

How is the local church in Mbare Zimbabwe preparing the youth to participate in the socio-political system of their community?

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Micah 6:8.

Abstract

The church in Zimbabwe has been a great influence in the socio-political life of the people. The church has been involved since the time of colonialism to the current. The church has been at the centre of the life of the people of Zimbabwe. The influence of the church has been seen through the establishment of schools, hospitals and vocational colleges for the local people. This was done during the colonial era through the missionaries. Though they worked together with colonial government their desire to empower the local people was not welcome by the colonial government. After Independence the church continued to work for the development of the people of Zimbabwe. The church worked together with government to develop the various infrastructure that was needed to rebuild the country after the protracted struggle for independence. However the fortunes of the country have not been as anticipated, Zimbabwe has been for the last decade or two faced serious economic hardships, corruption, shrinking economy, human rights abuse and highly polarised political environment. Ecumenically the Christian voice has been heard and continues to be heard as the church continues to find a lasting solution to the nation's problems.

The nation said to be almost 85 % Christian has a political environment characterise by violence. My study seeks to find out what is the church doing to prepare its young people to participate meaningfully in the socio political environment of their communities. In the study I focus on Diakonia and active citizenship as basis for my theoretical frame work. I conduct a case study on five different congregations in Mbare, Harare. In the study I use questionnaires to get information from the pastors and also from the youth. The questionnaires have semi-structured questions and open ended questions.

The results are analysed manually and reflected upon using aforementioned theories. The findings from the study show that the youth are aware of the need to participate in the civic issues of their communities. They however show that they do not know how and in what ways they can get involved. The concept of politics seems to be limited to political party affiliation and not the general civic issues concerning the people's lives. The results also show that there is not much effort put to equip and guide the youth into active citizen of their communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my children, Munashe, Munopashe, and Mutsawashe

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1 Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction and design of study.

1.3 Introduction

Church and politics is a topical issue in the modern day world which has become very secular in outlook. There has been a great emphasis of the separation of state and religion. The Christian has continually shunned involvement in any form of politics, and yet they are the sharpest critics of government failure and incompetence's. In Zimbabwe the church was involved to a great extent in the liberation struggle for independence, this made the church structure easily accepted by the politicians. "The majority of the

Churches, having supported the liberation movement, enjoyed a cordial relationship

with the new government and were also in support of the new policy of reconciliation

as it echoed biblical principle."(Marlon Zakeyo, 2012) In the Lutheran world the teachings of Luther of the two Kingdoms have largely been used to justify non participation of Christians in politics. Christians have largely stayed away from any form of public involvement. In contrast the church as a body cooperate, mainly through para-church organisations has been active and vocal in issues concerning human rights and governance. In this paper I would focus on the church in Mbare community, in Harare Zimbabwe. The main focus would be to look at the theological mandate for getting involved in the transformation of the community by bringing the values and ethos of the Kingdom of God. Would also show the benefits of active citizenship as means of bringing about positive change within the community.

1.4 Problem statement:

I have observed that the church in Zimbabwe has been very active in articulating problems faced by the people in their socio-political environment. The Church has been trying to engage the government through its para church organisation to influence the political space in the country. Zimbabwe has faced huge decline in the quality of life of the ordinary person, wanton disregard of the rule of law. Elections in the country have been characterised by violence and many people have lost their lives for belonging to the opposition. Ecumenically the church has tried to engage the government through the Heads of Christian Denomination Group (HOCD) which in 2008 presented a document entitled the "Zimbabwe We Want". In the document the articulated and expressed the desire for a change in the way the country was being governed. These views expressed by the church did not seem to make any impact or did

not solicit any positive response. It is of importance to note that approximately 84% of the population of the country profess to be Christians. This would mean that Christians are also involved in the party politics that have seen scores of people killed dispossessed, imprisoned and maimed. This only means the Christian community has not been faithful to its calling of being the salt and light of the earth. It means the individual Christian has not been involved in the political space and has left it to people who would do anything to get to power. This I believe could be addressed if the Christian community would get involved in their local political community. Christians become active citizens of their community and country; they would bring in the values of their heavenly Kingdom. Christ proclaimed the arrival of the kingdom of heaven which has a different set of values and whose motive for action is love.

1.5 Research Question

How is the local church in Mbare, Zimbabwe preparing the youth to participate in the socio-political system of their community?

- a) Are the youths aware of their role in Politics of their society as a Christians?
- b) What is the church doing to educate or prepare the youth for involvement in the political life of their community as Christians.

1.6 Assumptions/Hypothesis

The estimated Christian population of 84% in Zimbabwe begs the question “where have you been for the situation in Zimbabwe to deteriorate to this extent”. There is rampant corruption in all areas of the government and parasternal bodies, disregard of human rights, rule of law and many others. The church has not been able engaged the political body at local level, not as a cooperate body but at individual level and there is very little being done to promote such participation. Individual engagement as Christians in the local communities is not taking place as much as would be desirable.

1.7 Theoretical Frame work

The theoretical frame work would revolve around the following issues namely how the church is empowered to get involved in the communities they serve. What is the theological basis for encouraging Christians to engage their communities? How the concepts of active citizenship

is a way of improving the quality of life of the community, district and nation by getting the ordinary citizen involved in the day today political affairs.

Diakonia as mandate for the church to actively participate in the welfare of the community they serve. The concept of Diakonia is all encompassing meaning it covers a wide area of disciplines in people's lives. The church must be an expression of the life of Jesus, in other words the church must be Jesus incarnated in human reality following the mandate that the disciple got from Jesus. In John 20vs 21 Jesus says "As the Father has sent me, I send you" The task of the church must be a continuation of the task Jesus had, to reconcile man to God and man to man, empower and transform mankind. The function of the Church is clearly demonstrated in the life of Jesus who empowered and dignified, set at liberty those that were oppressed, by bringing healing to the body, soul and spirit. The Church therefore has the responsibility to be involved through its members in the socio- political arena of the communities they are in. The Christian is a member of the church community and the same time a citizen of a socio-political domain, in which they have responsibility to actively engage and influence. The concept of Diakonia will try to show the theological basis that Christians as individuals have a responsibility to participate in the day to day function of their community as people with dual citizenship in the Kingdom of God and their local place of physical abode.

Active citizenship as concept which empowers local participants to influence the type of governance they want within their local domain. Active citizenship highlights the importance of the local population in influencing their socio-political atmosphere and outcomes. The concept is used here to highlight the fact that local participation can have a great impact on the politics of the community and thus eventually affect the national outlook.

1.8 Methodology:

I have selected Mbare Township in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mbare is the oldest township and has a lot of history on the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. The investigation will focus on the youth of the different congregations. Questionnaires would be distributed and the main focus would be to find out from the Christian youth. Their understanding of the idea of politics, should the church participate, politics. Their participation in local politics as individuals or through cooperate bodies.

1.9 Outline of study

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Background

Chapter 3 Theoretical frame work

Chapter 4 Methodology

Chapter 5 Results and findings

Chapter 6 Discussion

Chapter7 Conclusion and Recommendations

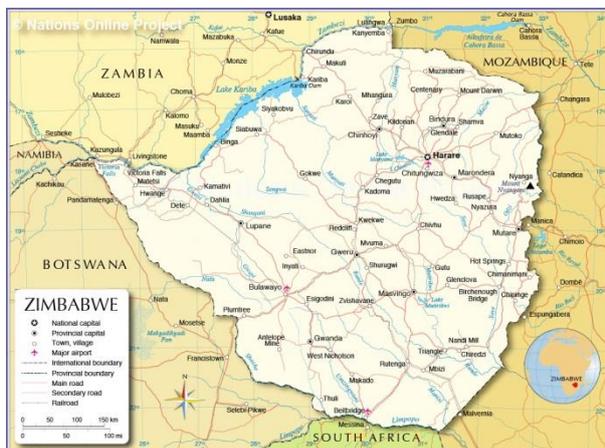
2 Chapter 2

1.0 Background

2.1. Introduction.

In this section of the paper I would like to give a brief overview of the political history of the country from colonial times to the current. I would also look at the relationship between the state and church during this period. A more detailed study would require a whole lot more work and time. This brief treatment is meant to give an appreciation of the environment in which the church has been and is functioning in right now.

