfred Burbridge. Just like the other two figures to be explored in this chapter, Burbridge is a long forgotten figure in the history of Mbare or the Church in Zimbabwe even though he is one of the few Jesuit missionaries whose name is on one of the index cards in the National archives in Harare, an indication that he was an important person in that society. He wrote substantially on the “native” issues, but he rarely recorded his daily activities, like other missionaries of his time. The little that can be gathered of his activities is from Jesuit catalogues, minutes of meetings he attended, some letters he received from officials and historical studies on Harare.

According to the information in the catalogue of all Jesuits who served and died in Zimbabwe, Burbridge was born on the 14th of March in Huntingdon, England. Chichester adds that he was born in the same house as Oliver Cromwell. The mention of Cromwell indicates to us that he was an “Englishman” by all standards. He was a convert from Methodism and had spent some time studying for Wesleyan Methodist ministry before he converted to the Catholic faith in 1891. He entered the Society of Jesus on 7 September 1893 and was ordained on the 30th of July 1903. He took his final vows on 2 February 1911. He arrived at St Aidan in South Africa in 1906 and stayed there until 1908. The following year he moved to Bulawayo and stayed there for a year. He then moved to Salisbury in 1910 where he stayed in Chishawasha for a year and returned to Bulawayo for two years. He came back to Salisbury and became the first resident parish priest of St. Peter’s in the Harare African location, taking over from Fr. Lickorish. He stayed in the location until 1929, when he moved to Macheke about 100 miles from the African location. In 1935 he briefly returned to St Peter’s for a year then moved to the city center where he died in 1946. He is buried at pioneer cemetery, a few meters away from St. Peter’s Harare. His placements reflect a typical route taken by Jesuit missionaries from Europe. It was a movement

form England to South Africa then a gradual movement north, with stopover in Bulawayo before reaching Salisbury, then dispersal to other parts of the country.

As noted already, there is very little of his day-to-day life in the parish, but there are bits and pieces in other writings and historical records of organization to which he belonged that give an insight into his daily preoccupation. According to the notes he gave to Fr. Johanney in 1929, Burbridge highlighted the native population and the developments in the location and lack of clean water.³⁴ His contributions to the Southern Missionary Society, to which he was a member, shows that he was up to date with all activities in the Harare African location. As a member of the conference, he made strong recommendations that the location needed improvement.³⁵ He was one of those who strongly proposed that Africans should be given land near the city, where they could have market gardens. He was appointed as a member of the committee set up to meet the Mayor about the conditions of the natives in the location. The report that the commission gave to the commission in 1922 indicates that the missionaries contributed to the erection of married quarters, even though it was an issue that the authorities had been considering as well.³⁶ He brought up a number of issues for discussion by this group, which indicates the extent to which he was involved with the people in the location. He spoke on gambling, beerhalls, education, marriage and some activities of agents of other missionaries in the location.³⁷ As early as 1922, he

³⁴ Notes on the missions, 1924, "St Peter's Mbare, Chich Pr, Fr Cochroft Box 132, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

³⁵ Proceedings of Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference, Minutes 16-19th June 1920., Chivero, Prestage, Diary 1884, Early days SA 1874-1878. Box 328, File 1. Jesuit Archives Harare.

³⁶ Proceedings of Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference Minutes 5- 8 July 1922 Chivero, Prestage Diary 1884, Early days SA 1874-1878. Box 328, File 1. Jesuit Archives Harare.

³⁷ Ibid.

proposed the setting up of a native advisory board in Salisbury and Bulawayo, 25 years before they were eventually approved by the government³⁸ He resigned from the conference in 1930, and the conference expressed deep appreciation of his services and noted his devotion to the natives.³⁹

Apart from the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference, Burbridge was also a member of a number of commissions and boards that dealt with “native” matters. He was a member of the Advisory board of the Southern Rhodesia Native Development, where he continued to represent his interests in the improvement of the natives in the location, after he had left the location.⁴⁰ He was a member of the Salisbury and District Native Welfare Society from which he resigned in 1943. The society responded by making him the honorary life president of the society.⁴¹ He was also a member of the language unification committee. It involved working on the native language question. It was made up of government officials and other missionaries.⁴² It was mainly about how to develop and understand the different dialects of native language.⁴³ He insisted that it be “ a strong representative Committee whose membership must disregard colour

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Resolution Passed by the S. Rhodesia Missionary Conference on 26th June 1930, Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴⁰ Southern Rhodesia advisory board for native development 1934 article 23; 1935 article 14, Chivero, Prestage Diary 1884, Early days SA 1874-1878. Box 328, File 1. Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴¹ Letter from Lesely B Fereday, 8th September 1943 and letter from secretary of the Salisbury and District Native Welfare society 25 September 1943, Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴² Correspondence between H Jowwit (Director of Native Development) and Monsignor Brown 15-20 December 1930 (Jesuit Superior in Salisbury), Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴³ Memorandum of the language Question, Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare

and creed.”⁴⁴ When he resigned in 1943, the director of native education expressed deep appreciation and personal loss of his immense wisdom of the natives.

However, they were some who felt he misunderstood the language and the history of the people, such as Harry Buck who unlike Burbridge maintained that the Bantu not Europeans destroyed the Bushman (people who inhabited southern Africa before the coming of Bantu tribes from North Africa).⁴⁵ But others like Jowitt, director of native development, spoke highly of his knowledge of the “natives”⁴⁶

In Harare African Township, Burbridge supported the education efforts started by Fr Likorish, when St. Peter’s was opened in 1910. The church building was not only for worship. The sanctuary was closed by a curtain, and it became a school. This creativity has continued to operate in the Harare African location to this day as families in the one-roomed hostels separated into rooms with curtains. It is an age-old action started by the church of using limited space in the best possible way. Burbridge added an evening school to the one started by Fr Lickorish. According to reports from government inspectors, the school had challenges, but it was doing well by their standards.⁴⁷ He invited sisters to come to the school, and the sisters emphasized home economics and domestic science, to prepare girls to be homemakers.⁴⁸ He was in charge of

⁴⁴ Letter of Stark (Director of Native Education) to Fr Burbridge, 5 October 1943, Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴⁵ Letter to Burbridge from Harry Buck, 19 July 1940,” Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴⁶ Letter of Jowitt to Msgr Brown, 27 August 1930, Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴⁷ Letter from Department of Native Education to Fr. Burbridge, 6 March 1929, St Peter’s Mbare, Chich Pr, Fr Cochroft, Box 132, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

⁴⁸ Report of girl’s Work at Salisbury location St Peter’s Mbare, Chich Pr, Fr Cochroft, Box 132, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare.

nine other out schools, and he left the running of the school to the sisters and a local teacher.⁴⁹ He also supported the idea that there should be secondary schools for Africans, which other missions opposed.⁵⁰

Besides education, he was also committed to the religious and church activities, even though he wrote very little about religious and sacramental life, giving an impression that all his efforts were attempts by a liberal white man who wanted to improve the native just like native commissioners. His views on the natives which he expressed in his writings showed that he was not an extension of the native commissioner, neither was he like the colonists who valued the native for his labour. He had deeper theological interests. As indicated earlier, Burbridge was a convert to the Catholic faith. He had trained to be pastor in the Methodist church. As a Jesuit priest, he wrote a pamphlet on Wesleyanism published by the Catholic Truth Society (CTS), which aroused some theological interest.⁵¹ His work among the “natives” had deep religious convictions. These convictions distance him from those who sought to control and manage natives as well as from those who endeavored to avoid the control. The next section considers those religious convictions.

Burbridge and Faith in the City: The primacy of the Supernatural

Burbridge understood the Christian mission to be part of the civilizing mission to which colonial efforts were a part. That is why he closely worked with some colonial administrators. His review

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Carl Hallencruetz, *Religion and Politics in Harare, 1890- 1980*, Upsalla, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 1998, 94.

⁵¹ Letter to Burbridge from Sobrino Grimma from Scotts College Rome, 6 April 1935 and Three letters from A .W. Bar, (A Wesleyan Minister), Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare

of the colonial government's native legislation from 1930-1935 commended progress that was being made legally to improve the lives of the natives.⁵² Careful reading and studies of the native legislation as discussed in chapter 2 have shown that legislation did little to improve the lives of the natives. Therefore, Burbridge commendation of these laws place him among the colonial administrators who championed control of Africans in the dynamics sketched in the second chapter about control and restriction and Africans' response to the control. He can be regarded as an arm of the colonial enterprise because of his positive reading of how native legislation was developing. However, to place him in this group would be missing an important aspect of his mission because his interests are very different. He emphasized those aspects of the legislation that supported Christian marriage and rites, which he equated with civilization. Although he had detailed descriptions of the legislation, he was only attending to the extent it was attending to the particular issues which he poignantly described at the beginning:

A casual reading of reports of prosecution in the local courts creates the impression that the die is loaded against the native. No matter which way he turns to improve himself in selecting industrial pursuits, he is caught in meshes of laws which retard his economic advance.

An ordinance is passed to keep down the sale price of his mealies to 5s 0d per bag. There is another to prevent him from washing sand for gold-dust. Yet another prevents him from using his net in the river on the banks of which he was born, part of the evidence against him in the court being that with a permit from the local NC he had sold in Salisbury 240lbs of fish fresh from the net. His ingenuity in bringing fish to market and thus entering into unfair competition with the European supply proved his undoing. For much of the same reason a native was fined £5 the other day for selling food in the location."⁵³

⁵² A. Brbridge "A Review of Five years of Native legislation: A paper read at the vicariate Conference," Sept. 23rd 1935. Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare

⁵³ Ibid.

This apt observation and many other efforts to represent the natives distinguish Burbridge from administrators like Roger Howman and politicians cum pastors like Rev. Percy Ibboston discussed in the previous chapter who patronized the “natives.” Burbridge unlike Howman and Ibboston was addressing the “civilizing” legal tools, examining the extent to which they advanced his Christian values. He was not trying to develop, influence or craft a legislation to advance a colonial administrative agenda, like what Rev. Ibboston did.

In his review of native legislation, he writes positively about natives, claiming that Africa is their home. His writings were an endeavor to make the city a home in the same way Europeans were trying to make a home in the same place. These views and sentiments place him among Africans discussed in the previous chapter who struggled against the control and restrictions and were claiming space in the urban space considered to be geographically a European space. Again, just as he would not fit squarely with settlers who were controlling Africans in the city, he cannot fit in the same way in this category because of the way he regarded them. They were still natives with heathen customs. They needed the missionary effort as well as colonial government to bring them to a better condition to claim a space among the human race. Lawrence Vambe, a leading African Journalist in the 40s, corroborates Chichester’s description of Burbridge as his own man with his own answers. His description is helpful in showing that Burbridge was neither about European ideals or African values. He writes that

St Peter’s, the Catholic African Mission at the edge of Harare location of Salisbury, was run by the Reverend Father Burbridge, S.J. Like other missionaries Burbridge subscribed to the philosophy of white leadership for black people, but he had the rare distinction of being himself no respecter of persons, or frequently, of governments. His fiery temper and caustic tongue were held in awe by great many black and white people in Salisbury. He used to walk into police stations and order the immediate release of Africans he knew were in trouble over minor breaches of the country’s legal system, and he defended anyone he thought was a victim of white bureaucracy and racial discrimination in Salisbury. In turn the black people revered him for being a highly effective and

compassionate social worker for their race in the whole city. He could not care less for what the Rhodesian authorities thought or did about his unconventional methods; but just as he had no patience with blundering officials, he had none either for an African who did not give him instant obedience.⁵⁴

It can be argued that Burbridge was able to do what he did because he was white. He could get away with the disrespect of Rhodesian authorities because he was their kith and kin. However, that does not take away the fact that he had his own vision, which was beyond what white or black wanted.

Burbridge's misunderstanding of Africans, which indicates that he was not at one with them, is found in most of his writings about natives. It is best articulated in a response to criticism of the missionary efforts by some European scholars.⁵⁵ The criticism was that the missionaries do not understand "natives," that they "have a preconceived ideas set against native customs." Others pointed to a "crass inadaptability of the missionary to the African world."⁵⁶ It was further alleged that they were disturbing the organization of native life and removing its foundation. They were also accused of lacking specialist knowledge in understanding the natives. Burbridge dismissed these criticisms as "futile, tiresome and extremely mischievous" from onlookers with no first hand knowledge of natives. In defense, Burbridge used particular concrete examples of native practices as a way of showing that he has a good understanding of what he was engaging. He argued that what was considered disturbing organizations and removing foundations were changes that had nothing to do with missionaries but were a result of some "civilized government effort." He also argued that he needed no special training because

⁵⁴ Vambe, Lawrence. *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*. London: Heinemann, 1976. 102.