1.2 Zimbabwe in General.



Map based on a UN map. Source: [UN Cartographic Section](#)

Zimbabwe is a land locked southern African country located between the rivers Zambezi in the north and Limpopo in the south. It has Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana as its neighbours as shown in the map. Zimbabwe has an estimated population of 14 million (UNESCO 2013) Harare is the capital city of the republic and has an estimated population of 1, 5 million as of 2010. Zimbabwe has three official languages Shona (which has as many as six dialects); Ndebele and English the Shona people occupy approximately two thirds of the country and Ndebele mostly the western part of Zimbabwe,

2.3.1 Brief History of Zimbabwe

The area now known as Zimbabwe is said to have been part of a kingdom run by Mapungubwe, whose seat of government was at the Great Zimbabwe ruins from which the country gets its name, which means “house of stones” in the Shona language. Remer (2010)

However colonisation was formerly done by Rhodes in 1891 after he was given mining concessions by the Matebele King Lobengula. Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC) (also known as the Pioneer column) had entered the country in 1890 and established a fort called Salisbury the present day Harare. Rhodes gained control of lands further north of the Zambezi and these later formed a federation of three territories Nyasaland (present day Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The federation dissolved in 1963 and Southern Rhodesia became Rhodesia. In 1965 the Rhodesia Front party under the leadership of Ian Douglas Smith declared unilateral Independence (UDI) from the British to set up a government which excluded the local African people. Sentiments of African independence or inclusion in matters of governance had already started as far back as 1957 with formation of African National Council (ANC) which was banned. Joshua Nkomo was the leader of this movement and later formed other organisations which were to be banned namely National Democratic Party (NDP), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). ZAPU later split into two, with one part formed by Herbert Chitepo, Ndabaning Sithole, Henry Hamadziripi, Mukudzei Midzi, Herbert Chitepo, Edgar Tekere, Enos Nkala and Leopold Takawira called Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Nkomo remained leader of ZAPU and the two groups formed military wings Zimbabwe African Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's liberation ARMY (ZIPRA) which waged a 15 year gorilla warfare against the Smith all white government. Robert Mugabe only appeared on the scene after the death of Herbert Chitepo and the rejection of Ndabaning Sithole as leader of ZANU and ZANLA. The war of liberation ended in 1979 after the signing of the Lancaster house agreement between the Liberation armies and the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (1978) government coalition led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa. In 1980 ZANU PF won the general election making Robert Mugabe the first democratically elected prime minister of Zimbabwe who later became an executive president after constitutional changes in 1987. The ZANU PF party has led Zimbabwe as a de-facto one party state after ZANU assimilated ZAPU in a unity accord in signed in 1987 following the disturbances in Matabeleland. The disturbances occurred from 1981 to 1987 which saw the killing of almost 20 000 (Tendi, 2010) people in Matabeleland. The killing of the innocent civilians was mostly attributed to the North Korean trained 5th Brigade army which was deployed to quell the dissident activity by some former ZAPU (ZIPRA) liberation war fighters. (CCPJ 2000) The period after the unity accord saw ZANU PF trying to establish a one party state how ever this was thwarted in many ways. The expulsion of Edgar Tekere from ZANU PF led to him forming an opposing party in the 1989 general elections Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). ZUM caused a lot of problems for the

ruling party as it exposed the fact that people were not in favour of the one party state especially in the urban areas. (Personal observation). In this period ZANU PF used the state machinery to try and suppress the opposition. The growing dissatisfaction of the general population continued to grow as the livelihoods of the ordinary people began to decline and the economic climate was becoming difficult by the day (Chitando, 2002).

Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe`s citizens have staggered under the heavy weight of multiple burdens , including economic recession, IMF sponsored structural adjustments, government corruption, political violence, ethnic tensions, land scarcity, drought, and an HIV/AIDS epidemic that has killed many of the country`s brightest and most productive people. (Callahan, 2001; 85)

In 1999 the labour movement together with civic organisations formed an opposition party Movement for Democratic change (MDC) which became a potent foe to the ruling party. The MDC together with civic organisations defeated ZANU PF on a referendum (11-12 February 2000) of a government sponsored national constitution. This led to a kneejerk reaction on the part of ZANU Pf with farm invasions, intimidation and abductions of opposition party and civic organisation members. Subsequent elections after this have seen much violence and intimidation of the ordinary citizens of the country. ZANU PF has shown it is unable to accommodate viable the opposition. Elections in 2008 MDC won the parliamentary seats by 99 to ZANU PF 97 and in the presidential election Morgan Tsvangirayi won the contest defeating Mugabe but did was said not have gained enough votes to take leadership. He had less than 51% of the total vote. The MDC then withdrew from the run up elections following a spate of violence that saw many opposition party members killed or tortured. The 2013 elections Robert Mugabe and ZANU Pf won the elections resoundingly however the opposition parties accused ZANU PF for rigging the elections. The undemocratic practise in Zimbabwe of muting the media, supressing freedom of speech and association, brought about “targeted” sanctions from the west and donor organisation. This with poor management and economic policies, corruption has lead to a near total economic collapse.

2.4 History of the Church in Zimbabwe

2.4.1 Colonial Period.

Historically Christianity was first introduced around 1856 by lone missionaries and more organised missionary work was introduced in 1890 when Rhodes Pioneer Column entered the territory which later became known as Rhodesia and currently Zimbabwe. The arrival of the pioneer column opened the door to more missions of different denominations. Catholic priest and nuns were part of the team of the pioneer column. (MacDonagh, 1980). Anglican missionaries were also part of the pioneer column “With the 'Pioneer Column', Jesuit Catholic missionaries and the Anglican Canon Belfour entered Lobengula's territory.” (Zvobgo, 1996). The defeat of Lobengula by the British South Africa Company led to an influx of many denominational missionaries who established posts in the various parts of the country.

2.4.2 Missionary work:

The missions followed different strategies in the first decade. Some of them – Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Methodist, Episcopal and American Board – concentrated on their big centers. The Anglicans and the Wesleyan Methodists established 'chains' of stations,At the turn of the century, the missionaries, by this rapid rate of land acquisition, had taken over one third of a million acres in Zimbabwe. (Sundkler and Steed, 2000, pg. 450)

After the fall of Lobengula who was perceived to be resistant to missionary work many missions were established with the blessing of the new established dominancy of the settler BSAC. The missionary established notable centers and stations which became places for education, health and evangelism spring boards. Catholics through the Jesuits established the Chishawasha Mission where "Training was directed towards practical and industrial work" (ibid). Wesleyans called their central station 'Epworth', after John Wesley's home.

In 1891 the Salvation Army, the Wesleyan (British) Methodists, and the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa arrived, each occupying part of the central province. In 1893 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches established a mission in the southeast, near Mount Selinda. The Seventh Day Adventist arrived in Matabeleland in 1894. The Methodist

Episcopal Church (MEC) sometimes called American Methodist arrived in 1897 in Manicaland and began work in the east around Umtali (ibid)).

The settlement of these missionaries in the country was encouraged by the occupying force BSAC which gave them land thus their political allegiance was to support or tolerate the decisions made by the settlers. Missions as mentioned earlier became responsible for meeting various social issues/needs that affected the local people. In the colonization process not all missionaries supported the idea of the marginalization of the local people and they took it upon themselves to advance educational skills to high levels. This was being denied by the colonial masters. Missionaries like “Bishop Dodge had accelerated native educational, medical and church leadership and had campaigned vigorously against oppressive rules of the Smith regime.” (Maenzanise, 2008) Bishop Donald Lamont a catholic clergy was known to be very vocal against racial discrimination. He made very critical comments against the 1969 constitution which further marginalised the participation of Africans in the economy and administrative affairs of the country. The land tenure act introduced at the same time with the constitution segregated against races using or residing in land not demarcated for them. The rest of the church was rather silent and neutral as McDough, (1980) notes... “They accepted the colonisation process as a natural and inevitable result of the inherent superiority of the white race...accepting tracts of land from the Company...” They did not however use the land for personal gain, but as bases for their missionary work. They established schools, training centres and health institutions for the local population. The colonial era church was silent to the atrocities committed by the settlers they however played a moderating and mediating roll between the settlers and the locals. (McDough, 1980, pg93) In summary the period during colonisation had individual denominations stand up against abuse of the local population by the settlers, there was no united front until after the formation of umbrella bodies for representing the churches.

The period leading to UDI (1965) saw a more organised critic of the subjugation of the African population by the white government. According to (Peaden 1979) the church had become critical and vocal against the way the government was ruling. Peaden chronicles the various events in which the church stood and made its voice heard concerning issues of governance in the then Southern Rhodesia and later Rhodesia. He however makes it clear that there was a gradual development over the years for the church to come out in clear support of black majority rule. He notes that church leaders had been writing expressing their opposition to racism since the setup of the colonial settlement. In the 60`s the formation of the Rhodesia

Christian Council gave a somewhat joint representation of the church position though not all churches openly condemned or supported the status quo. The relationship of the church and state was strained and saw a number of church missionaries deported by the Smith regime.

“On July 17, 1964, Bishop Dodge was deported, together with his colleague Rev. Robert Hughes. His deportation stunned the nation, especially the oppressed majority, the African people.” (Maenzanise 2008) Guy Clutton-Brock (5 April 1906 – 29 January 1995) was an English social worker at the Anglican mission of St Faiths, co-founded a multiracial cooperative, Cold Comfort Farm was also deported, These are just two of the many missionaries that were singled out and removed from the country because of opposing views to the Smith regime. (Zvobgo, 1988) also notes that “In colonial Rhodesia, missionaries’ persistent calls for more participation by Africans in political processes caused constant friction with the state (see also Bhebhe, 1988).

2.4.3 Liberation struggle:

The liberation struggle saw a great divide between white and black congregates, the whites Christian felt that it was not their business to effect change even though they were aware of the injustices. The black congregates were in support of the armed struggle as a way of emancipating them from the white supremacist government. The great thing to note is that most of the nationalist leaders were people who had been groomed by the church and for the church. The different denominations through their education system had trained many Africans into positions of leadership in the church. Missionaries had sent some overseas for higher education, which enlightened many of their (colonial) situation and possibilities of changing it.

“only after the Second World War did it (African political rule) become more radical and gain the popular support of the mass of the population in the 1950s after it had been reformed under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, then a Methodist local preacher. (Pearde, 1979)

The educated Africans had grouped together and formed organisations to bring about political and social change. Pearde in his article clearly articulates the ecumenical position of the church in disagreeing with the declaration of UDI

...notable ecumenical organization was the Salisbury Christian Action Group, formed in 1956 by a group of churchmen of both races to demonstrate in practice the Christian

calling to 'love their neighbours as themselves'; the Group believed that 'Christians should work to bring about truly representative government' and 'seek the repeal of legislation . . . which would discriminate against men on the grounds of race, colour, creed or nationality'... (ibid)

The church was actively opposed to the Rhodesian constitution which was discriminatory against the Africans. However the congregates remained divided into colour camps, with the blacks supporting the struggle for independence and the whites opposed to the use of force.

2.4.4 Post colonial church

The church continued to play the role of advocate for the people after having welcomed the new government at independence in 1980. The church through its various organs supported the developmental programs of the new ZANU PF government. The seemingly good relationship between the church and the state received a knock after the start of disturbances in Matebeleland and Midlands. The church became critical of the way the army was responding to the disturbances. The Catholic Church was the most vocal through its organisation the Catholic Centre for Peace and Justice (CCPJ). The ZANU Pf government as the years were accruing did not live up to the expectations of the people and the social-political situation was deteriorating. The church though critical still managed to be involved with the government. "The rhetoric of nation building, reconciliation and progress succeeded in bringing together politicians and people of religious institutions." (Chitando; 2002) In 1995 the Zimbabwe council of churches (ZCC), CCPJ and ZimRights played a leading role in voter education and election monitoring with the blessing of the government.(Laakso, 1996) However just like in the colonial era the church's position in Zimbabwe has not been unanimous regarding the political and economic situation of the country. This was so with some leaders openly supporting ZANU Pf and its policies this was exemplified by the former Bishop Kunonga of the Anglican Church. The continued deterioration of the political and economic environment caused a lot of hardships for the common man. The political sphere became more oppressive and denied the people basic human rights. In this background the Ecumenical church in 2006 represented by ZCC, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) presented a document entitled "Zimbabwe We Want". The document outlined the type of constitution that safeguarded the rights of the people. This move was deemed as a bold move of confronting the government over the crisis bedeviling the country for the past decade or more. Since then the church has been actively involved in trying to find solutions to the current Zimbabwe crisis. The Church

has played the role of mediator between ZANU Pf and the opposition mainly MDC. The Church has through mobilisation sought public support by lobbying regional and international institutions and leaders, and using the regional and international media so as to keep the crisis on the public agenda, which has been helpful in maintaining pressure on ZANU PF. (Moyo, 2014) The formation of the Government of national unity helped in stopping economic freefall that was draining the population. The church was one again instrumental in persuading the political parties to dialogue and come up with a solution. The ZANU pf government has been able to identify some churches and incorporate them into their propaganda machine. A case in point is during the troubled land distribution process Gundani (2008) and Chitando (2010) observed that Mugabe and his party were able to get the support of some church leaders to promote their land distribution by giving them access state controlled media and officiating in national events. “Nolbert Kunonga of the Anglican church is a case in point (Gunda 2008). Pentecostal leaders such as Wutawunashe also fall into this category” (Chitando, 2011). Church leaders such as Manhanga and Obadiah Msindo of the Destiny of Africa Network can be seen leaders who saw Mugabe as a God-given leader who could help restore African dignity. (Chitando, 2010) The divisive stance by ZANU Pf helped to legitimise the violent land reform program. The voice of the church became weakened by this however despite these setbacks the church managed to still force some dialogue between the parties.

2.5 Conclusion

The church since colonial has been representing the rights and privileges of the people of Zimbabwe. It is noted that the ecumenical representation of the Christian has been very visible in the political matters of the country. The church has therefore not had any favourable relations with state since the colonial days. This has continued even after independence, with ZANU Pf seeking to maintain its grip on power at the expense of the fundamental rights of its citizens. In the current situation focus has been the use of the various organs of the church to try to correct and reverse the current national crisis, but this largely fallen on deaf ears of the politicians who have called for the clergy to mind the business of the church and leave politics to the politicians. The current political arena is characterised by blatant disregard of the rule of law abductions, torcher, intimidation and fear, coupled with economic melt down with a highly polarised interparty urban and rural population.

3 Chapter 3

6.0 Theoretical Frame work

3.3 Introduction:

In this section I would like to discuss the theoretical premise for the project, the theoretical basis is on the concept and reality of Diakonia and active citizenship. Diakonia is in this case the biblical argument of or for the involvement of Christians in their community. I will briefly look at what Diakonia is and how it relates to the Christians in the modern day secularised society. I will outline the historical perspective of the relationship between the Christian and society starting from the historical perspective of the Jewish background to social and political setup. The history will establish the way God the creator has always been concerned with the welfare of his creation even in their fallen state. Looking at the historical premise of how God through various persons chose to speak into the prevail social ills that were not reflective of his character we see this in Micah 6: 8

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to love kindness and mercy, and to humble yourself and walk humbly with your God?”

In my literature review I will then look at active citizenship in a democracy where the individual has access to political influence on their community. How active citizenship is a tool of democratisation of society where the individual can participate with the knowledge their in put can have an impact in their local social-political welfare. Then lastly tie up the Christian social responsibility and active citizenship as means by which the Christian can have influence in their community as they play their role as citizens of the Kingdom of God of their local communities.

3.4 Diakonia

The term Diakonia has been made a topical issue amongst theologians, academics and practising church leadership both at local, National and international level in the last 200 years (Dietrich, 2014). The term is used to refer to the work done by the church for the needy and underprivileged. This work is usually carried out by individual congregations or through para-church organisations.

3.4.1 What is Diakonia

In the Old Testament we are introduced to a God who not only created man but is also concerned with man's day to day deliberations. We see a caring God looking out for the welfare of his people in this case the Israelites. "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." God chose Abraham to show what a life dedicated to God would be like so that mankind would turn back to God for redemption. As the biblical narrative unfolds we see that it is through the lineage of Abraham that Christ is born into the world. Christ's life is the very basis of diakonia in that he came to serve Mark 10:45. Christ is God the father's expression of love to the human race John 3 vs 16. The Holy Spirit empowers Christ for his work here on earth Luke 14:18 We see the triune God working together to redeem mankind. God gives the authority the Holy Spirit empowers and Christ does the work to bring salvation. Christ can be seen as the first Deacon.

Diakonia has been described as humble service to the poor and marginalised by the church, this has been done through various structures, church related organisations and individual congregations who through informal groups performed acts of kindness to members of their congregations and communities. Over the years since the introduction of Deacons to serve the tables in Acts 6 the term and description of Diakonia has evolved to incorporate many aspects other than humble service. This has been due to the change in socio-political set up of many communities throughout the world. The change has led to the function and execution of Diakonia to be different in each community or nation. The ministry of the word has been contextual, dealing with the situations according to detects of the need and not a one size fits all solution. God's dealings with people has been contextual taking into consideration the social, political, economic, and cultural context. In the gospels we see Jesus as the servant King in Luke 4 vs 18 .John 10: 10. he lays out his mission,

...to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Jesus himself says that I came to serve and to contrast his Kingdom from the prevailing ruler ship of the Romans who put burdens on the Jews instead he says "take my yoke upon you for my yoke is easy...Mt 11vs30 if you are to be leaders you should be servants of those you lead. Mt 20:27."

(paraphrased) The very ministry of Jesus was characterised by doing good, he went about healing the sick and delivering those who were oppressed, Acts 10:38 and also confronting the religious order of the day. Christ was serving the communities he went to in his ministry here on earth. Scripture shows us that Jesus did not just deliver people from their sins, spiritual oppression, physical incapacitation, but also met their daily needs as illustrated by the feeding of the crowds that were following him in Mt 14: 16. This very act illustrated that the disciples were not just going to minister spiritual needs only but to the entire being. Jesus passed on this ministry of the Kingdom to the church John 20:21 “Peace to you! [Just] as the Father has sent me forth, so I am sending you.” It is on this understanding that Diakonia is seen as a characteristic of being church. The basis of Diakonia is the self-emptying love (Phil. 2:7) of Jesus Christ, the deacon (Luke 22:27), whose sacrifice was made for the salvation of all humankind (1 Cor. 1:30; 1. Tim. 2:6).” (

3.4.2 Historical Development of Diakonia

During the first three centuries the philanthropic Diakonia of the Church was limited to distribution of goods to the poor, and care for the orphan, the widows and the elderly (Constantelos, 2004) . The execution of this mission took various forms as the world societies evolved over time. In the period after the first disciples were gone Christianity became part of the ruling elite in the Roman Empire, church functions were integrated to national functions and citizens participated by decree and not by conversion.