⁵⁵ Alfred Burbridge: "Missionary and Heathens Customs: Advice of onlookers: criticism that is futile and Mischievous," *Rhodesia Herald* Friday August 20, 1926.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

that would make him a slave of a theory. All he was doing was observing what was happening among the natives.

In his observation of what was happening among natives, he noted four things about the native mind. First, “the native mind is a fallen mind;” and it needs some scientific engagement. To him revealed religion is as scientific as anthropology, and it is capable of dealing with the native question. Being scientific was important to him; he repeated it in a number of occasions.⁵⁷ Secondly he observed that the native mind is “a one sided mind, pre-occupied with one side of man’s nature only,” therefore it must be supplemented by Christian ideals of individual morality.” Thirdly “it is a child mind’ and its customs are of a child mind “which must grow and accommodate themselves to the environment of a child.” Finally “it is a mind operating in an environment which had been changed and is still being changed by forces which lie beyond missionary control.” The missionary is just part of a process taking place.

Burbridge’s reflection reflects a typical 19th century view of Africans by Europeans, which inspired the colonial as well as missionary efforts and they still exist in some subtle forms today. These views distance Burbridge from Africans whom he tried to present, but they do not place him among some of the colonialist or a number of their administrators discussed in the previous chapter because for Burbridge what was fundamental in this encounter with the native mind and the customs, which he considered heathens, was the Christian moral code. The native mind and customs were conflicting with Christian principles. Just as the church had dealt with slavery, missionary work was doing the same to heathen customs of natives. In response to a statement

⁵⁷ Alfred Burbridge, “How to become a witchdoctor,” Native Affairs Department Annual, Salisbury: Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department 1923, 94 and “In spirit bound Rhodesia,” Native Affairs Department Annual, Salisbury: Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department 1924.

that missionaries are heading towards a rock that will split their work, he wrote, “We, too, see a rock, not through the haze of nebulous theories hatched by half a dozen schools of a science which has barely won its nature. We see it in light of the supernatural. And we see it under our feet with only foam and vapour at its base. For it is a rock of Ages, a spiritual rock . . .and the rock was Christ.”⁵⁸ This was an evangelical response that distanced Burbridge from people like Roger Howman and Ibboston, who contrasted what is African to what is European. Burbridge was contrasting what is African with what is supernatural and Christian. He was fighting a spiritual warfare in his engagements.

The fundamental role of the spiritual and supernatural in his dedication to “native work” is evident in his devotion to study and understand “native spirit world.” Much of his writings centered on this subject. His outline of the different spirits among the Shona and how they are understood shows that he was aware of how different spirits are understood among the Shona.⁵⁹ What he lacked was an appreciation of what these spirits meant to the Shona, he judged them with his own European categories and dismissed them as superstitious and magical. In his conclusion he asserts that his survey and analysis is just a subjective and scientific study of a subject matter that needs further study for the progress of the people. A lot of studies have been taken since the time of Burbridge. They only differ from Burbridge in that they have shown a deeper appreciation of these spirits.

Burbridge study was not for mere scholarly purposes or for the development of natives. It was a way of trying to show that Christianity is more superior to this spirits that abound in

⁵⁸ Alfred Burbridge: Missionary and Heathens Customs: Advice of onlookers: criticism that is futile and Mischievous.” *Rhodesia Herald* Friday August 20, 1926.

⁵⁹ Alfred Burbridge “In spirit bound Rhodesia,” Native Affairs Department Annual.,Salisbury: Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department 1924.

Rhodesia. In Chikowero's terms it was a way of "witchcrafting", traditional religion.

"Witchcrafting" according to Chikowero is disrupting African cosmology. This is what missionaries were doing. They were "witchcrafting" African being (*Chivanhu*).⁶⁰ *Chivanhu* is a way of understanding what it means to be a human being. It has to do with relations sanctioned by cultural values and African traditional cosmologies. Witchcraft in Africa is about destruction through use of spiritual forces. By "witchcrafting" Chikowero means missionaries destroyed African ways of understanding what it means to be human and African so as to impose Western ideas that were considered pure and pristine. Hence, he concluded that there is need for an intellectual *chimurenga*⁶¹ to this "witchcrafting" if Zimbabwe is to progress.

Burbridge fits neatly into Chikowero's description of missionary activity because one of his preoccupations was the study of what he termed African witchcraft, and he wrote about it on several occasions.⁶² However, the writings on witchcraft reflect an inner conviction that he was fighting a spiritual war. He was convinced that unless the spirit-ridden mind of the native is overcome, all the efforts to bring knowledge of European medical profession will be futile.⁶³ Unlike Placide Tempels, discussed in chapter 1, who argued that there was a coherent philosophy

⁶⁰ Chikowero, Mhoze. *African Music, Power, And Being In Colonial Zimbabwe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. Chapter 1.

⁶¹ Chimurenga is a Shona word for revolution. It is used mostly to refer to the wars against colonialism.

⁶² Alfred Burbridge "The witchdoctors power, A study of its source and scope" Native Affairs Department Annual, Salisbury: Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department 1925. "Witchcraft: English and African" Zambesi Mission Record: A Missionary Publication for Readers at Home and Abroad, Vol 8 p. 54-58. "How to become a witchdoctor, Native Affairs Department Annual. Salisbury: Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department, 1923 and Province News , Letters and Notices (LL&NN) vol. 41. 1926,, 264-265.

⁶³ Alfred Burbridge, "How to become a witchdoctor" Native Affairs Department Annual. Salisbury: Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department, 1923.

in African mind that could be engaged, Burbridge saw only superstition and magic in the native mind. For Burbridge the natives with their belief in magic were making disease the subject of worship. He disparaged traditional healers calling them “witchdoctors,” and for him success with the natives is only achieved if the witchdoctor is proved to be a “wholesome charlatan.”⁶⁴ His study of how one become a witch doctor was a way of showing the problems with the system and proposed that native education must take into consideration native superstition. He was aware of Europeans claiming that Witchcraft in Africa was similar to witchcraft in Europe, and that there was need for studies that compare the two.⁶⁵ His response was that European had learnt from sad experiences and already denied the existence of witches and regards belief in them as a system of tyranny. He considered speculative comparative study to be a waste of time because Europeans had overcome superstition and magic of Witchcraft. A missionary has to be practical and deal with the concrete existence of witchcraft, which he was encountering in his daily work, not concerning himself with European fables from the past.

Although there is little about his daily pastoral work, from parish records we can tell that he ministered to the people pastorally. The baptism register at St Peter’s Mbare is testimony to a sacramental life during his time. For him, baptism was an important victory of the spiritual warfare in which he was engaged. He did write about baptism once.⁶⁶ It was the baptism of twins in the locations. This was not just a record of an event in the parish. It was a proclamation of a success story over what he considered the main enemy of Christianity, “African spirit world.”

⁶⁴ Ibid., 95.

⁶⁵ Alfred Burbridge, “Witchcraft: English and African,” *Zambesi Mission Record: A Missionary Publication for Readers at Home and Abroad*, Vol 8 p. 54-58.

⁶⁶ Alfred Burbridge, “Province News” *Letters and Notices (LL&NN)* vol. 41. 1926,, 264-265.

The story of the survival of these twins was a victory because the traditional Shona belief that twins were a taboo and should not be allowed to survive beyond infancy was still held by many in the location. For Burbridge, the baptism of these twins was a victory over this kind of “superstitious” thinking. These were the first twins to survive in the 30-year history of the “native” location.

The emphasis on the need to dismantle African spirit world places Burbridge in a space between the designs that the Europeans were developing and the way Africans were responding. Burbridge efforts were neither about restricting or controlling like the European administrators, even though he had a lot in common with them in terms of how he viewed Africans. Neither was he about resisting the control and securing a dignified space for Africans, although his engagement also expressed the need to do that. His main objective was about relating the struggle in the city to the supernatural or transcendent. His interest was about how the Christian faith relates with change and struggle for dignity in the city and beyond. It was about finding identity in the supernatural, as understood in the Christian faith. He thought less of African culture and had high regard for European values because he considered that which is European to be closer to the identity of the supernatural. His dismissal of African traditional religion as witchcraft was not because he was against the Shona, but that he was convinced that he is fighting the fundamental evil among the Shona speaking tribes, that undermined the supernatural as represented by the Christian faith. In short, Burbridge was a European missionary who was convinced that he was doing what is best for Africans in accordance to the dictates of the supernatural as expressed and articulated in Christianity. What was fundamental for him was the Christian faith, its supernatural qualities, not African or European culture and values.

As Hallencrutez's study has demonstrated, the significance of the supernatural in processes that shape the city was a significant part of the development of Salisbury. Religion and claim of the supernatural was part of the struggle that shaped dynamics that made Salisbury. The claim of the supernatural is still part of development (or rather decline) of Mbare which used to be the "native location of Mbare in the days of Burbridge. It is represented today by the more than 20 church buildings in an area where about 1.81 square miles make up Mbare. It is also present in the numerous groups that gather under trees and in private houses for worship. These spaces are not only spiritual homes; they configure how residents relate to everything in this space, which has now become a permanent home for many. In these spaces many couples make life commitments; others celebrate life achievements; and many others come to bid farewell to dearly departed. There are spaces where people hear some life changing sermons; where they pledge their souls and offer their hopes and dreams. Even though they are supposed to be spaces where divine love is witnessed and expressed, they are also places of struggle as many argue about how the supernatural ought to be understood and how it ought to relate to life. Theological reflection that engages African experience can benefit tremendously from engaging these experiences. How theology can benefit from the experiences is the subject matter of the next chapter.

Charles Mzingeli 1905-1980

Burbridge and Mzingeli

In 1934, when Burbridge had moved to a country parish a hundred miles from the Harare African location of Salisbury, he wrote a report where he expanded on the struggle for understanding the supernatural and how it shapes people's lives. He wrote about protestant

missionaries and “weird American sects” disrupting what he had achieved.⁶⁷ The black man was failing to comprehend the doctrines of the faith because he was mixing up his ritual with emotional revivalism of Protestantism. As expected, he did not have kind words for the witchdoctor, “Another by no means spent force who works against us is that of the witchdoctor.”⁶⁸ He also noted a new threat;

A new menace has come to take the place of the witchdoctor especially in the town, namely communistic propaganda, to which the native falls prey. The envoys are already stirring up trouble in the big factories and workplaces, and once we see the seeds of Bolshevism in the minds of the blacks it will take a long time to displace them. In the near future, there is to be a great struggle for the following of the black man on the African front.⁶⁹

His statements about the influence of Bolshevism on Africans and the great struggle of the black man on the African front

are quite interesting and worth attention in view of the struggles that ensued in the Rhodesia of the sixties. However, what is of interest for our purposes is his placing political developments at the same level with witchdoctors’ practice. In a way he considered it a threat to the supernatural for which he dedicated his life in the same way witchdoctors were a threat. This section explores how Mzingeli, one individual considered to have been influenced by the communistic propaganda, tried to engage the supernatural and the response he received. It is a way of exploring how pastoral activity that considered the role of the supernatural in the struggles in the location engaged the political development that was taking place in the same place.

⁶⁷ Alfred Burbridge, “Province News” Letters and Notices (LL&NN) vol. 49. 1934. Jesuit Archives Harare, 171.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

One event recorded and discussed by a number of scholars about Mzingeli was his encounter with Burbridge. Mzingeli lived in the location where Burbridge worked, and he was a member of St Peter's parish. He had founded Industrial Commercial Union (ICU), a trade union organization that represented workers and ended up representing residents. Burbridge told him that the organization of this kind had been forbidden by the bishops in the Union of South Africa; therefore, there was no way he was to continue with this organization. Mzingeli refused to give it up and he was "excommunicated" or barred him from receiving communion. In protest Mzingeli wrote to Pope Pius XI. According to a handwritten note on a copy of the letter in Jesuit archives, "He may have received a reply, when he wrote, but he certainly received one from the vicar delegate who after taking information from Bishop Fleischer in South Africa, on the position in Natal and the attitudes of the bishops towards the union, of which the applicant was the secretary in Salisbury, replied to him at considerable length, explaining to him why the bishops were opposed to its methods. A copy of the letter must exist in the Vicariate" (Fr J who was then vicar-delegate) It may be also added that Charles Mzingeli later got into trouble for attacks on the chief native commissioner (Corbert) and was found guilty by the magistrate"⁷⁰

Fr. Bex who attended to Mzingeli's dying wife in 1970s writes that Mzingeli remained Catholic throughout his life, and he was a friend of the Fathers, Swift and Becks, who worked at the parish after Fr Burbridge.⁷¹ According to Vambe's description of Mzingeli's relationship with the church, Mzingeli did have a good relationship with the church. After the encounter with Burbridge, Mzingeli "was more determined than ever to undermine this so called Christian

⁷⁰ "Letter of Charles Mzingeli to Pope Pius XI" Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare .

⁷¹ Anthony Bex "Charles Mzingeli and Pope Pius XI" Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare .

Society. He never went to church again, although I understand from him that the priest in Charge of St Peter's in the 50s tried hard to get him back to ecclesiastical fold"⁷² But Fr. Bex notes that he was asked to marry the couple when his wife, was in danger of death. The attempt to get a Catholic marriage to his wife who was a Methodist had started in the time of Fr Swift as far back as 1954.⁷³ After consultation with relevant authorities, he married them and Mzingeli asked if he could receive communion. He received communion on the new years eve of 1973. Not much is heard of Mzingeli and the church up to the time of his death in 1980.

There have been many views on the encounter with the Church. Fr Bex said, "Charles obediently accepted fathers decision but applied to the pope."⁷⁴ But according to the report given to Edward Munger in 1952, Mzingeli said he was a good Catholic until 1930 when the priest (Burbridge) told him to stop his union activities. He said he was offered a chance to return to the Church, but he refused. In 1951, he went to Church once and considered himself a "Christian by persuasion"⁷⁵ Vambe notes that because of his upbringing as a Catholic, Mzingeli sincerely believed that his actions were in line with the Church.⁷⁶ He saw himself doing what Christ would have done if he had been in Rhodesia at the time. The Rhodesian government realized the

⁷² Vambe, Lawrence. *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*. London: Heinemann, 1976. 102

⁷³ Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury October 13 1954, St. Peters Mbare. Box 670, file a, Archdiocese of Harare Archives, Harare.

⁷⁴ Anthony Bex, "C

harles Mzingeli and Pope Pius XI" Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare .

⁷⁵ Edwin s Munger "Charles Mzingeli: Leader of Southern Rhodesian Africans" "A Letter from Edwin S Munger." *American University field staff reports, Dec 6 1952 Central and Southern Africa Series Vol 1. No. 5.* (Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. New York: Amrican field staff 1956. P5.

⁷⁶ Vambe, Lawrence. *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*. London: Heinemann, 1976. 102.

influence that Fr Burbridge had, and they asked him to use his priestly influence on Mzingeli. An interview was arranged between Mzingeli and Burbridge. When they met, Burbridge as usual, with an air of self-importance, asked for the constitution; and after reading it he argued that it “reeked with communist ideas.” He went on to make changes and added that the union was a Catholic Trade Union and it was subject of control of Catholic Church. Mzingeli unequivocally refused, and he firmly stated that he would not give this organization even to the pope. Burbridge threatened him with excommunication. It is from then that he stopped from attending church.

Hallencruetz concurs with Vambe that Mzingeli did not see any contradiction with what the Church was about and that he wanted to combine his work with his commitment to the Catholic Church.⁷⁷ But in Hallencruetz’s assessment, the reason for Burbridge’s position was more complicated than how Vambe presents it. Burbridge was following what the Bishops in the union of South Africa had prescribed. They had forbidden membership to unions that were independent of the Catholic Church; thus, Burbridge’s suggestion was not because of his intransigence, but that he was trying to show Mzingeli a way that could bring his union in line with the Catholic Church.

There is some evidence written to the bishop, most probably by Fr. Swift, that Burbridge did try to reach out to Mzingeli after the incidence.⁷⁸ Sometime in 1935, a prominent member of the parent ICU, to which Mzingeli ICU was a branch from Johannesburg, came to address the members in Harare location. Fr Burbridge and Fr Brennan attended. On seeing them, the guest of honour is said to have said “Black Coats and white collars. This is no place for me.” and he left

⁷⁷ Hallencruetz: *Religion and Politics in Harare, 1890- 1980*, Upsalla, Swedish institute of missionary research, 1998. 98 and 219.

⁷⁸ Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury October 13 1954, St. Peters Mbare. Box 670, file a, Archdiocese of Harare Archives, Harare.

without addressing the people. Burbridge tried to use this opportunity to show Mzingeli that ICU was incompatible with the Catholic teaching, but it seems it did not work because according to Fr. Swift, Mzingeli rarely attended masses, although he publicly confessed his adherence to the church.

It is unfortunate that the note he received from bishops is not available. It would have helped in giving a clue to the official response to the political developments in the location, which could give an idea of how the pastoral or as Burbridge would put it, the supernatural, related to the political. However, an overview of Mzingeli political activities and his relationship with the Church in comparison with Burbridge's pastoral view of the supernatural reviewed in the previous section may be helpful in plumbing this relationship and showing some ways that the pastoral interacted with the political.

Mzingeli: Life and Work

Although there is a street in Mbare (formely the Harare native location of Salisbury) named after him and his name appears on every intersection of the eight streets that run across, not many people from the area know who Charles Mzingeli is. Accounts of him from those who encounter him in his life tell a different story. In his prime, Mzingeli did make a good impression on people; and he was not easy to forget. It is not only the missionaries like Fathers Bex and Mcagary who wrote about him glowingly more than 30 years after his death, (most probably as a way of presenting him as a model of how to the response to the post 2008 political Crisis).⁷⁹ As far back

⁷⁹ Antony Bex "Charles Mzingeli and Pope Pius XI" Jesuit Fathers, Burbridge, Carry and Donovan. Box 372, File 1, Jesuit Archives Harare . and Brian McGary "Mzingeli Always focused on People and their Grievances" *Catholic Church News* Aug/Sept 2010.

as 1946, Lawrence Vambe, a leading public intellectual of the time, was impressed by him in an encounter that he had with him on the train. Vambe wrote;

I was struck by his dignified presence, his intelligent looking face and his serenity. He did not look affluent, but his clothes were trim, his shoes well polished; nothing on him was out of place so that I got the feeling that I was in the presence of a well cultivated man...I realized at once that in this man, I had met one of the most important contacts in my life.⁸⁰

In 1952, an Edward Munger an American professor who reported on many countries in Africa considered Mzingeli the one person, though not as educated as many people in his country or on the continent, who was capable of uniting Africans in the whole of Southern Rhodesia. He did not only impress elite and educated people. As reported by Scarnecchia who has the most comprehensive study of Mzingeli to date, in his lifetime Mzingeli made a lasting impression on the poor and downtrodden in a way that the elite failed.⁸¹

Tim Scarnecchia's study of dynamics and changes in the Zimbabwe politics is helpful in situating Mzingeli's life and assessing his work. Before 1960 there were two strands of political developments. One was led by mission educated public intellectuals, who used the press to articulate African grievances. In fact, they were only representing grievances of their class arguing that education and wealth qualified them for an imperial citizenship. Another was led by people like Mzingeli and his allies in the township, and their main target was racial segregation and economic exploitation. They demanded that opportunities be given to the least so that they could also be part of the empire. The mission-educated elite looked down on those who tried to

⁸⁰ Vambe, Lawrence. *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*. London: Heinemann, 1976. 93.

⁸¹ Scarnecchia Timothy. *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfields, 1940-1964*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008. Chapter 2 and 3.

represent the poor. Hence, there was a struggle within a struggle. There was a struggle with the imperial system and struggle among those who were struggling against the imperial forces.

The situation changed in the 60s, when a group of young professionals who were dissatisfied with racial discrimination in white-collar jobs demanded a complete revolution to the entire system that favored white minority. They were opposed to the incremental changes, which were being advocated by people like Mzingeli. They wanted radical change. Violence against the system was adopted at that time and nationalistic politics changed since then. People like Mzingeli who opted for inclusion in imperial citizenship were considered “sell outs” and were overshadowed by the demand for liberation, independence and majority rule.

As pointed out in chapter 2, the nationalistic project is complex and they are divergent perspectives on it. Scarnecchia’s perspective is one among many, but it is more convincing than the one found in patriotic historiography. It has been further corroborated by other works, such as Sachikonye’s *When the State turns against its citizens*.⁸² There are no major works that have challenged this schema. Patriotic historiography only exaggerates the role of nationalist leaders who emerged in the 60s and argue that there is a continuity of their efforts with the first *chimurenga*. It does not give adequate account of the development of different strands in the history of the nation. Mzingeli political activities were part of complex development. He was one of the pioneers of a democratic tradition that the later day nationalists hijacked. His attempt to combine it with his devotion to the Christian faith gives a valuable opportunity to consider relation ship of faith and politics.

⁸² Sachikonye, L. M. *When a State Turns on Its Citizens : 60 Years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe*. Sunnyside, Auckland Park [South Africa]: Jacana Media, 2011.

Mzingeli was born in 1905 at the catholic mission of Empandeni, established by Fr Prestage during Lobengula reign. His father had been one of the warrior in Lobengula's army that fought the Europeans.⁸³ He was wounded in one battle; and after he recovered, he settled near the Mission that had been given to the Jesuits by Lobengula in peaceful times. Charles attended the mission school until he was 14. According to Vambe, Mzingeli ran away from home and worked for the railways first in Bulawayo then in Northern Rhodesia. In 1927 he joined Industrial Commercial Union (ICU), a trade union started in South Africa by Clement Kadalie, who had come from Nyasaland. Kadalie had worked in Southern Rhodesia before moving to South Africa, and he was happy to send a representative to train men to begin the organization in Southern Rhodesia. Mzingeli was one of the three men trained by Sambo, the representative from South Africa, before the Rhodesian government deported him.

Mzingeli was sent to begin the organization in Salisbury in 1929. He was popular and the people came to his meeting where he spoke eloquently about the injustice of the white man. Although the movement was popular, nothing much was achieved because of the divisions in the location between those who saw the place as a temporary place and those long staying residents. Only a few of the long staying residents remained as paying members. Others were afraid to lose their jobs; so they did not join; and some educated elite despised what Mzingeli was doing because of his education and his association with the poorest of the poor. In 1935, he opened a "native eating house" and got into trouble with the police and was arrested for selling prohibited

⁸³ Edwin s Munger "Charles Mzingeli: Leader of Southern Rhodesian Africans" "A Letter from Edwin S Munger." *American university field staff reports, Dec 6 1952 Central and Southern Africa Series Vol 1. No. 5.* (Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. New York: Amrican field staff 1956, 5.

hop beer and spent some time in prison. He was also arrested for perjury. He eventually opened a grocery in the Harare African Location of Salisbury.

In the 40s he began a new phase in his political career. As an attempt to spite the Prime Minister, Huggins, who was pushing for segregation and supporting the white industrialist, Mzingeli joined a few white liberals and formed the African branch of the Southern Rhodesia Labour Party. He had a meeting once with Prime Minister Huggins who despised him and wanted all African affairs to be represented by the Native welfare society led by Rev Percy Ibboston. Mzingeli maintained his position that the SRLP African branch was a legitimate African representative. Through this organization, he tried to push Britain to use its veto to stop the segregation legislation such as the Land Apportionment Act and Native Urban Areas Act. He did receive some support from a few white liberals in Southern Rhodesia and some sympathetic assurance from the labour government in Britain, but nothing accrued in terms of action to effectively stop the segregatory legislations. Mzingeli decided to form RICU, in 1946.

The formation of the RICU came after the successful 1945 railway strike. The political scene had several popular actors calling for drastic changes. Although he initially tried to combine efforts with some of them, there was competition among them, which led to open hostility eventually. The major competition happened after the passing of the Native Urban Areas Act which created an advisory board where Africans would be elected. Mzingeli was opposed to NUARA; but when it was passed, he made sure that most of his men from RICU were elected. For about 10 years, his organization dominated the advisory board, beating leading and educated man like Mynanda who was favored by white paternalists like Rev Ibboston. The advisory board did not have much power and Mzingeli was becoming part of it so that the whites did not use it to rubber stamp their unjust laws and activities. He faced challenges from some

members of his organization who were not happy with the participation of RICU in the Native Advisory Board because it was not effective. They demanded more aggressive action. Although advisory board did not have executive powers, it was crucial as is evidenced by competition among the different groups to be represented on it.

Another challenge came during the 1948 general strike, which involved a lot of unrest and looting. Mzingeli might have been aware of the strike, but he was not responsible for it. He used it to try and gain recognition for the RICU in the negotiations that ensued after the strike. He had an opportunity of meeting Huggins again. Nothing much was achieved. The government responded by passing the Subversive Act of 1950, which was meant to stop any future labour unrest. It was another repressive legislation meant to control Africans in the location. Again Mzingeli struggled in vain to stop the legislation.

In its attempt to tighten security in the location, the government strictly followed NUARA and tried to make sure that unattached women were removed from the location and tried to stop any males coming to town without proper papers. RICU gained popularity as it represented most of those affected by the new legislations, especially women. The membership of the RICU was made up of women who wanted him to represent their grievances, and he had some successes. This representation got him into trouble as some elite women accused him of promoting immorality because he represented and protected prostitutes and “*mapoto*” women. Mzingeli continued to represent the women without pushing on morality. He gained the confidence and support of the people. Even though the RICU members were defeated in the advisory board elections, Mzingeli retained his seat and was very popular among the poor residents

After the establishment of the Federation in 1953, a group of young politicians who were not happy with the approach of Mzingeli of negotiating with the authorities began to oppose him. The political climate was changing as some of his comrades in arms became more aggressive. Other political organizations emerged. Unlike Mzingeli's approach of trying to use the limited spaces available to advance the black causes, the new organizations were more confrontational. Mzingeli and many Africans were opposed to the federation; but after its establishment, some like him who were opposed joined the federation. The older generation of Mzingeli eventually fell into oblivion.

Faith and Politics in the city:

Challenge from Mzingeli life and Work

According to the two struggles mapped in the third chapter, Mzingeli belonged to the Africans who endeavored to bring dignity to the Africans living in the city. He struggled to claim a decent space for the territory that European settlers claimed for themselves. His life in the location is best summarized by the title of Yoshikuni's dissertation, "Black Migrant in White City." His struggle and those of many blacks who came to the city that the white man was building for himself in Africa was against the control and restrictions of blacks in the city. And just like most blacks in the location, he got into trouble over issues of beer brewing regulation and spent some time in prison. He challenged the colonial administration and spent more time in prison. He struggled against other black elites who wanted to protect privileges for the elites. He also struggled against the official church.

It is his struggle with the church that gives us another coordinate grid in our mapping of faith in the location. As pointed out, earlier Mzingeli saw all his struggles within the African community as compatible with what the church stood for; and he wanted to combine his

commitment to the struggle for the life of faith. Although we do not have the official statement from higher authorities why the “excommunication” issued by his priest was not reversed by higher authorities, we know for sure that the main argument of his priest was that his union had to be subject to the church; and Mzingeli refused. He did not want the organization to be just Catholic. He wanted it to be for all people. The Catholic position that was represented by Burbridge was not just about white control and black resistance, but it was about the supernatural. In a way, it shared with Mzingeli the view that an organization should be universal and not just for a specific people. However, there was a failure on the part of the church and its official’s in the form of Burbridge to realize that the supernatural can exist apart from the church. Burbridge’s position collapsed the supernatural to church structures. It gave a monopoly of the interpretation of the experience of the supernatural to the church authority. Mzingeli’s defiant act challenged this position and interpretation.

Although this was before Vatican II, before there was a realization that the world has got its processes in which the church must engage, the thinking that the church is an alternative space that all activities and struggles should be subject to is still dominant in Mbare as well as in the whole country as it was represented by church officials like Burbridge. It expressed in subtle ways that prominent church leaders endorse political affiliations for their members. Mzingeli’s restrained relationship is one instance demonstrating that the church structures do not have a monopoly of the supernatural or that which is universal and a theology that deals with how people’s adaption to change can benefit from engaging with this fact. Again this will be the subject matter of the next chapter.

Elizabeth Musodzi 1885 -1952

Unlike the stalemate he had with Mzingeli, Burbridge had hope and faith in Mai Musodzi, a woman from his parish in Harare who was active in the social and political life of the location. Just like Mzingeli, Musodzi was a product of one of Catholic Missions in Rhodesia. She was from Chishawasha, the second mission established by Jesuits when they reached Salisbury with the pioneer column. Prestage who had founded Emapandeni Mission in the time of Lobengula was also instrumental in the foundation of Chishawasha, before he went back to Emapandeni. Unlike Mzingeli who grew up with his parents who were well to do at the mission, Musodzi was an orphan and was raised by an uncle and received the education that the nuns offered to the girls of her time. Just as the encounter between Mzingeli and Burbridge, gave us one way of exploring how faith or the Christian claim of the supernatural interacted with the politics in the Harare African location in Salisbury, Musodzi's life and efforts can help us to understand the issue of gender at the intersection of the pastoral and political claims of the supernatural. This section explores this issue, and it begins with the life of Musodzi; then it explores how interpretations of her life expand issues of gender and the supernatural.

Musodzi: Her life and Times

Yoshikuni, who did the most important work on the early history of early Harare, carried out the best research on Musodzi's life.⁸⁴ Much of this summary is based on his study. He begins with a description of an old "non descript and underutilized building" in Mbare called Mai Musodzi Hall. It is one of the few old buildings that many do not care much about. Many do not know the person behind the name. Neither do they know that Ayema Street is named after her son. The

⁸⁴ Yoshikuni, Tsuneo. *Elizabeth Musodzi and the Birth of African Feminism in Early Colonial Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2008.

ignorance about names behind these streets is similar to what was mentioned above about Mzingeli Street. Many do not know who Mzingeli was, after whom another street is named.

Musodzi (tears) was well respected by the community; that is why she was addressed as Mai, meaning mother in Shona. It is attached to her name as a proper noun. It reflects her impact. She was born sometime in 1885, according to baptism records at St. Peter's Mbare, in the Chiweshe area, about 20 miles northwest of present day Harare at a time when Rhodes and his men were busy trying to secure their hold of Mashonaland and the Jesuits among other missionaries were struggling to establish a mission among the different tribes in Southern Africa. She was a relation of Nehanda Nyakasikana, the spirit medium who inspired the 1896 rebellion against white domination, who was hanged by the colonial administrators after the rebellion. Her parents were killed in the 1896, rebellion and she and her two sisters were taken by the uncle who settled on the Jesuit farm in Chishawasha. Musodzi was christened Elizabeth; and she attended the school at the farm, which was run by Dominican nuns.

Around 1908, she met and married Frank Kashimbo Ayema from Barotseland in what was known as Northern Rhodesia then, now known as Zambia. He was a sergeant in the British South Africa Police. She was one of many Shona women who married foreigners. As has been shown in the third chapter, most men in the Harare African location in Salisbury were foreign from neighboring countries, but the women population of the location was made up of local Shona women. The Shona speaking tribes were reluctant to establish a home in the city. So many of the migrant laborers married and lived with mostly Shona women, something that was

despised by many Shona parents.⁸⁵ Although both did not have strong family ties, their marriage was as Yoshikuni observes uxorilocal. Musodzi had more influential position in the marriage than Frank because she was in her home country and had uncles and relatives around whereas, Frank's relatives were far away in Northern Rhodesia.

Musodzi and Frank moved to one of the private farms on the outskirts of Salisbury, where Africans moved to when they were resisting life in the location. The farm they settled on was conveniently located because it was between the mission and the city. It became their first home which they maintained for 30 years. They had five children, whom they sent to Chishawasha for their education. She gained more independence as she committed herself to market gardening on plots that were leased to Africans and began selling her produce. It gave her an income that helped her establish independence. Her initiative was noticed by Fr. Burbridge who used it as evidence to the land commission that Africans were capable of utilizing what was being regarded as European lands.⁸⁶

In mid 20s, they moved to the location and rented a cottage in the new location that was established in 1922 for married couples because Frank's job required that he be in town. Frank had another accommodation at the police camp in town. They also maintained their home on the outskirts of Salisbury. They had three homes for a while. In 1937, they left their home on the outskirts and moved permanently to the cottage in the location. They lived there for the rest of their lives, and it was there that Musodzi established herself as a community leader.

⁸⁵ Schmidt, Elizabeth. *Peasants, Traders, and Wives : Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*. Social History of Africa. Portsmouth, NH : Harare : London: Heinemann; Baobab ; J. Currey, 1992. P.141.

⁸⁶ Yoshikuni, Tsuneo. *Elizabeth Musodzi and the Birth of African Feminism in Early Colonial Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2008., 5-6.

She was active in a number of organizations in the location. She was involved in the parish work at the Roman Catholic Church, where she was instrumental in starting the new sodality of Mary, which is still in existence with membership in every parish. The total numbered in the thousands. She was also the founding president of the Harare African women's club, the first urban women club, which did not have a church affiliation. It was affiliated to the Native Welfare society, controlled by arch paternalist, Rev. Ibboston. However, it maintained its own independence. Through her work, she encouraged girls to be educated at a time when the emphasis was on educating boys. She encouraged women to be involved in income generating projects so that they could have their own source of income at a time when most women depended on the income of their partners. She represented women to authorities and some influential people in the location. She advocated for better maternity facilities. She was eventually awarded an MBE in 1947 for all her efforts. Not long after that, she passed away on 26 July 1952 and not less than 2000 mourners attended her funeral. She is buried in Pioneer Cemetery on the edge of the location, the same place good old Fr. Burbridge is buried.

Faith and Gender Ideologies in the Interpretations of Musodzi's life

According to the situation of women outlined in the third chapter, Musodzi was one of the elite women who strove to establish respectable and dignified African women in the location. Theresa Barnes underscores her privileged position and emphasises her promotion of what the norms of respectability and righteousness considered good for African women:

Good women were separated from bad primarily according to their marital status. It has already been noted that the first club of African women in Harare township refused to accept unmarried women as members. The club was led Mai Musodzi a.k.a. Mrs Franks who was perhaps the best known woman in early history of the Salisbury location...Mai Musodzi almost had it all: relative prosperity gained in her farming years, a proper

marriage, a township house, standing as a catholic churchwoman and relative safety from colonial harassment.⁸⁷

Yoshikuni emphasized her efforts to reach out to the underprivileged women in the location,

Musodzi was a feminist, to use the language of our times. Her public life was dedicated to the advancement of the welfare of African women. As a keen observer of the social changes of her time, she was aware that the new era would be richer and more fulfilling for those who could free themselves from traditional boundaries of womanhood, which devolved around caring for one's husband and children, and doing household duties. A step towards realizing this potential was for women to have access to knowledge and education, as well as income generating opportunities. Characteristically, these feminist notions did not arise from books or from other people's arguments. They came from Mai Musodzi's daily experience which included her directly witnessing the miseries of urban life for many young women coming from rural areas.⁸⁸

Much could be said about her privileged position and the respect that she commanded and her relationship with the underprivileged and the unmarried women who were considered bad.

However, these can only help us appreciate the complexity in the location where she operated.

This short discussion is on one aspect of what is entailed in Barnes's statement that she had a "standing as a Catholic Church woman" It is about the way and the extent to which the Catholic faith is related to or shaped by her privileged position and her outreach to the poor in the community.

Mhoze Chikowero has nothing but contempt for the kind of missionary education that Musodzi would have received at Chishawasha mission. He consider it to be part of the missionary efforts to "witchcraft" African epistemology. The missionaries, such as those who educated Musodzi, sought "to subvert the African psychological view, to spiritually disarm them

⁸⁷ Barnes Theresa "We Women Worked So Hard" *Gender, Urbanisation and Social*

Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956, Harare. Boabab Academic, 1999, 33.

⁸⁸ Yoshikuni, Tsuneo. *Elizabeth Musodzi and the Birth of African Feminism in Early Colonial Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2008, 10.

in order to facilitate their recreation into subordinated beings amenable to alien colonial designs.”⁸⁹ It was in fact a gross “epistemicide” as missionaries sought to supplant the traditional structures of knowledge, which they labeled barbaric and replace them with their Christian values, considered pure and pristine. And they did so in violent manor without any regard for African traditional values. Chishawasha, in particular, where Musdodzi grew up and was educated, tried to create Christian villages where pagans were kicked out. It introduced a band, which played European instruments. This was not just a usual learning experience of instruments from other parts of the world. It was part of uprooting the Africans from their traditions and values and replacing them with Western symbols. In Chikowero’s analysis, Musodzi’s education at Chishawasha is best understood as a process of destroying African being and womanhood.