It was after Constantine’s reign that philanthropy became institutionalized. The Church either built or was charged with the supervision of hospitals, orphanages, gerokomeia, ptocheia, xenotapeia, reformatory institutions and other social welfare services (.ibid)

The work of the church became institutionalised; ministry to the people was no longer a prerogative of individuals but was now being done through organised state/church institutes. The church went through transitions as the world changed and the theology of the church also changed. In the 16th century we had the reformation era where there was a break away from the Roman Catholic Church on doctrinal differences. One of the major issues was on the salvation of man the Protestants were interpreting that salvation was by grace not through works. Faith alone in the work of Jesus at the cross brought salvation and not mans works. In these periods alms giving and charity were seen as acts which would bring about salvation,

whereas the Protestants viewed these acts of service as a spontaneous responses to situations of need based on the Good Samaritan story. Diakonia was seen a special ministry for the deacon or deaconess or as organised help through church related institutions like hospitals, orphanages, schools, special services for the sick, handicapped, individual help for the poor and marginalised groups done by professionals and not by lay people or the untrained. (Martin,1994). The function of diakonia as part of being church was lost with time and was now regarded as external function of the church motivated by need. We read into the fact that the church was providing social security for the various people who were marginalised or impoverished by the societal set up of the time. This was done through the different church related institutes and groups.

The ecumenical understanding of Diakonia has gone various changes as the Church was adjusting to the different understanding and interpretation of the scriptures and also the changes taking place in the world.

From World War II to this day, the new *Diakonia* , long fully embraced within German Evangelical Churches, has remained the iconic Christian semantic emblem of the lowly, selfless, loving service that characterised the life and death of Jesus and that should characterise all ministry performed in his name. “This understanding of a humble selfless service to the needy did not question the socio-political status which caused or perpetuated the problem in society.” (Collins, 2012)

This view of diakonia began to be challenged as needs and situations in world were changing as societies and nations were changing. The north -south relationship of the donor and recipient was being challenged. The supply of aid was not changing the lives of communities that were being assisted in that the underlying causes were not being addressed. The aid that was being given was treating the symptoms and not the causes of the perceived problems. . Questions were being asked by both the recipients and the donors, scholars and church leaders were also reviewing the concept of diakonia. Ecumenical perception of diakonia was changing as seen through the redefinition of diakonia through the WCC (World Council Churches) 1965 Geneva meeting which redefined diakonia as ministry.

to the saints, through the ministry of congregations to each other (Acts 11,12,24; 1 Cor. 10; 2 Cor. 8,9); (2) to the needy in the midst of a church (Acts 6); and (3) to all in need (Luke 10; Matt. 25) through aid (emergencies, refugees) and development projects in

cooperation with governments engaged in nation-building and modernization (politics-centered)”. (Martin ,1994)

The new thrust was not only to meet the needs but to be also actively engaged with the social structures which encouraged the neediness of the communities. This would entail working to empower people so that they can be able to provide for themselves through developmental aid which targets needs identified and agreed upon with the local community.

There was the resurgence of diakonia as part and parcel of the ministry of the church not to be left out for para-church organizations ... while Diakonia was earlier (1900s) perceived to be the activity of the professional diaconal workers or agencies, it is now emphasized that Diakonia belongs to the nature and mission of ‘being church’.

“diaconal work is not optional to the church but an integral part of its being Church” (Nordstokke ,2014)

. The institutionalization of Diakonia in the welfare states made it optional for the individuals to do acts of kindness or they would just to donate money to organized bodies within the church. The institutionalization of various church based organizations did not help the situation as this made them independent of the church life and this secularized diakonia.(Nordstakke, 2014) In most welfare states the running and mostly funding of hospitals and schools was taken over by the state(Pådam, Thidevall, Ahlstrand, 2002.pg.10), the church was left to administer the institutions on biblical ethos or moral standards. The redefinition of diakonia was done by many church denominations the one that strikes me most was by LWF. The Lutheran World Federation viewed diakonia as

... central to what it means to be the church. As a core component of the gospel, diakonia is not an option but an essential part of discipleship. Diakonia reaches out to all persons, who are created in God’s image. While diakonia begins as unconditional service to the neighbour in need, it leads inevitably to social change that restores, reforms and transforms (LWF 2003b:6).

W.A. Visser 't Hooft urged the churches not to see diakonia as means to an end but as an essential dimension of being church and at the core of the ministry of the church as the body of Christ (2 Cor. 8" (Robra, 1994).

3.5 Aspects of Diakonia.

The definition, interpretation and application of Diakonia has been different through the years and also has been specific to communities and regions. Theology of Diakonia has also been developing and being redefined according to new understanding of the terms used in the New Testament. Work by J Collins on the use of words relating to Diakonia in the new testaments has brought about a new appreciation of the function and office of the deacon. The notion that Diakonia is a lowly and humble service is being challenged by his study and understanding of the use of diaconal words in the New Testament. John Collins paints the picture that Diakonia is an active deliberate act of intervention motivated by Gods love for the world. Diakonia intervenes as an agent for reconciliation in the context of conflict and discrimination (Nordstokke,2014,pg.199). As mentioned earlier on acts of Diakonia are contextual and thus it can be expressed in many ways, in situations of exclusion the action is for reconciling, in situations of conflict diaconal action can be as a go between. It assumes many forms of expression thus also has many terms used to refer to it namely Prophetic, Political, go between etc. God's mission always takes place in a particular social, economic, political, religious, and cultural context. The church therefore has to analyse its context in so doing can be able to ask questions relating to situations requiring particular interventions, like transformation and/or healing, conflict and reconciliation, and power dynamics – its use, abuse, and misuse.

3.5.1 Prophetic Diakonia:

The concept of “prophetic diakonia” was formulated in Germany in the 1980s. According to Nordstokke (2011) it relates to the core or inbuilt nature of diakonia, which affirms the prophetic task as part of the mandate and authority that God has given the church in its execution of diakonia. In the biblical text, prophecy is given as a response to divine revelation and a God-given mandate to the prophet (ibid). Tsele (2002) says “Prophetic diakonia is by definition a special form of diakonia, a qualified or distinct form, certainly not the norm.” He qualifies this statement by stating that prophets of old gave specific words for a particular time and with specific objectives. In other terms the proclamation was contextual and addressing specific issues be they social, religious or political in nature. Diakonia in a prophetic mode must be transformative, change oriented, specific and boldly tackling root causes at the same time addressing the immediate crisis (Nordstokke, 2011). Prophets in the

Old Testament gave words and proclamations from God which called for social change or influenced political change. We find in the bible words of the prophets confronting the way rulers were exercising their authority. Prophets admonished religious leaders of the day to repent and not to follow rules made by man. Amos 2 :12. In Amos the prophet address the rulers, the social and religious status of the society. There is a call to repentance Amos 5 vs 6, the prophets also addresses the injustice against the poor Amos 5 vs 11, At the end of the book of Amos there are words of prophecy which bring hope of restoration and healing. It is good to note these prophets who spoke on behalf of God against unjust social structures were usually not temple prophets (Ibid). In other words they were not necessarily part of the administrative or religious structure. The prophetic proclamations in the bible would results in specific forms of changes in the social structure. They would result in either in the change of the moral or ethical behaviours of society (repentance), or change in the socio-political structure. (Jonah. 3)

3.5.2 Political Diakonia

This aspect of Diakonia is seen to be a derivative of prophet diakonia in seeks to operationalize the prophetic proclamation. Fretheim describes it as

.... as a more specified concept and field of study that explores and examines the meaning, use and function of theological concepts, ideas and metaphors in political discourse, in particular (Fretheim, 2013: pg.6).

The church must not just meet and alleviate immediate, distressing situations and needs. It is also imperative for the church to look at the structures that produce and perpetuate poverty, exclusion and deathlike situations. Our mission includes tackling the root causes instead of just treating the symptoms. This is a call for the church to not only relieve suffering but to denounce the causes and to work towards changing the social-political systems that produce such inequalities. It is described in Diakonia in context (LWF 2009) as “*Political diakonia* expresses the political dimension of diaconal work. Since diakonia takes place in the public sphere, it must be conscious of its socio-political role and be ready to speak out when necessary. Political Diakonia is expressed in the following ways namely advocating for change, social justice joining in demonstrations, and lobbying political representatives for change of legislation that promotes; exclusion, socio economic imbalances. Advocating for

equality for the marginalised an example is work that was done for the Dalit (formally called "untouchables") in India (Manchala, LWF, 2002, pg48).

3.5.3 Diakonia for the individual

Ecumenically the church has made tremendous strides in articulating the needs and fighting for justice for the down trodden and disenfranchised of the world. In Plan for Diakonia the Norway church distinguishes the different forms of Diakonia. Diakonia described as general Diakonia as "Individuals and the community are moved to respond when people face minor and major crises" (CONIS, 2010) Diakonia is an organised effort through deacons or lay workers in congregation professionally trained and through specialised church institutions or faith based organisations. (Ibid) Christians are called to be Disciples of Christ who himself is the epitome of Diakonia. "Deaconhood of all believers" (LWFDTTS 2005). In the bible there are calls for the Christians to be witnesses of Christ who in turn has given the individual Christian the mandate to continue his diaconal work."as the father has sent me so I send you." John 21vs 10. The motive for the individual is not only to fulfil the great mandate but it is also an expression of Gods love. Christians are commanded to "love thy neighbour" Mt 19:19, Mk 12:33, Lk10:27 as your self. There are to be witnesses of Christ every where and to minister to all mankind in Mt 25 vs34....40 the fact that believers minister to Christ when they minister to people in the list given in the Mt 25.