In as much as Chikowero’s argument that missionaries did a lot of harm to African being and tradition is a tour de force that must be given credit, there is one aspect that he mentions and quickly passes over which can help us reconsider the mission of the missionaries. At the beginning of the chapter he makes a remark about a statement to which he was responding and building his argument. This was a statement by W.R. Rea S.J., who argued in a presentation at a conference that “European missionaries should be judged as individuals who obeyed Jesus to set out to preach Christian gospel to all nations, not as people whose purpose was to further any political ideology, including the imperialism of the nineteenth century.”⁹⁰ Rea contended that their work will certainly be judged, ‘but it is in the kingdom of heaven that the verdicts will be

⁸⁹ Chikowero, Mhoze. *African Music, Power, And Being In Colonial Zimbabwe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015, 20.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, . 19

published.”⁹¹ Chikowero dismisses this statement as self writing and argues that the copious archive the missionaries left is enough evidence to give us their psychology and what they did, which makes it possible for us to judge them here on earth. That is why he delves into these archives so as to prove his point that missionaries intentionally destroyed African structures of knowledge.

Unfortunately, what Chikowero proves is that missionaries did harm to African culture and has argued, but has not shown that this was part of the colonial consciousness to disarm and subdue Africans. He has not demonstrated how the missionaries’ efforts were inspired or informed by the imperial desires that inspired colonists like Rhodes and not by “obedience to Jesus Christ.” Burbridge’s actions, analyzed above, challenged and dismissed African culture and values. were part of the epistemicide highlighted by Chikowero. He shared a lot with his European kith and kin. However, as argued above, there are aspects in which he differed with his European confreres. He was inspired and influenced by something not necessarily African or European. It was the supernatural, which he felt was above black and white. The understanding and legitimacy of this supernatural can be questioned, but it certainly had differences with imperial designs such as those followed by Cecil Rhodes and his pioneers, some of whom did not care much about his designs, but were in search of fame and fortune. However, this cannot be established with certainty. Neither can we firmly conclude that he was inspired by what inspired Rhodes. Therefore, a more convincing logical conclusion in the view of Chikowero’s analysis is that claim of the supernatural or of “obedience to Jesus” was closely intertwined with European

⁹¹ Ibid.

imperial designs. In this relationship, we can find ways of establishing how faith operated in dynamics and processes that led to the rise of the city.

In her study of Shona women between 1890 to 1939, Elizabeth Schmidt has a chapter that focuses on the education of girls by missionaries; and it gives important insights into the nature of the relationship between faith and the colonial process that gave rise to the city and how they affected gender issues. According to Schmidt, some African traditional elites and colonial authorities concurred in the thinking that a woman's place was in the home. The missionaries, from a spiritual front, colluded with colonial authorities and elite African men in subordinating, controlling and restricting women.⁹² The political economy that colonialism was introducing required that men provide the labour, whilst women stayed at home, obeying their husbands and reproducing a health labour force. Thus, the education most women received was to be good homemakers and obedient Christian wives. It emphasized sewing, needlework, cooking and cleaning. It was the so-called domestic science, which was basically a domestication of women. This is the education that Christian missionaries provided.

This education was not always smooth as it was resisted by some Europeans who felt it was making African women European, and it was also resisted by some African parents because there was thinking that it would make their children prostitutes because they would run away to town and would not be married or they would marry foreign men who were looked down upon. But to most missionaries who devoted themselves to the education of "native" girls was important for making them good Christian wives. The education did not end with formal school which was very minimal for girls, it continued through creations like *ruwadzano*, where women

⁹² Elizabeth. Schimdt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives. Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*. Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann ; Harare : Baobab London : J. Currey, 1992. Chapter 5.

continued to teach each other about their role as wives. There were other organizations such as sunbeams and wayfares, a watered down form of girl guides designed for “native” girls, because they were considered to be less sophisticated. They could not do what girl guides should do.

In spite of the domestication, a few African women went on to shape their own lives, beyond what the missionaries wanted. Some took the domesticity to heart, “but others used their education as a springboard for resistance to African patriarchs both old and new.”⁹³ They went on to take jobs and responsibilities that gave them economic independence and a say in how they wanted to live their lives. They married men of their choice. According to Schmidt, these are the few who were liberated by mission education, Unfortunately, they were “..forced to accept European values and behavioural codes that circumscribed their option outside the domestic sphere.”⁹⁴ They exchanged “African for European patriarchal authority.”⁹⁵

Musodzi can be described as one such woman who followed this route. However, she did not choose either to imbibe the domesticity that was being promoted by Christian missionaries nor the independence that her education provided her. She chose both. The kind of works and ideals that she promoted for women in the location were those that were taught and encouraged for girls at the mission. But she managed to secure her own economic independence and married a foreigner, something that was despised by some of the African parents who resisted that their daughters receive education. In this struggle between the African and European patriarchal authorities, the Christian faith played an important role in her personal emancipation and of

⁹³ Ibid., 154.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 154.

other women. The missionaries tended to align Christian faith with European authorities; but for Musodzi, it was a key aspect of personal emancipation, in spite of its limitations.

As Yoshikuni emphasized, the Christian faith was an important part of Musodzi's life. It helped her champion the causes.⁹⁶ She was not just a Christian; she upheld some African traditional values; and she embraced the urban culture.⁹⁷ The words of her grandson recorded by Yoshikuni give us an insight into how Musodzi negotiated the tensions between her Christian faith and traditional culture, 'Grandmother [Musodzi] use to say that she lived in three places: the village, Chishawasha, town. When she lectured children on their mistakes, she'd say. "It may be alright in that place, but not in this place. It may be acceptable there but not here. I know this because I live in three places."⁹⁸ Yoshikuni goes on to expound that this sensitivity to context was not some form of relativism because Musodzi was different from some nationalists leaders emerging in the sixties who saw that which is African as antithetical to what is Western and Christian. Musodzi was sensitive to the different context as well as to what is axiomatic and universal that is why she was able to practice a world religion (Christianity) without losing sight of the local and traditional.

Musodzi experiences sheds light into the complexity of the relationship between Christian faith and ideological development that shape understanding of gender. Her life was a response to Christian faith's advance of certain ideologies. The Christian education she received was advancing a skewed understanding of being a woman. She did not dictate or impose one way

⁹⁶ Yoshikuni, Tsuneo. *Elizabeth Musodzi and the Birth of African Feminism in Early Colonial Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2008, 8-10.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 8.

of responding to this development. Instead, she found a way of developing the good in Christian faith to help underprivileged women to develop themselves. She did this without losing the traditional values that the parents of most girls of her time thought would be lost.

Many women in Mbare and beyond continue to navigate this challenge. They are constantly searching for ways of how to use the Christian faith to develop their despised statuses. The achievement of Mai Musodzi of expressing her traditional African values through a skewed missionary education that she received is an area that is still theologically undeveloped because of African theology preoccupation with what is African. Just as was the case in the experiences of Burbridge's and Mzingeli's experiences, the benefit of this experience to theology will be explored in the next Chapter.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has explored how Christian faith operated in the experiences of Salisbury from 1890-1953. African experience during this period was mainly a response to the restriction and control by colonial authorities, who only allowed Africans in the city to provide the much needed labour. Africans responded by claiming the limited space and turning it into a respectable and dignified home. The chapter began by outlining the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, tracing how it came to the location. It established that initially the Catholic Church wanted to create a space outside the city and away from African traditional villages, but it ended up following the people who were making the city their home. Through the experience of three people who were associated St Peter's Mbare, a Roman Catholic Church in the Harare African location in Salisbury, it mapped the three features of how faith operated in the development of the city.

The first was Fr. Alfred Burbridge who tried to go beyond what is African and European and emphasized the importance of the supernatural as experienced by the Christian faith. He did not appreciate much of African traditional religion and seriously misunderstood much of African traditional religion. However, his emphasis on the supernatural was important in emphasizing what faith is all about and opened ways of thinking about its relationship with the concrete struggles through which the city develops. The second was in Charles Mzingeli's disagreement with Burbridge. It exposed a major problem in Burbridge's or the official church's understanding of the relationship between the supernatural and the political processes. Burbridge wanted Mzingeli to subject his organization to the Church. This decision was a failure on the part of the Burbridge and the church to notice that the supernatural is bigger than the Church. Burbridge collapsed the supernatural to the structures of the church. Mzingeli resisted this move and operated outside the church authorities. The third aspect was explored through Mai Musodzi's life. She was a product of the church's education system that supported a problematic ideological thinking about women and gender. Musodzi managed to find a way through this teaching and used those teaching of the Church that promoted the cause of women.

In sum, these three lives indicate three experiences of faith in the city, first faith as that which is a call to something beyond and above the daily concrete experiences but must be connected to the daily struggles; secondly, the danger of reducing faith to structures of the church; and finally the danger of using faith to support certain ideological views about men and women. In their different ways Mzingeli and Musodzi, lay people with little education, overcame these problems. It is the manner in which they overcame these problems that this dissertation proposes should be the basis of contemporary African theology that uses experience as a source of theological reflection.

CHAPTER 5

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN URBAN EXPERIENCE AND THEOLOGY

A scribe trained for the kingdom who brings from his treasure things ancient and new (Matt 13:52).

Introduction

The chapter is a discussion on how theology in Africa can be transformed by the structure of faith mapped in the previous chapter. It is made up of five sections. The first section is a comparison of understanding and use of experience in the first chapter with that of urban experiences explored in the third chapter. This comparison is a way of revisiting the general urban experiences outlined in the second chapter that ushered a change in theological reflection on the continent. The specific ways that the urban experiences can bring change to theology is explored in the second section; through a discussion on how the three lived faith experiences of the church in the city, outlined in the previous chapter, can help in establishing ways of moving African theology beyond efforts outlined in the first chapter. The third section will discuss the how the move from identity to global theology in African can be attained through the exploration of lived faith experiences of the Church in the city. The fourth section summarizes key propositions of this dissertations and it proposes a way of carrying them forward so as to make African theology fully global. The final section is a brief comment on the vision and task of theology that emerges from the discussions.

Experience in Contemporary African Cities and Experience in African Theology

The different interpretations of the city outlined in chapter 3 show that Africans' response to colonialism was complex. Life in the city for many Africans involved more than what theologians explored in Chapter 1 tried to capture and articulate. It involves more than recognition, recovery, rehabilitation or rescuing of African identity and being from misrepresentations in the Western discourse on Africa. Western misrepresentations of African culture followed a metaphysical prejudice that a European is ontologically superior to an African because he/she is endowed with special rationality. Unlike attempts in African theology to give African culture their dignified space in the world through protection and preservation of despised African cultures and traditions, Africans in Salisbury struggled to find new ways of expressing traditional identities in the new space being shaped by colonial, socio-economic processes. In as much as Rhodes and most of his men who founded Rhodesia and Salisbury were guided by a colonial myth, inspired by Western metaphysics, which informed European misunderstanding of Africans what shaped their actions were concrete economic demands. The actual process of colonizing was guided by economic expediency. Likewise African responses to Rhodes' dream in Salisbury was not so much about engaging or correcting the distorted metaphysics that was being perpetuated by Rhodes and his men. They were not trying to assert how their being is similar or different from Western being. Rather they rendered the myth that sustained European discourse on Africa bankrupt through a process of claiming and making a mark on the space that the colonists endeavored to preserve for themselves. Through the political and religious forums available to them, African men and women struggled in different ways to claim and shape space in the city that the European settlers were building for themselves.

In Rhodesia, Africans' initial response to white settlement was resistance through war. The 1893 Matebele rebellion and the 1896-7 Shona uprising were clear rejections of Rhodes's machinations and Western misrepresentations of the Africans. After the failure of these wars of resistance, Africans adopted a different strategy. They sought to be included and to find an expression of their identity in the new and important spaces such as cities, which were becoming centers of the colony. The African response in Salisbury is best described by Shorter's observation, highlighted in Chapter 2, that the city did not obliterate the African identity and values. It gave them a new dimension for expressing their culture that can be discerned in the processes in Salisbury.¹

This experience is very different from that recovered by Mbiti in his study of the Akamba.² Mbiti's study was as concrete as what this dissertation has attempted in chapter 3. It took time to understand the language of the Akamba, and he managed to demonstrate that it contained a way of understanding time that was peculiar to African culture. He went further to show how this understanding of time affects how the Christian faith is expressed in the bible. It was an attempt to recover a living African tradition and use it to understand and articulate the Christian faith. The third chapter was not about recovery of anything so as to find ways of understanding or articulating the Christian faith. It was about how Africans are adapting to the changing social processes, how their traditions are being changed and how they have adapted to their traditional values to the new experience resulting from colonialism. The third chapter proposed that theology pay attention to the adaption and change if it has to move beyond preservation of an identity that depends on past experiences.

¹ See page 76 above

² see pages 41-45 above

Of the four theologians explored in depth in Chapter 1, Katongole's approach is closer to what was proposed at the end of Chapter 3. His proposal is that a way beyond the nation-state, a structure imposed by colonialism, is to follow the example of the three individuals whom he studied. They engaged with the processes of dehumanization in their communities and tried to transform them. This is close to the proposal in the third chapter that an understanding of contemporary African experience needs to go beyond the thinking of the African experience in terms of what Europeans say about Africans or what they did to Africa or the disruption caused by colonialism or preserving and protecting a pristine African past. Katongole's study of individuals and how they can lead to change locates theological reflection inside the complex processes in a manner that is similar to that explored in the fourth chapter where there was an examination of personal lived experiences of faith. However, there is a critical difference between the use of personal experiences in this dissertation and how Katongole approached them. Katongole is trying to find a way of overcoming the nation-state. His proposal is that the nation-state is a colonial creation that needs to be overcome so that Africa can find a new way forward. So, his study of the three individuals is a way of developing an alternative to the nation state. What the third and fourth Chapter showed is that the issue is not so much about discarding the nation-state or any colonial structures; rather, it is about how to be attentive to the way people live through colonial structures and reshape them. The idea is not to create an alternative to a nation-state or colonial structures, but to engage with ways through which people adopt and incorporate colonial structures such as the nation-state.

The nationalistic historiography discussed in the third chapter has shown that the nation of Zimbabwe has acquired characteristics that make a nation born out of many experiences, which includes the colonial experiences. It cannot be reduced to the structures of the nation state

that it has inherited. They have been impacted by political, economic and social struggles, which have given them a new identity since its creation in 1890. The nation-state and many other colonial structures are only a part of the bigger processes that have brought together diverse groups who find an identity in what has become Zimbabwe. Thus, to think in terms of an alternative to the nation state is to do the impossible. It is an attempt to undo history. The proposal in chapter 3 was about locating theology in the historical experience that shapes experience.

The recent events in Zimbabwe that have led to the removal of Robert Mugabe from power have shown that the legal structures that make the state have grown beyond what was inherited from the colonial masters. During the process of pushing Mugabe out of power, different groups, the army, the presidency, political parties and parliamentary organs quoted from different sections of the constitutions with all sorts of amendments to try and justify the legitimacy of their actions. The constitution of Zimbabwe had become a tool that had been adapted to work for different groups in different ways and was used as a guarantor of freedoms and justice. Although it began as a product of the nation state, it has become an important tool for Zimbabwe that cannot be easily replaced.

Another theologian from the first chapter whose proposals seem to be similar to the proposal in the third chapter is Shorter, who proposed a dialogue between Christian theology and theologies of African traditional Religion. The experiences of Africans' engagement with urbanization explored in the third chapter, that this dissertation take, as a crucial location for theological reflection, is different from what Shorter is proposing. Dialogue as proposed by Shorter is about two theological or theoretical disciplines or groups that should respect the independence of the other and dialogue about areas of convergence and divergence. It is different

from experiences of engagement such as those in Salisbury. Locating theology in experiences of engagement in urban experiences is about using concrete processes through which people change and are changed by the other as fundamental sources of theological reflection. Such an approach is more in line with the insight in Shorter's study of the church in the city, reviewed in the second chapter, where he states that the "the city does not provide a new culture, rather it gives people a consciousness of an extra-cultural dimension which is not easily integrated with ethnic tradition."³

Pobee went further to suggest a translation of "Christianity into Authentic African Categories" as a way of replacing the European stamp that came with Christianity with one that is African.⁴ Just like Shorter, he suggested that it has to be done through dialogue. The difference between dialogue and what was proposed in chapter 3 needs no further clarification. What is key in Pobee's proposal is what he calls translation and how it differs from locating theology in processes of urbanization. What Pobee calls translation is commonly referred to as inculturation in African theology. It was a dominant theme in African theology throughout the 20th century. Although it was not discussed in the first chapter, it was at the core of what most theologians were doing. Mbiti and Nyamiti did not consider themselves as doing inculturation, but there is a lot about inculturation that can be discerned in their work. Mbiti's proposal that there is a way of looking at New Testament ecclesiology in an African Background is one way of inculturating.⁵ Nyamiti's attempts to draw the similarity between African thinking and Aquinas' scholastic

³ Alward Shorter, *The Church in the African City* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991, 26.

⁴ John S Pobee, *Toward an African Theology*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1979. P15-16.

⁵ See page 41-46 above

method is also an attempt at inculturation.⁶ Again translation or inculturation differs from a theological thinking that is about cultural values and identities that are finding new expressions in new socio-economic processes. Inculturation is more about some preservation, and the engagement with social processes. It is about an acquisition of new meaning and identities.

The theologians discussed in Chapter 1 were aware of the changes that African culture was going through. They made reference to the dynamics that the colonial experience was bringing to Africa. Shorter's work was about exploring whether incarnation or adaptation is the best approach in African theology. Pobee, Kwesi and Nyamiti explicitly mentioned the need to be attentive to the changes taking place in Africa. Their personal lives were also influenced by the global trends of the time. Most of them were Western-trained. They spent a considerable time working in Europe or America. Some of them, like Mbiti, Ela and Katongole ended up settling in Europe or America. Thus, they were not just in the past. They were also seriously considering how the African traditions and culture is part of the global trends. However, as has been argued in the first chapter, the general trends in their theology was to recover and protect the cultural traditions and religions which were being trampled upon by Western discourse on Africa. They were part of the liberation struggles to ascertain the dignity and independence of African traditions and religion. The result was an identity theology, a theology that was located in the western imagination of Africa and it sought to establish that which makes African Christianity unique and give it a respectable place in the global thought processes.

The third chapter was trying to map a way of going beyond establishing a respectable place for African theology on the globe. It was exploring how African theology can engage with

⁶ See page see page 50 above

global processes through identification with the ways that traditional values and identities have been finding new expressions in the city. It demonstrated that urbanization is not loss of identity but creation of new identities through making the local part of the global. It was building on Chapter 2, which gave us a theoretical framework to explore the city in chapter 3 and showed that these dynamics were already bringing changes to theology. We noticed in chapter 2 that when theologians began to reflect on the church and the situation in the city, they began to move away from thinking about how the church can alleviate the miserable condition in African cities to thinking about how the Church can be part of the dynamics taking place in the city, where people were finding ways of embracing the globalization that the city was bringing. The exploration of the nature of faith in Chapter 4, through lived faith experiences of the Church in the city, was a way of building from the insights in Chapter 2. The next section is an analysis of how theology can move forward in light of the lived faith experiences explored in chapter 4.

Lived Faith Experience in Cities and Theological Reflection in Africa

Burbridge's Experience and Theological Reflection

A lot has been written about how missionaries disrupted African culture; but apart from the debate that Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* has generated, there has been little study of particular missionaries did in different places. Much of what is available are general statements about missionaries in many theological texts, such as those by Shorter who states in passing that missionaries were insensitive to African culture or those from Pobee or Muzorewa that their good work was marred by the fact that they were associated with the colonial agents.⁷ In historical books such as those of Chikowero and Schmidt, you can come across quotations from

⁷ see pages 26-27 above

missionary diaries that are used to support views that missionaries were the agents of colonialism.⁸ In the church's archives, missionaries are portrayed as men of faith who worked hard, in spite of their foibles, to build the churches; and they are remembered as such by members of different congregations. These diverse views provided a background for mapping faith in the city, which started with the analysis of the efforts of missionaries. It focused on Rev. Fr. Alfred Burbridge S.J., the first resident parish priest of St Peters in the African location in Salisbury, the first urban parish in Rhodesia.

Alfred Burbridge was an eccentric figure of volatile temperament. By and large, he expressed European views because he was convinced that they best express that which is Christian. He was aware of some tensions and misunderstanding among Europeans, and he disagreed with them. He was also committed to the development of Africans whom he regarded as primitive or with child brains. His tireless efforts to prove that the African spirit world is superstitious helped to demonstrate that his main object was not to promote European culture and values, neither was it just to make Africans like European. It was about understanding how the supernatural or divine transcendence as expressed by Christian faith is related to the historical circumstances in which he ministered. Burbridge was first and foremost a pastor who was ministering to people who lived in an environment of tension with one group (Europeans) seeking to restrict and control another group (Africans), who were resisting the control. Like his fellow missionaries who first tried to create spaces, which were neither European nor African but Christian, his efforts were meant to direct the people to God. He was relating the struggle in the city to faith in God. As pointed out in chapter four, how the faith in the supernatural is related to

⁸ see pages 210-213 above

struggles for space and other struggles in the city is still an important part of the African experience in Salisbury, which is now Harare and beyond.

Burbidge's pastoral efforts, which were not only sacramental but involved participation in different organizations and political administrations, are an instance of a faith in the supernatural or divine transcendence at the center of the struggle for exclusion and inclusion, disruption and integration during the imposition and reign of colonialism. They are attempts of the church to connect the struggles of experience to the supernatural. A theology that locates itself in such pastoral efforts will be more attentive to how people experience change. It is different to one that is responding to a discourse of one group (European colonialist) on the other (African cultures). It will not be about defining oneself in terms of the other but will be engaging how the official church is attentive to ways through which the self is adapting to the conditions brought by the other, even if they are being imposed. Such a theology will be robust if it pays attention to a number of issues that affect pastoral activities such as those that Burbidge engaged, which were not only sacramental. It has to analyze how the pastoral approaches deal with diversity, how they try to go beyond just ending particular disenfranchisement or highlighting uniqueness of particular groups and how what is new accommodate traditional values.

The theologians discussed in the first chapter referred to the importance of pastoral activity for theology in one way or the other. Mbiti revaluation of New Testament eschatology from the perspective of African concept of time is a way of developing a pastoral activity that can help people like the Akamba understand the New Testament Eschatology.⁹ For Nyamiti

⁹ see pages 43-45 above.

pastoral activity plays a crucial role in theology because the objective of theological reflection is to understand of revealed truth, and “to communicate it to others so that they can best understand and live its mysteries.”¹⁰ Jean Mac Ela’s theology has a firm pastoral grounding. He calls it a “shade tree theology;” a theology that “develops among brothers and sisters searching shoulder to shoulder with unlettered peasants for the sense of the word of God in situations in which these words touch them.”¹¹ It is different from that which is developed in libraries and offices. Katongole’s proposal that the focus must be on individuals and how they overcome the nation state is another way of emphasizing the importance of pastoral work in theological reflection.¹²

Of those theologians, the one whose understanding of how pastoral work should operate in theology is closer to what is being proposed here is Jean Marc Ela. It is unlike that of Mbiti or Nyamiti which is about clarifying the mysteries so that it is communicated to others and it is unlike that of Katongole who turned to pastoral engagement as a solution to the disruption caused by colonial approaches, Jean Mac Ela rooted his reflection in the daily engagement in experience of people who were suffering. His theology is very close to the liberation of theology of Gutierrez, which is about transforming structures of oppression from the perspective of the oppressed.¹³ However, the pastoral engagement being proposed in this dissertation is different from that of Ela because his emphasis was confined to one side of the political processes. Unlike

¹⁰ see pp 49-50 above.

¹¹ see p. 57 above.

¹² see p. 62 above.

¹³ Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation History, Politics and Salvation*. New York: Orbis Books, 1973, 15.

Burbridge who was on the side of the oppressor and the oppressed, Ela concentrated on the ending of oppression and disenfranchisement. His theology ended up as a voice of one political movement in the struggle. It did not have sufficient representation of the other. As a result it suffered a great blow when he moved into exile.

A theology that is located in a pastoral activity that is attentive to the process of how people engage in change that is being proposed here is not just about attending to a disaster but about the different ways different people contribute to adaptation and engagement with the changing circumstances due to social and political process. Such a theology can be rooted in concrete pastoral actions just like what Ela attempted to do, but it remains open to engage differences and diversity within the particular communities where it is located and within the structures beyond the community. As will be shown in the experience of Mzingeli below, it remains an incomplete project because it is dealing with the supernatural that cannot be exhausted by particular ways or understanding of the supernatural.

Mzingeli's Experience and Theological Reflection

The role of politics in the shaping of African contemporary experience needs no further clarification. The entire liberation movement against colonial domination was a significant political movement that played a crucial role in shaping African experience. Theology was an important part of this movement. As has been shown in the works of Ela and Katongole, the role of politics in shaping African experience did not end with the attainment of independence. It continued as the African intellectuals, new and old, critiqued the new African governments in independent Africa that continued with some of the oppressive structures of colonial government. Charles Mzingeli belonged to the earlier period when much of political activity was about criticism of colonial regimes. His experiences, especially his encounter with the officials of

the church help in showing another dimension that a theology rooted in pastoral engagements and change must address. His experience provides a way of thinking about the relationship between pastoral and political activities.