3.5.4 Active Citizenship

In this section I want to look at the concept that shows that individual citizens can have an influence that can result in socio-political change in their communities. Active-citizenship as a tool for bringing about change in communities on various issues around the world. It is seen as the bedrock for an effective and functional democracy, where the people have a large say on how they are governed and how their society functions. In tackling the issue I would first look at what is understood as citizenship.

What is citizenship one would want to start by defining citizenship... can be defined as "the status of having the right to participate in and to be represented in politics" (Baylis, J & Smith, S. 2001) It is a collection of rights and obligations that give individuals a formal juridical identity.

T.H. Marshall (1949) says citizenship is *"a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed."* The above definitions imply that one has to be within a particular geographical setting where they are accepted and have the right to participate and not participate in the processes of determining rules and regulations that govern that particular geographic boundary. They can be able to participate in choosing those who govern and can also be chosen to govern. They also have the right not participate and still remain citizen of that particular state or nation. Citizenship within a particular community also implies that one can participate in determining the welfare of that community.

... citizen participation as "the process by which members of a society (those not holding office or administrative positions in government) share power with public officials in making substantive decisions [defined as those that are critical in community life as defined by the member of the community] and in taking actions related to the community." . (Roberts, Nancy. 2004, pg.320)

Active citizenship can be described as the ability of a citizen to influence and determine the functioning of local economy and society.

European Foundation articulates it as follows...

taken broadly, can mean any form of productive contribution to society. What policy makers appear to have in mind is people's capacity to take an active role in public affairs, whether through formal democratic structures, through the press, through public debate, through associations, political parties, trade unions, local clubs and societies or simply through informal networks and mutual aid amongst neighbours, friends and family. (Chanan, 1997, pg. 1)

Active citizenship can be achieved through a number of avenues or methods through individual efforts or institutions or just organised groups. Active citizenship does not necessarily have to be politically motivated. A member of a community can notice that there is an irregular collection of refuse and decide to do something about it, like contacting the people in council in charge of refuse collection. Activity can be achieved through organised civic society bodies or community associations such as neighbourhood watch, women's club as examples. Active members of the community do not necessarily have to be engaged in active governance even though their contribution can effect political changes. As mentioned earlier activities can include helping in the after school programs, youth activities, and these are usually volunteer services. Active citizens can be engaged through individual efforts or through structured groups or community associations. A community association is

defined as any participation in cultural, neighbourhood, and ethnic or issue-based associations. This can take the form of helping at a funeral or helping somebody move house, these are simple cultural or community involvement activities which do not need any special organisation.(Ibid)

3.5.5 Benefits of Active citizenships

Fostering social cohesion. Immigrants who participate in civic, cultural and political activities of their community accelerate their integration. Participation breaks down misunderstandings and differences between social classes by bringing together the poor and rich, weak and strong, young and old, people from diverse social backgrounds. Studies have shown that active citizenship has a positive social outcome in that it strengthens the development of responsive and accountable governments and fosters an inclusive and cohesive society (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). In the political arena active citizenship stresses the importance of citizens taking responsibility and becoming solutions themselves to issues that affect them daily in their local communities. The responsibility for welfare is being passed over from the state to communities or individual citizens who are compelled to get active by their personal morality and the prospect of approval from others, rather than from feelings of community belonging and communal endeavour. (Kearns,1995) Citizen participation has been noted to achieve social justice, building confidence and self-esteem of the marginalised groups and greater political inclusion. These benefits were also linked to changes in development priorities, attitude by public officials and intellectual elites. The active participation of citizens brought about broader outcomes related civil society capacity, governance issues and policy change. (Gaventa, 2006)

3.5.6 Obstacles to active citizenship

Political dictatorships which do not give room for people input to policy making this is exemplified by Socialist/Communist state centralised power governments where policies are made to protect the ruling elite at the expense of the ordinary citizens who is deemed ignorant of what is best for them. Capitalist governments supported by large financially powerful conglomerates dictating policies. Insecurity of the citizens has a bearing to the level of participation in issues that have a political tone to them. Level of literacy can have the effect of reducing the percentage of participating citizens. Frustration, anger, cynicism, and alienation toward politics can make the political arena seem too large and distant for individual actions to have an impact. The growth of individualism can be an obstacle to citizen participation as noted by (Cohen and Taylor, 1992)

the whole notion of a public life and a sense of place have been undermined by the growth of private lifestyles and a reliance on the electronic media to overcome isolation and define our social situation beyond our physical setting.

The tendency that people only associate with those who have the same value system or social status is quite prevalent in this modern day society.

People living in the same street will have fleeting relationships with each other, having widely differing lifestyles and household arrangements, and have common interest only in the maintenance of certain shared facilities they take for granted (Albrow,1996)

This has brought about some division in society seeing others as not belonging and therefore not caring for them, this also can be hindrance to active citizenship. This break down has an effect of the term local since peoples interest may not necessarily be in the same geographical location as their residence. The effect is their attention is not on the social life in their neighbour hood therefore the term local becomes ambiguous to them. The growth of Social Media Technology(SMT) has both positive and negative impact on social participation. Social Media Technology refers to web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new or existing content, through multi-way communication. (Davis III et al.2015) People have turned to social media to share their concerns on varied topics including community issues without going out into the streets to picket as a way to voice they concern. The Arab spring is an example of the use of SMT to spread information quickly and in real time to the world over these events were in part fuelled by the social media. In Oslo people gathered with roses in the city and marched in their thousands thanks in part to social media. In a simple observation one might conclude that it is a tool available for use. Dijck, notes that “with maturing of Web2.0 into a functional infrastructure, users moved more of their everyday activities to online environments; these activities were not simply channelled by platforms, but programmed with specific objective”. (Dijck, 2013).

3.5.7 Discipleship and Citizenship

Christians are caught between two worlds the Kingdom of God and the earthly Kingdom and the dilemma is how far can I go as Christian to participate in this world in which I am passing through. In the creation narrative we read that God gave Adam stewardship of the earth “the

Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Genesis 2 :15. This mandate still stands for those who have accepted the work of Christ as saviour of mankind. Christians have a divine mandate to look after their world (community) The fall of Adam in the garden did not curtail Gods desire to relate with man. The triune God reached out to man through the incarnate birth of Jesus (the Son) and subsequent death on the cross to re-establish the relationship between man and God. Through out the historical narrative of the bible we see God being involved in mans life relating with man at a personal level. In Job29 we read that Job had favour with God and man because of his social activities in expressing his love and honour for God. He outlines his work in the following verses in Job 29

12, because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and *him that had* none to help him. ¹³ The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, ¹⁵I was eyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame. ¹⁶ I *was* a father to the poor: and the cause *which* I knew not I searched out. (King James Bible online)

This articulates the social engagement of one who is in favour with God, in other words it is a portrayal of a life lived for God. Job attended to the social issues in his community and his life was blessed of God. We see service, transformation and advocacy in his work. He did not only help but sought to find out why things were the way they were “the cause which I knew not I searched out”. His life not only affected the poor and marginalized but also the rulers and when he spoke they listened.

⁸ The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, *and* stood up. ⁹ The princes refrained talking, and laid *their* hand on their mouth.¹⁰ The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth (King James Bible online).

In Jeremiah 29 we read that when the children of Israel were in exile they were instructed to be concerned with the social issues in their temporary place of abode. They were not citizens in Babylon there but they were instructed to be concerned and to attend to issues concerning the socio political issues of the community they were living in. Jeremiah 29: 4-7

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;⁵ Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; ⁶ Take ye

wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.⁷ And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. (King James Bible online.)

This resonates well with the Christian world view that they are not of this world but are passing through and their citizenship is in the Kingdom of God. There are to be involved in the affairs of this world since they are in the world. The same instruction to children of Israel still stand true for the Christian today to be concerned with the welfare of the place they are living in, so that they will also have good welfare. In the gospel of Mathew we read that Christians are to be a ministry to the world Matt 5 vs 13-16. (Cray G, 2007) “He tells his disciple what they are and not what they ought to be. As disciples they are salt and light” As Christians we are the righteousness of God (Rom 3 :17) in Christ and we embody the very essence of being Christ (Eph 1:22-23) Discipleship in Christ makes one a citizen of the kingdom of God (under Gods ruler ship and way of life) and commissioned to bring about the will of God to this earth as they pray “thy will be done on this earth as it is in heaven” Christians are to bring the authority of God to this earth through their being active “¹⁶Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honour and praise and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.” Matt 5:16

The expression of the Kingdom of God life will inevitably have an impact on the socio-political life of the community the Christian is found in. Christians can be directly involved in any form of political activity as long as they live out their mandate to bring the Kingdom of God to this earth. The greatest asset the Christians bring into their communities is the principles and ethics of the kingdom of God. The mandate for the Christian is to display the life of the kingdom, as ambassadors of the kingdom Christians must display the life of the kingdom of God by engaging the current as exemplified by Jesus ministry. Jesus said to the disciples heal the sick raise the dead, proclaim the good news of the kingdom. “Jesus public ministry was characterized by forgiveness of sin, sick were healed, demonized set free, dead were raised, hungry were fed, authority exercised of nature and leaders in public life challenged.” (Cray, 2007, pg. 150) This is the challenge for the Christian today to engage their communities and present the kingdom of at various platforms as they actively engage as citizen without necessarily using the platform for proclamation.

3.6 Conclusion

I have outlined how Diakonia has developed historically to the present perception that it is what it means to be church. The church through out generations has had impact on societies through its diaconal institutes namely schools, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the elderly, provision of relief to stressed societies through natural or man made disasters. The Ecumenical church has now taken it upon its self to not only tackle situations of poverty, marginalisation and many other ills, but to address and seek changes to structures that perpetuate such situations. The development of concepts such as prophetic, political and liberation theologies has put the church in a more combative stance against social injustices of any form. The priesthood of the believer has cascaded the ministry of Diakonia to the individual Christian who is in daily contact with people in their local communities.

Active citizenship as concept in the modern political democracy in which individuals play an active role in determining what kind of society they want to live in. The concept shows the possibility of how individuals can have a positive influence on society by their participation. A community can collectively determine the kind of political governance they would have in their community. Christians as citizens of the Kingdom of God living in this world have a calling to participate in the affairs of this world as means of showing Gods love and desire to participate in the lives of his creation. As Christians become active disciples of Christ they in fact become active citizens of both the Kingdom of God and active citizens of their communities.

4 CHAPTER: 4

6.0 METHODOLOGY

4.3 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher outlines the methodology followed in carrying out the study. This will include looking at the design of choice, the methods used to collect data and why these were chosen. I highlight the method of analysis of the data collected.

4.4 Study design.

Philosophical approach.

Ontology is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors or whether they should be considered social constructions built up from perceptions and actions of the social actors.(Bryman, 2004 pg. 17)

The ontology of my study is based on the philosophical thinking of Constructionism also known as Interpretivism. This thinking is based on the belief that “phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors”. ibid Using culture as an example Becker (1982,521) in Bryman (2004)” suggest that people create culture continuously” Implying that culture is not a rigid phenomena but one that is being constantly revised and changed in the light of new knowledge the actors acquire. The advantage of the constructivism approach is that there is a close working relationship between the researcher and the participant, at the same time it allows the participant to give their own narrative and perception of reality(Crabtree & Miller, 1999). This enables the researcher to better understand the actions of the participants. In my study constructivism is more appropriate in that the study is focusing on a social phenomena related to a social behaviour affecting the livelihood of the social actors. In this study the social actors are the Christian youth and their participation in the socio-political economy of their communities. As mentioned in the problem statement the observation of corruption, violent behaviour against opposition, and involvement on non involvement of Christian in political spheres, constitute behavioural patterns which are subject to change in light of either empowerment or new knowledge. The social actors in this case are part of the construction of the perceived behaviour patterns in the

community the underlying philosophy of the study will allow them to articulate or narrate their story regarding the social phenomena in which they are either active or passive participants.

I have chosen to do a case study, with the aim of soliciting in-depth information from the respondents. A case study is more appropriate for this situation in view of the limiting factors which I will elaborate later. It also enables me to answer the questions of why there is the observed behavior (participation or non participation in socio-political situation) in the community. The case study also allows me to look at the context within which the decisions are made namely Christian belief and the community in this case Mbare. I have selected a location Mbare within the greater Harare city and have targeted the youth and not every congregation. According to Bryman (2004) a case study is a “detailed and intensive analysis of a single case.” Yin states that..

the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries. (Yin,2003)

According to Baxter (2008) a case study allows one to look at a phenomena using many lenses thus providing multiple views of the phenomena under study. This allows for multiple characteristics “of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood”. Others argue that case studies have a down side in that they cannot be generalized to other populations. Critics say the case study is difficult to cross check since it is location specific (contextual) Others however argue that a case study has a strong internal validity and the findings can be used to come up with a theory which can be tested elsewhere. In my situation it is a study of a community (Christian community) in Mbare with a particular reference to the young people. The selection of mbare a location in the greater Harare narrows the study to a portion of the Christian community. In this community I also select only five congregations these do not have any particular characteristics apart from the fact that there are Christian churches. The different churches will give a variety of views concerning the topic of study. The findings here can be a barometer for the socio-political involvement of Christians youth in various other communities with similar problems.

4.5 Selection of Study Sites

In the study I selected Mbare township for historical and also political reasons. Mbare is the oldest township in Zimbabwe, located on the southern side of the city of Harare, about 5 kilometers from the central business district. It was initially created by the colonialist as dormitories for the native workers who were working in the homes, factories, and shops of the settlers. Mbare community has a long political history in the life of Zimbabwe as a nation, and today can be used as measure of political climate in Zimbabwe. I randomly chose Christian churches found in Mbare without classifying them into particular denominations. Although there is a good representation across the denominational divide though this was not intentional. I chose five (5) churches out of a sample size of approximately twenty five (25) churches. The method is simple random sampling “ with random sampling each unit of population has an equal probability of inclusion in the sample” (Bryman, 2006, pg. 90) In this case a random approach will refute charges of researcher bias in the selection of participants. In the churches only the pastors and a sample of 10 young people from each church would participate in the study. The churches selected were a mixture of traditional, evangelical and Pentecostal. Churches like the Roman Catholic, Lutheran church, Mbare Community Church (Pentecostal church), Baptist, and independent African church. In this case congregates in the churches come from all the residential sections of the township and are representative of every social status.. The sample chosen is not homogeneous, in that the churches themselves are not of the same denomination, the youth chosen represent every strata in terms of social status. In this case there is a high chance that there is a fair representation of the population of the Christians youths in the community.

4.6 Data Collection Methods

Case studies are usually associated with qualitative method of study but in practice they can employ data collection instruments from both methods qualitative and quantitative. This is a mixed method study in that the researcher uses two designs of questionnaires. One design has open ended questions which give the respondents the opportunity to answer using their own words to express their thoughts or relate their experience, the second design has structured questions of which the respondents are to identify and give responses which best represent his or her experiences or thoughts on the subject matter. Information is collected by means of questionnaires which are divided into two; one for the pastors and the other for the young

people. The pastors questionnaire contains ten (10) questions eight (8) of which are open ended and two contain choices for level of agreeing with the given statement. The young people have thirteen (13) questions in which eight (8) of the questions are statements of which they have to chose if the agree or disagree with the statement and at the same time indicate the level of agreement or disagreement (see appendix). The type of questions form what is known as the Likert scale which makes it easy to code the results for analysis. A Likert scale is a psychometric response scale primarily used in questionnaires to obtain participant's preferences or degree of agreement with a statement or set of statements. The respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with a given statement on an ordinal scale. The questionnaires were distributed on my behalf in the different congregations. Each questionnaire has an introduction to the study and states that no names are required. The respondents answered and return them, the research assistant choose to had out the questionnaires and collect them at a later date . The questionnaire was chosen because the researcher could not go to the field in person due to time and financial constraints. The instrument is easier and quicker to administer (Bryman 2003, pg.133) through a third person, in that there is no training required for the person issuing them. Unlike interviews the research assistants would need to be trained and acquainted to the research philosophy and objectives of the study. The anonymity of the questionnaires gives the respondents freedom to express their genuine thoughts and feelings. There is no interviewer effects on the respondents, "it has been suggested that such characteristics as ethnicity, gender and the social background of the interviewer may combine to bias answers" (ibid). The pastors questionnaire has more open-ended, evolving, and non-directional; questions which gives the respondents the freedom to express themselves without any reservations on the topic in question. This is like a written interview with semi structured questions, this makes it more of a qualitative instrument for data collection.

4.7 Data Management.

The management of data was done manually since the sample size was manageable. The use of the Likert scale made evaluating and analysis of responses easy to categorize. The structured interview data was analysed by coding, subdividing it into categories which are

then unitised to come up with a conclusion.. The data is broken down, conceptualised and categorised, identifying concepts and forming patterns by putting together repeating incidences, claims, and discursive practices. (Strauss A, Corbin J., 1998) The data received was lower than expected, this made it easy to deal with it. The questionnaire from the youth was tabulated showing the frequency of a preferred answer per question. These were analysed by putting them into categories namely Citizenship, Participation, Influence of Faith, Political involvement.

The Pastors questions were also categorised into the following a, Politics (knowledge), b, Political participation and awareness promotion by the church, c, Christian social influence, d, Role of Church. e, Preparation of the young people. f, Church participation

4.8 Ensuring trustworthiness in the study

The trustworthiness or lack of it in an any study, is established by the soundness of its method, the accuracy of its findings, and the integrity of assumptions made or conclusions reached. In a quantitative research design this is known as validity and reliability of the study, which is established by undergoing rigorous testing under specific headings. These terms have been however said to be applicable to quantitative studies only even though some have argued that the same terms can be used in qualitative studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985.p. 300) proposed terms such as establishing the "trustworthiness" of a study, then used terms unique to qualitative design such as "credibility," "authenticity," "transferability," "dependability, "and 'confirmability," as "the naturalist's equivalents" for "internal validation," "external validation," "reliability, "and "objectivity". Winter (2000) contends that the question of validity of data in qualitative research can be achieved through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, selection of participants, the methods used to collect data triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher.