As has been shown in the fourth chapter, Mzingeli desired to combine his political actions with commitment to Christian faith. Burbridge, his pastor, representing the position of the official church did not agree with the way that he wanted to do that. Mzingeli was asked to make his organization subject to the church; he refused. It has already been mentioned that Burbridge and the official church were collapsing the supernatural to church structures and the act of Mzingeli was exposing the fallacy of this approach. This conflict demands that a theology which engages contemporary experience must reflect on how the pastorally engaged political theologies engage with claims of the supernatural outside church structures.

Over the centuries, Christian faith has grappled with ways of dealing with the supernatural in politics beyond the church. Different views have been expressed at different times in the history of the church. One view is from Augustine in the early church who distinguished between the two kinds of love operating in the world.¹⁴ He distinguished between the love of God to the point of rejecting the self and the love of self to the point of neglecting God. For Augustine these loves can be found in both the church and in the world. So there are people outside the church who can still have the love of God to the point of neglecting the self, just as there are people in the church who can love the self to the point of neglecting God. From this perspective, it is possible to see how theology can recognize the act of God or the supernatural outside the church structures.

¹⁴ Augustine Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Bettenson , Pelican Books, Middlesex, 1972., 593

A more contemporary view is from Scott and Cavanaugh who, in their exploration of political theology, regard religion and politics as “...similar activities that create metaphysical images which determine a community’s organizational structures.”¹⁵ In other words, religion has got those attributes associated with politics such as ordering the public life of society, and politics has attributes associated with religion that has to do with relationship with the transcendent. Their view is different from those who think one has a monopoly over the other; either religion controls politics or vice versa. Political theology within the approach that views politics and religion as similar activities has a task of “exposing false theologies underlying supposedly ‘secular’ politics and promoting true politics implicit in true theology.”¹⁶

These views from history have their limitations and strength, but they are an important resource for an African theology that try to engage with the problem that was exposed by Mzingeli’s experience. They help African theology to go beyond the efforts of Katongole and Ela who engaged the political but overlooked the complexity in the relationship between faith and politics. They focused on the injustices and the excesses of post independence political regimes without attending to the fact that some of those regimes saw themselves as doing something in line with the faith. Katongole and Ela endeavored to find an alternative rather than an engagement, which Mzingeli wanted. An attentiveness to the religious dimension in politics, might help theology to recognize that not all politicians are dictators. There are some like Mzingeli who have a vision similar to that of the church.

¹⁵ Scott and W. Cavanaugh, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Mai Musdozi's Experience and Theological Reflection

It is important to note that all theologians discussed in the first chapter were men, and almost all of them are priests or pastors. Up until recently, theology in Africa has been a monopoly of priests and pastors. It is no wonder that issues of women or gender are absent in the first chapter. Although the situation seems to have changed a little as there are laywomen theologians who have emerged, gender issues in African theology are yet to fully develop, which makes the experience of Mai Musodzi cogent. The scarcity of women theologians or gender issues among African theologians does not mean there has been no woman who articulated gender issues in the faith that was part of the developing urban communities. Mai Musodzi was not a theologian, neither was she a scholar of any kind, but she embodied an experience that gives us an insight into understanding gender issues from the perspectives of ordinary women who form the majority of Church members across Africa.

It has been established in the previous chapter that Musodzi was one of the unfortunate orphans of the first war of resistance to colonial rule; she found herself at one of the early mission farms. She received an education that was supposed to uproot her from her traditional roots, (which had their fair share of limitations for women) and make her a proper Christian woman according to the ethos that guided the missionaries of the time. Unknown to the missionaries, the ethos were supporting an ideology that promoted certain retrogressive ideas about black and white, male and female. Musodzi did not follow the objectives of the curriculum of her education; neither did she escape from the limitations of her African traditions. She used the best of both worlds to carve a route for women in the city. She kept the ideals of the faith she received without despising the traditional values of her people and championed the causes of those who did not fit in the ideals of both the Christian faith and the traditional values. The imperial

government that supported the colonists who killed her parents honored her; the church that gave her the education, though skewed, that emancipated her does not have anything to honor her memory except comments and statements from priests who served her. However, she remains an important figure for the people of her time who witnessed her efforts.

Her experience and legacy is an important source for a theology that should take into consideration contemporary African experience of change and adaptation. It provides a couple of issues or more that such a theology should consider. First it demands that theological reflection of feminism or gender issues must constantly pay attention to the daily struggles of ordinary women. It should not only be about theories and ideas of what it means to be a woman. As Yoshikuni pointed out, Musodzi was a feminist even though that word might have never been part of her vocabulary or even though it was not known in her part of the world during her time. For Yoshikuni, if we understand feminism to be about the advancement of women, it should not be only about what issue from books or from other people's arguments. Musodzi can be considered a feminist just like Mary Daly or Elizabeth Johnson.

Secondly, Musodzi's experience requires that theology be attentive to the fact that people are constantly redefining their identities in accordance with the circumstances in which they find themselves. Musodzi considered herself African, Christian, woman, mother and grandmother in accordance with different situations without dismissing the others. Mother is a status regarded highly in African, European, Christian or any other religious traditions in the world; but its interpretation differs in ways that are not easily discernible to the scholar. Musodzi attained this status at the crossroads of pastoral and political views that were not always compatible. A theology that is sensitive to contemporary African experience that takes gender issues seriously has to deal with how these seemingly incompatible views come together.

Burbridge, Mzingeli Musodzi and the move from Identity to Global Theology

There is a link between urbanization, modernization and globalization, which has not been discussed in this dissertation; but it has been alluded to in a number of places in the preceding chapters. In chapter 2, the link between urbanization and modernization was strong in Shorter's remarks about the city as a vehicle of modernization. He described modernization as the "ability to transform scientific knowledge into technology" and is at the core of international socio-economic systems of which Africans are a part.¹⁷ He considered it as an essential currency that can serve any or every cultural system. His criticism of the modernization that came through the urbanization was that it was not value-free. It came with values of the Western cultures that control modernization, and some of these were negative. Consequently it functioned as an instrument of Western domination. In spite of this challenge, Shorter maintained that there was something great happening at the same time as people of diverse backgrounds and traditions were finding new ways of associating and building communities. He noted an associative principle replacing the cohesive principle in urban areas. The cohesive is about the imposition of traditional values, whereas the associative is about adopting other forms and making it their own. In a way, Shorter's description of modernization involves the impact of the global processes of modernization through which modernization took place in Africa and the way the local people responded to the global impact on the local.

The connection of the global and the local in urban cities was also discussed in chapter 3, where it was noted that African cities are dependent on processes that originated beyond Africa. One firm argument in this regard was from Magubane who argued that, unlike European cities,

¹⁷ Ibid.

which developed because of industrialization, African cities developed as centers of exploitation meant to supply raw materials to European industries. Magubane's argument was that the development in African cities would not be solved by industrialization, but by revisiting the relationship between Africa and the West. That relationship between the global and the local in African cities was indirectly discussed in chapter 4, when we considered the experiences of Burbridge, Mzingeli and Musodzi. These experiences were not only about the local issues or about making Salisbury an African city. Their action was guided and informed by the idea of imperial citizenship. There were efforts to be part of bigger global processes beyond their local circumstances.

In the experience of Burbridge, Mzingeli and Musodzi, we encounter particular concrete situations where there are adaptations that are not an abandonment of local values. In as much as the global or that which is beyond the local community is a dominant factor, there is no overwhelming of the local by the global. Instead there is a development of a space created through individual efforts to shape and recreate identities. A theology that is rooted in this space becomes aware of the different ways people are becoming part of the global. Such a theology appropriates what is in Samora Machel's famous statement "Aluta continua" the struggle continues. Samora Machel was the first president of Mozambique; through a number of tragic experiences after independence came to the realization that independence is not the end of strife and tension or a re-creation of Africa as it was before colonialism. Rather it is a continuous commitment to the building of the nation from diverse experiences, which have developed over a long period and coalesced in a particular space.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Camarada Presidente*, directed by Moscow Kamwendo, Dubai 2012.

Aluta continua can be understood as a realization that the ideas and policies of leading African leaders, like Nkrumah, Nyerere and Kaunda were blind to an experience of adoption that had taken place as a result of colonialism. Nkrumah's conscientism,¹⁹ Nyerere's *ujamaa*²⁰ and Kaunda's humanism²¹ are some cases of these efforts to recover African values and ethos. They all failed to bring the development that they envisaged. There are some who argue that these failures are a result of Western influences and meddling in African Affairs. The Western powers are accused of the fall of Nkrumah through a military coup.²² The World Bank and IMF are held responsible for the failure of Ujamaa.²³ There are some who follow the fact that the failure of some of these had to do with the failure of leadership in independent countries; for example, the case of Zambia is blamed on Kenneth Kaunda's intolerance to opposition and corruption.²⁴ All these reasons might have contributed to the failures of these great leaders and their policies, but none of them make reference to the fact that inside these struggles were individuals and civic organizations that were not thinking of alternative ideological premises nor keeping pristine traditional values. There were about finding new expressions in the circumstances in which they found themselves. They were not about creating a new ideology or safeguarding traditional values.

¹⁹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonisation*

²⁰ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa, essays on socialism*

²¹ Kenneth Kaunda, *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation*

²² Godfrey' Mwakikagile, *Western Involvement in Nkrumah's Downfall*, Dar es Salam: New Africa Express 2015.

²³ Horace Campbel, "Nyerere Julius Kambarage," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought* Vol. 1 p 179.

²⁴ Helen Epstein, "Colossal Corruption in Africa," *The New York Review of Books*, December 4, 2014.

The efforts of these particular individuals and organizations in shaping new nations out of a merger of traditional or local values with the global processes have been understudied. What has dominated political discourse in Africa has been about protecting the ideas and wisdom of African tradition, and making sure that it occupies a respectable place among Western ideas that have come to dominate the world today. As has been shown in Chapter 1, theology has been part of this endeavor as it tried to show the African wisdom through which the Christian faith can be articulated. What is being suggested by looking at personal lived experience of individuals such as those considered in Chapter four is that theology will then locate itself in the midst of change, reflecting on how the change is taking place, and how it safeguards against generalisations, such as those found in attempts to formulate ideologies to guide independent African states.

Such a theology that focuses on an on-going process of interaction and re-creating a new space and phase based on encounters and relations has some family resemblance with Latin American liberation theology or Black Theology and Feminist Theology of North America. However, it is different in that it is not about ending a particular disenfranchisement, such as that of the poor (Latin America) or of people of a certain colour or people of a certain sex (North America). Poverty, racism and gender discrimination are problems in Africa; and they need and can benefit from the insights of liberation theology developed in the Americas. However, what is being emphasized in this theology is an attentiveness to the on-going process of incorporating the disfranchised in space at each given time, which includes particular groups that American liberation theology has dealt with and many more. The city as a space toward which most people of different areas and eras seem to gravitate and which is in a constant flux is a significant space to find a way of incorporating all. The attention to how individuals live their faith in the city should give theology a way of establishing a notion of development that does not obliterate the

achievements of past generations, but help them carry forward and create a permanence that is open to change.

An attention to lived faith experience is also an important way of engaging two dominant themes in Southern Africa that have carried over from Nyerere, Nkurumah and Kaunda's approaches. One is represented by Mugabe's rhetoric of sovereignty and another is of ubuntu, adopted as a guiding principle for a post apartheid South Africa. Most people know Robert Mugabe as the 93 year old president of Zimbabwe who was in power from April 1980 to November 2017. A sizable literary industry has grown around him.²⁵ Most of it is critical of his leadership. Although reviled by many, a reasonable number revere him, including some prominent African leaders. A survey of his many speeches will show that his major theme has been very simple. His basic message was that African countries are sovereign nations and they must be left to run their own affairs. He perceives his life as a long struggle against Western imperial forces, which are always trying to undermine Africa of its God given right to sovereignty. Much of the literature that has developed around him blames him for Zimbabwe's political and economic decline. The response from his apologists, including African leaders like Thabo Mbeki, is that the Western powers seeking a regime change are responsible for the problems that Mugabe is trying to solve.²⁶

The debate around Mugabe is an instance of the effort in African scholarships including theology to protect and preserve African legacy. It is located within the colonial imagination that

²⁵ Stephen Chan, *Robert Mugabe, a Life of Power and Violence*. Andrew Norman, *Robert Mugabe and the Betrayal of Zimbabwe*. Peter Godwin, *The Last Days of Robert Mugabe*. David Blair, *Degrees in Violence*. Martin Meredith, *Mugabe: Power, Plunder and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*. Heidi Holland, *Dinner with Mugabe: The untold story of a Freedom Fighter Who Became a Tyrant* and many more

²⁶ ZA Updates. "Thabo Mbeki Speaks Mnangagwa, Mugabe & British Mugabe Change," YouTube Video, November 22, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWm9eKGm8nU>.

depicts the African situation of poverty and misery through the prism of colonial experience and its aftermath, portraying the colonialism as a major source of African problems and it probes and proposes ways of exorcizing Africa of western destructive influences by delineating what is African in a bid to rescue Africa from Western machinations. That process is generally referred to as decolonisation and it manifests in different discourses on Africa, in African Christianity and in African politics.

Another attempt to protect the African legacy is through efforts to resuscitate Ubuntu as a principle to guide the socio-political in South Africa²⁷ and Zimbabwe.²⁸ Ubuntu is an attempt to develop an African philosophy, which looks at a human being as belonging to a community, different from a view of a human being as an individual subject. The main expression of Ubuntu is “I am because we are” which is different from the Cartesian “I think therefore I am.” The latter locates being in the individual, and the other locates being in community. Those who advocate for Ubuntu try to place the community at the center of political and economic processes.

In as much as these efforts have their fair share of benefits in Africa and are an important legacy from which African theology can draw, this dissertation is proposing that there is need to pay more attention to how these values are interacting with global process, some of which have been imposed by colonialism. It argues that the best way to do that is through a careful engagement with lived experience. For theological, reflection the personal lived experience of faith in the church and city is an important starting point.

²⁷ Michael Onyebuchi Eze, *Intellectual History in Contemporary South Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²⁸ Stanlake John Thompson Samkange and Tommie Marie Samkange, *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy* (Salisbury: Graham Pub., 1980).

It was mentioned in the introduction that a danger in identity theologies is to take the identity of the group to be the same as the identity of the individual. Even though there had been no discussion in chapter one of how this danger was part of African theology, it can be discerned in the fact that most theologians did not discuss how their claims of what is African did not pay much attention to the differences perspectives of those claims. Attention to lived faith experiences of the church in the city is helpful in showing how to individuals and organizations in one given society are able to transcend the identities commonly associated with their races or groups. It avoids taking one understanding as representative of all who belong to the group.

Possible Ways Forward for a Global African Theology

First and foremost this dissertation was about African theology. It has argued that African Theology needs to take urban experience if it is to move away from identity issues and engage with the global process. Such an approach takes African theology from preoccupation with protection of African identity and becomes part of global processes. It has proposed the use of personal lived faith experiences of the church in the city as a primary source of a theology that moves beyond identity theology. However, there is need to look at other discourses in theology to take African theology further into a global realm.

Firstly, much more needs to be done in terms of understanding how the proposal developed in this dissertation relates to the use of the bible and discussion about doctrinal issues in African theology as well as in theology in general. It was mentioned that theology is not merely about culture or about being African or European. It is about Jesus Christ as he has been proclaimed in scripture and tradition, what is it he has done for us.²⁹ African theology just like

²⁹ See pp. 25-26 above.

any other Christian theology has dealt with these issues of Christology and salvation. How the fruits of these discussions can be help or be helped by the approach discussed here is something that needs further exploration. One way of doing that would be to explore how the bible or how Christ and what he has done for us, shaped the personal lived experience of faith such as those of Burbridge Mzingeli and Musodzi or how their experiences contributed to the traditional understanding of these doctrines. This would be different from finding an African philosophy or theoretical category to express Christology such as Nyamiti's efforts to articulate how Christ can be understood as an Ancestor.³⁰

Secondly, the examples used were from a specific church in a particular location. More could be done about the specific churches in different eras or about other churches of the same era. An ecumenical approach can be taken by looking at other denominations in same or different eras and areas. The idea is that, if these particular stories are explored and incorporated, a pattern may be established that may be useful in proposing ways for developing cities.

Thirdly, I have used personal stories to map contours of the lived faith of the church in the city. I have used them as illustrations of bigger issues. The benefit of this approach needs further investigation especially in view of other studies that have gone in this area. The focus on personal, lived experience is not new thing in theology. Hagiography is full of such stories. Autobiographies such as Augustine's confessions have also been ways of using personal stories in theology. And in recent years, there are different theologians who have proposed new ways of working with personal stories or biography as theology.³¹ It may be helpful to compare how these

³⁰ Nyamiti, *Christ as our Ancestor: Christology from an African Experience*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984.

³¹ J. B. Metz: *Faith in History and Society: Towards a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans and ed. J M Ashely. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co. 2007, 219 228.

proposals or uses of biographies are similar or different from the way personal stories were used in this dissertation.

Another area of engaging personal stories that indirectly inspired this dissertation is the use biographies or personal experience in biographical movies such as *Lincoln*, *Belle*, *Jesse Owens* among others.³² These movies are not just about the achievements of the central figures of the story, but through the story of the focal figure one is led into the historical or political issues of the time. A biographical movie like *Lincoln* (2012) is not just about Lincoln's life as president. Neither is it a catalogue of events that led to passing of a bill. It uses the life of Lincoln to interpret key historical events. Lincoln or Owens is placed at the center of major historical events. The form of story telling in movies is different from a linear presentation of a narrative that is found in hagiographies or some early theological biographies such as the *Life of Macrina* by Gregory of Nyssa which move from one's birth to one's death.³³ These narratives presented in the movies show a complexity of an experience as they try to view an event from different experiences occurring at the same time. I used this approach found in movies to look at the nature of faith through lived experience because they reflect the complexity of how the city or communities developed. How theology can appropriate some of these uses of personal stories in movies may be helpful in dealing with complexity that makes up global processes.

Beyond biographies and personal experiences is the use of experience as a source for theological source. Reference has been made about the use of experience in the liberation theologies of the Americas and the use of experiences in this dissertation. Experience as a source

³² *Lincoln*, directed by Steven Spielberg, New York City, 2012; *Belle*, directed by Amma Asante, 2013; *Race*, directed by Stephen Hopkins, 2016.

³³ Gregory of Nyssa, "The Life of Macrina" in Caroline White, ed. *Lives of Roman Christian Women*. London: Penguin, 2010.

of theology has also been used by many others apart from liberation theologians, such as Swarger,³⁴ Balthasar³⁵ and Hauerwas.³⁶ Swarger and Balthasar use the drama or the experience of theatre as a resource or tool to explain how salvation takes place. Their focus is on God's action as he comes to meet us. Hauerwas has a slightly different approach to narrative theology. His focus is on the narrative of the society as it lives its faith or as it witnesses to what God has done for us through Jesus. A comparison of the use of experience developed in this dissertation with other uses of experience might be helpful in making African theology global.

This dissertation has used history and culture as an avenue for theological reflection. Even though there has been limited discussion of philosophy, a traditional major avenue for theological reflection, a consideration of philosophical views of experience may be helpful in globalizing African theology. One such discussion that might be helpful is that of Lonergan in *Insight*, in which he offers a theory of knowledge that involves experience, judgment and understanding.³⁷ Such philosophical insights can be important in showing the strengths and limitations of the use of experience in theology.

Finally, this dissertation with its focus on the colonial experience needs to engage with developments in what has come to be known as postcolonial studies, a discipline that has emerged in the 70s. The works of most theologians discussed in chapter 1, on which this

³⁴ Raymund Swarger, *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation: Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption*. Trans. J. G. Williams & P. Haddon New York: Crossroad 1999.

³⁵ Balthasar, *Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol 1 – IV, 2nd Edition, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2009.

³⁶ Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.

³⁷ Bernard Lonergan. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. London: Longmans, Greens and Co. LTD. 1957, 274

dissertation has been building, appeared in the same period. According to *Cambridge Companion to Literary Studies*, “Post-colonial” first appeared as a term referring to a historical period after which most countries were gaining independence and were developing ways of making the colonial structure work for the people.³⁸ It quickly moved to refer to an engagement with the construction of ideological categories that misrepresent former colonies and deprive them of sustainable and genuine development. Postcolonial studies as an academic specialization have grown as part of the sea-change that took place in this development. It has been shaped by debates on how to approach political economy, Marxism, capitalism, nationalism and cultural issues. What has been discussed in this dissertation has also been covered in postcolonial studies. A comparison of what has been suggested here with what post colonial studies have shown will also be helpful in making theology global.

The Task of Theology

The task of theology that emerges in the approach to theological reflection that is being proposed here is that of helping the church to live its faith in the world. In Christianity, individual religious experiences are lived out within the context of a community of faith, the Church. Being Christian is not an individual enterprise. One cannot be a Christian alone. He / she needs the church. The lived faith experiences in the church that were investigated are important in showing ways that help the church as a community of faith to be part of a large community. In this approach, theology as an instrument of the church has to play an important part in helping the church reflect upon its place in the world, through its investigation of these lived faith experiences of its members. If we are to bend Tracy’s distinction of different publics, the church, the academy and

³⁸ Neil Lazarus, *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

the world, what is proposed and followed in this dissertation is a theology that investigates how one public, the church, is engaging with another public, the world. Tracy identifies three kinds of related publics that different ways of doing theology has to address.³⁹ Practical theology is for the world, and it is unlike systematic theology, which is for the church, and fundamental theology, which is for the academy. He has a well-developed exploration of how the theologians operate in three publics, but the simple task being proposed in this dissertation is that the search of relations within one public simultaneously leads to an understanding of the other publics. How church is lived and understood can enlighten how the city or the world are perceived and developed.

This focus in this proposal was not so much of a solution to urban problems as was the case with some theologians discussed in Chapter 2, but it was about how to use the urban experience in theological reflection. It was only providing a toolbox for a thinking that thinks God in an African contemporary experience of the urban. To a great extent it was about how to use the lived faith experience of the church that are part of urban experiences to help us think and articulate the God-talk in contemporary Africa. Hence, it appears to be more about methodology. Gustafson rightly cautions about too much emphasis on methods in theology. He noted that there has been a preoccupation with methods in theology that can lead to philosophy of theology and not theology.⁴⁰ He advises an awareness of the limitation of any methods even though some methods are better than others and advises that methods should be used as instruments for a theological purpose. To a great extent this dissertation has been about theology

³⁹ Tracy D. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and Culture of Pluralism*: New York: Crossroads, 1989. chapter 1 and 2.

⁴⁰Gustafson, James M. *Ethics From a Theocentric perspective*, Vol.1. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, 62 -68.

in Africa as an instrument, how it has operated in contemporary experience in the 20th century, and how it can move forward in establishing its purpose in the 21st century.

Mbiti castigates proposals of this kind in strongest terms. He writes:

In recent years there have been articles advising us on how African theology should be done, where it should be done, who should do it, what it should say, ad infinitum. Some of these self made theological advisors, whether they should be African or foreign, have little or nothing to contribute beyond proffering their lavish advise; others simply want to play the role of theological engineers. I do not believe that theology can be produced by such advice alone. Those who feel obliged to give advice on African theology should preferably use their advice first to produce theological works, which in turn will speak to others.⁴¹ (61)

This dissertation falls into the category of those works that Mbiti challenges. What is encouraging is that Mbiti's criticism is that he does not dismiss this advice completely, for he says theology cannot be produced by such advice *alone*. Mbiti is challenging those who proffer advice to use them. That is why this section is proffering a few avenues of how I hope to carry forward the advice in these pages.

Summary of Chapter

The chapter has maintained that unlike experiences considered by theologians in the first chapter, African Urban experiences considered in this dissertation are not about maintaining or restoring traditional values but are about how traditional values found new expression in the global economy that came with the establishment of colonial cities. It has gone further to show how lived faith experiences of the church in the city within experiences discussed this chapter can move African theology from an identity theology into a global theology. The experiences are no longer about the protection or preservation of values or categories that can be used to express

⁴¹ John Mbiti. *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986. 61.

Christian faith in Africa. It is about how these values become part of the global reflection of the Christian faith that has relevance beyond Africa. It summarized areas that this theology has surfaced and how they can be further developed. The lived experiences are carried within the church; therefore, this chapter emphasized the point that theology is best done for the community of faith.

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