4.8.1 Credibility.

The degree to which the data accurately represents the population being studied, research is that which has been carried out according to best practices and peer-review(Winters, 2007).To achieve credibility the researcher used a questionnaire whose design gave the participants room to adequately express their views without researcher interference. Questions were related to the theoretical assumptions. Knowledge and attitude questions were given sufficient latitude to solicit honest answers from the respondents. The researcher also made

sure that the language used was appropriate for the targeted group. The targeted group participants are all literate up to high school level. Thus language used was simple enough for them to understand the questions. The credibility of the instruments used in collecting data have an effect on the credibility of the study.

4.8.2 Transferability:

Is the equivalent to generalizability in positivism, this refers to the degree to which the results can be applied to the wider population, cases or situations. (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007) A case study is difficult to generalise due to the uniqueness of the context in which the study is carried out. It is context dependant (Flyvbjerg, 2004 p.421) The researcher has written extensively on the historical context and of the culture of the study area. Lincoln and Guba (1985 , pg. 316) recommend producing thick description of a culture/setting, they go on to say that the researcher is responsible for providing the data base and it is up to the potential applier to judge transferability. G Winter (2000) “qualitative findings are best generalisable to the development of theories and not wider populations” this is because the study is contextual but theories derived can be used in different contextual settings. Transferability can also mean the ability to use the same method or instruments of inquiry in a different setting.

4.8.3 Dependability

“ refers to the stability or consistency of the inquiry processes” (Williams 2011) The researcher sent out the data collecting tools and conceptual frame to other scholars who gave feed back on the tools and method of inquiry. The feed back was in cooperated into the study. The supervisor gave guidance on best practice when conducting such an inquiry. The use of the questionnaire as a tool enhances dependability.

4.8.4 Confirmability

In this case the researcher seeks to ensure that the information collected or findings are a result of the experiences and ideas of the respondents and not those of the researcher's preference. The absence of the researcher insured that respondents answered questions from their own understanding without interpretation from the researcher. The participants were given adequate time to read and think through their answers. The use of a mix of open ended questions with structured ones also helps in strengthening confirmability. Shenton (2004) in his paper notes that triangulation plays a significant role in strengthening confirmability of a study. Triangulation can take many forms in its application. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) outline types of triangulation time, space, combined levels, theoretical, investigator and methods. Triangulation entails using both quantitative and qualitative instruments for collecting data, a basic example would be to conduct interviews and use questionnaires as instruments in one study. The According to Guba and Brewer and Hunter, the use of different methods as means of collecting data from the same sample compensates for the individual limitations and takes advantage of their respective benefits. In my case I have used structured questionnaire and an open ended questionnaire to solicit information from the respondents as form of triangulation.

4.9 Limitations.

The researcher faced limitations in terms of time, resources and scope of study. The resultant paper of the study being a master thesis limited the scope to which the study could be carried out. The study being a case study I would have wanted to be on the ground in the community to do interviews with a variety of individuals relating to the topic of inquiry. The researcher could not go to the field as mentioned earlier on due to financial and time limitations. The researcher had to solicit the services of a trusted assistant in Zimbabwe. The major challenge was getting the questionnaires back from the respondents. The administration of the questionnaire was done by a third party so this made it difficult to control the process of distribution. I would have preferred to hand out the questionnaires and requested for them to be answered on the spot and returned to ensure a high return. The preferred strategy was to leave them with respondents then come back on a later day to collect. This made it complicated for the research assistant to be able to follow through with the collection. This made the whole process complicated and difficult to administer. I could only put so much

pressure on the person assisting. As a result I only managed to get three responses from the pastors out of five that were given out. The youth questionnaires were a total failure for I received only 13 out of an expected number of fifty. On receiving the few answer scripts I would have wanted to make follow up interview especially with the pastors, this was not possible. One avenue of inquiry I could have followed was to categories churches into denominations so as to include their theological basis for taking a particular position in terms of socio-political participation. Researchers own subjective feeling may influence the case study (researcher bias).

4.10 Conclusion

The method used for collection of data was appropriate one for this small study. As outlined above care was taken to make the search for information credible. The only disadvantage was that I was not able to be on the ground to ensure a good collection of responses from the participants..

5 Chapter 5

1.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by presenting the findings obtained from the research, by setting out the results of the Pastors response. The instrument used questionnaire has open ended questions and structured category questions. The responses are selected into themes and the frequency of each is measured. A similar treatment is done for the youth questionnaire. The questions are divided into themes in relation to the theoretical framework of the study.

5.2 Pastors` questionnaire

Five pastors were given the questionnaires to answer and only three were returned. Below is a summary of the responses from the pastors. The questionnaire sort to find out information on the awareness of the Church`s need for participate in the social political sphere of their communities. Also if the church leadership was encouraging congregates to be involved politically in their communities. The questions solicited for the pastors` knowledge of terms like Politics.

The researcher put questions into groups by topic and presents the response as they reflect on the theme. The respondents have been labelled P01, P02, P03, (Pastors 1, 2, 3) the youth have been labelled Y02. The referencing of the respondents in the document is shown below.

e.g. P01, Qs 3 (Pastor number 01 Question no 3 “then quote”). (Y02,Qs 3) youth number 2 question number 3.

A. Politics: the question asked them to show what they understood by the word Politics.

the Pastor`s responses show some knowledge on politics relating to governance and only one pastor mentioned participation as part of the politics.

Question 1. What do you understand by the term politics.?

“It refers to how people in given state determines how they are governed or simply participate in shaping their leadership as a nation” (P03, Qs 1).

B. Political participation and promoting awareness by the church

Questions 2, 3, and 6. deal with this theme: There is an agreement between two pastors that the church should promote awareness of political issues and participation without political affiliation.

Q,4 How should the church be involved in issues that concern the socio-wellbeing of congregates?

“the church should only participate in teaching Christian values not directly involved should leave that for the politicians” (Pastor 03, Qs.4)

Qs 2. What is your opinion about the church’ involvement in promoting political awareness and participation?

Pastor 02 strongly disagrees with the participation of Christians in politics

“John 18:36 “My Kingdom is not of this world” No matter what country you live in true Jesus followers must maintain strict neutrality in the world political affairs.” (P02, Qs 2)

C. Christian Social influence to the individual and expectations from the church.

Questions 4, 5 and 8 deal with the social influence of Faith. The responses from the pastors show that there is a different understanding of the influence of the Kingdom of God as a cultural force.

Qs 5. “The Kingdom of God is a culture which alters or shapes a persons social life”. Christian faith as a culture got two (2) positives and one (1) disagreement

D. Role of the church.

There is an agreement on the role of the church proclaiming the Gospel.

Qs 8. What do you think people expect the church to do for them.

To foster social harmony “To help improve the social and economic life of the needy” (P03 Qs 8)

Be the voice of the people

Set moral standards “to model morals and set standards” (P01. Qs8)

As go between “To promote harmony and help resolve disputes amicably”. (P03 Qs 8)

As source of strength “Encouragement during the trying times.” P02. Qs 8

E. Preparation for young participation:

Pastors P01 and P03 agree on preparing the young people by teaching and training them in Christian values and principles. P01 does not agree in participation so did not bother to answer question relating to preparation.

Qs 7 “ If yes (Q 6) In what ways are you promoting and preparing the young people for participation in local politics”

“By teaching Christians values, the young congregates are encouraged to influence political decisions to support the Christian way of leading and ruling.” (P03. Qs7)

F. Church participation.

Two pastors responded by highlighting only the disadvantages of non participation without stating any advantages .

Q,10. In your own opinion what are the advantages or disadvantages of Christians (1) engaging or (2) not engaging in their socio-political issues of their community?

The following were response to question

“One disadvantage is that politics bring conflict amongst people whereas the bible commands us to love one another, hence it becomes difficult to display this very important quality” (P02, Qs.10)

“the disadvantage is that decisions are then made by corrupt people. The church becomes voiceless”. (P01, Qs 10)

“By engaging in socio-political issues the Christian will influence political decisions to consider Christian values in all their plans but Christians should not complexly be in politics as they should concentrate more on winning and keeping soles in Christ”. (P03, Qs 10)

The pastors views expressed here kind of show the dilemma of political understanding and participation. Politics here is shown to be a means of conflict and is given a picture that it is not good for Christians to participate. This shows the kind of understanding of what politics is to the pastors. There is a sense that politics means party politics which in Zimbabwe has brought polarisation. The number of participants is not much to warrant any meaningful conclusions however this will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.3 Youth Results

The majority of the youth questionnaires (Questions 5 to 13) are presented in a table form showing frequency of an answer. The other questions are then presented using under different themes.

Questions 1-4

a) Citizenship

The results show that the participants have a good knowledge of who is a citizen. Twelve out of thirteen selected the answers C and D in question 1

Qs 1 What is your understanding of the word citizenship?

“1c, a person with a legal permanent stay in a country = six (6) and

d, a person who has legal right to participate in the affairs of the community/country. = six (6)

b) Participation:

9 youths indicated that they had not participated in any organised community venture.

Only 4 had participated in some community work like feeding program, cutting trees and at the youth centre. The results of the question show that the young people did not have the sense that they have an obligation to participate.

c) Influence of Faith:

In question 3 the results show that motivation for participation was mostly to be of service to the community, Faith in God only got three responses

In question 4 they had to write how being a Christian influenced their concern on the affairs of the community.

Qs4. How does being a Christian encourage you to be concerned with the day today affairs of your community.

Some of the answers

Y09 Qs, 4 “Christian values

Y11, Qs 4 “care for the less privileged”

Y02, Qs 4 “it encourages me to reach out to those who have not given their lives to God”

Y05, Qs4 “it dosen`t ”

Qs 5, 6, 7, deal with the theology of social involvement of the church. Questions seek to solicit the understanding or awareness that Christ was involvement in social issues in their communities..

The respondents show that they agree with the view point that the church should be engaged with the social issues of their community.

Qs 5 The bible does not support the notion that the church is to be the voice of the marginalised.

Although Qs 5 had almost an equal number of those who were not sure if the church should be the voice of the marginalised with those that selected that it should be. 5 were not sure and 7 disagreed with the statement.

Qs 6 and Qs 7 dealt with the involvement in both social and spiritual matters of the community. In both Qs the number of responses is 10 out of 13 choosing participation of Christ and Christians in social matters.

D, Political involvement related to Qs 9, 11, 12.

This section is dealing with political awareness of the individual Christian as citizens in a community. The questions cover a range from who should make policy related decisions and that the individual has a role to play in the politics of their community. The results show that the youth are not unanimous in their decisions we have responses in every option in all the questions. The table also shows that slightly more youth are aware of their political role in all the questions have a higher number of respondents showing support for the notion of political involvement of the individual.

Q.9, Important community decisions should be made solely by bureaucrats and elected officials?

Qs9 =8;

Q 11. The ordinary person has no influence on politics.

Qs 11= 9;

Q.12 I think I am better informed about politics and government than most.

Qs 12 = 6 and 2 not sure.

Church involvement in social and civil issues of the community is covered by Qs 10 and 13.

The table shows that the respondents agree on the fact that the church should be involved in the affairs of the social life of their congregants. Below is a summary of the youth questionnaire the table indicates the frequency of choice for an answer Table 1.

Question no	Frequency					total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	disagree	Strongly disagree	
5. The bible does not support the notion that the church is to be the voice of the marginalised	1	0	5	6	1	13
6. Jesus dealt with the spiritual and not the social matters of his time	0	1	2	9	1	13
7 Christians Should withdraw from history and society and have nothing to do with political situations.	2	1	0	6	4	13
8 Jesus Talks of the “Kingdom of God is at hand” He meant a spiritual Kingdom which had nothing to do with this life on earth	1	4	1	5	2	13
9 Important community decisions should be made solely by bureaucrats and elected officials?	2	3	0	5	3	13
10 The Church is actively preparing individuals for a meaningful role as Christian in socio-political matters of their local Community	2	6	0	3	2	13
11 The ordinary person has no influence on politics	1	1	2	4	5	13
12 I think I am better informed about politics and government Politics than most	1	4	2	4	2	13
13 Should Church leaders put what is right ahead of simply protecting the interests of their church?	2	5	3	2	Spoilt 1	13

5.4 Summary

The results show that there is a general agreement in that the church should play some role in the affairs of the community. As shown by the pastors responses there is no clear agreement on how the church should participate in the socio-political life of the community. Pastor P02 clearly does not want anything to do with anything political, this may be showing a misunderstanding of the term politics to mean party affiliation. This response shows the dilemma of the church in that there is no clear agreement on how to deal with such issues. There is no clear distinction in the understanding of politics as issues which affect the day to day living of the people in their communities. Pastor P03 limits church involvement to teaching and training Christian values and leave politics to the politician.

Table 1 shows that the youth have a general appreciation of the fact that the church should participate in socio- political issues of their community. The results do not show unanimity in choice for participation. The young people seem to have the right biblical perspective on social involvement there is a more positive score in questions regarding theological knowledge supporting participation.

The results though not conclusive due to a limited number of respondents however show that the youth have an appreciation of the fact there should be some participation by the church. They however do not have a clear answer of how they are to participate. The results also show that the youth are not actively participating in their communities as seen in the response on question no 2. This is a reflection of a lack of a clear direction of how to engage their communities besides proclamation of the gospel.

5.5 Conclusion

The questions of the study as stated in the first chapter

a) Are the youths aware of their role in Politics of their society as a Christians?

The results do not show a clear outright understanding of the role of the youth in their society, there is an appreciation of the fact that there is a need to be involved but a limited way. This is shown by their lack of participation in their society in any capacity other than proclamation of the gospel. It is not apparent that they understand the meaning of the word politics which might just be party politics for most of them. This then becomes an inhibiting factor judging by the history of party politics in Zimbabwe.

b) What is the church doing to educate or prepare the youth for involvement in the political life of their community as Christians.

The only preparation the results show is an emphasis on teaching and training of Christian ethics and values without any emphasis on community related issues. There is also no clear understanding of the role of the church in political issues as noted by the respondents, one (P02) pastor put rightly saying that the church should not be involved at all. The other view is they can only work on influencing political decisions and not be involved “leave politics for the politicians” This understanding of politics makes it impossible to get any preparation

done. The church does not seem to have an agenda to get the youth to engage in the socio-political life of their communities.

6 Chapter 6

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Introduction:

In this chapter I outline the findings as revealed by the results. I then discuss the implications of the results in reference to the research questions and my stated hypothesis. I then analyse the whole study using the theoretical frame work of Diakonia and active citizenship. I will categories the discussion into The role of the church using the response of the Pastors and other studies that have been done. The other category will deal with the youth as representatives of the congregates. Then review the findings reflecting on the theoretical frame work.

6.2 The Role of the Church.

The results also show that the pastors who lead the churches do not have a good knowledge of the concept of political activity, as a result they give views that restrict participation to only trying to influence the politicians and leave politics to the politician. One can safely assume that their knowledge of the concept on politics is limited to party politics. The term politics embodies all activity related to the function and well being of any organised society or community. This results should however needs to be taken in context of the political history of the country and the relationship between church and the state. As outlined in the background chapter the church has had a significant role in the life of the people of Zimbabwe. As documented by many scholars (Pearde. 1979, Maenzanise 2008,) who have studied the history of Zimbabwe from colonial times to the current state. The influence of the church has been profound from the colonial era to the to the current independent Zimbabwe. Education provided during the colonial era by missionaries trained the human resources and provided the platform that led to the armed struggle. This was done through educating the local people, who through the acquired knowledge sort to participate in the governance of their communities. “Church figures such as Ndabaningi Sithole, Abel Muzorewa and Canaan Banana were actively involved in the struggle for Zimbabwe.” (Chitando, 2011).

The church also played a crucial role in post independent Zimbabwe by working together with government on development projects that were badly needed by the young nation. The civic work of the church was very welcome by the government, but when critical comments were issued, government leaders preferred that the church stick to its “core” business of prayer and preaching and leave politics to the politicians. “ Whereas some politicians,

particularly President Mugabe, have sought to limit the church to prayers and offering guidance on moral issues,” (Chitando, 2011)

Divisions

The pastors response show that there is no united front in relation to participation in the political life of the communities. There are two possible explanations to this difference which I put into categories namely a, misinterpretation of the term politics coupled with a history of politics of violence that has characterised political life of the country since the colonial times, and (b, theological understanding of the role of the Christian in this world. It is my opinion that the understanding of politics is not very clear in that the political scenario in the country has exhibited violence as means of gaining power and also as a means of maintaining power. Dr Kadenge a lecturer in theology is quoted saying “Most men of the cloth in Zimbabwe, in line with the colonial theological training curriculum have been taught to evangelize only and to view politics as the evil world’s domain”.(Church and Civil Society Forum , 2012) This view makes it difficult for the pastors to encourage individual Christians to even think of participating in politics. The nature of politics in Zimbabwe makes it difficult to redefine it to mean individual participation in day to day issues that influence and govern citizens daily lives.

There are also a number of theological differences in the approach to church or individual Christian participation in politics. The two kingdoms doctrine has been used by the clergy to separate church from civic engagement (Dietrich, 2014) as one of the respondents quotes Jn,18.36 “ my kingdom is not of this world” (P02, Qs 2) One group says we can engage with society through proclamation and playing our role in the mode of the good Samaritan helping and meeting the needs of the disadvantaged. The view point propagated is that we do not belong to this world our citizenship is not of this world. In the same breath others have openly supported the ruling party and its policies Chitando (2011) writes clearly on the divisions and their effect on the coherent voice of the church against politics of intimidation and violence that have characterised the Zimbabwean political world. CCSF in a study on violence also noted that the pastors did not share a common vision towards political participation. In the study 71.2 % believed that the church should stay out of politics and concentrate on praying for the nation and its leadership. (CCSF, 2012) This is one of the dilemmas of the church, the lack of agreement in interpretation of scriptures in terms of social engagement.

However the Ecumenical body has been able to achieve a lot as outlined in the CCSF 2012 publication

“...the Zimbabwe Council of Churches initiated the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)..... The ZCBC, EFZ and ZCC are founding members of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP).”

These were bodies formed to try monitor the government and put pressure on it to adhere to democratic practices it claimed to stand for. Various individuals also stood be the prophetic voice of the church against corruption, misuse of power and abuse of the poor. “They include Bishop Levee Kadenge and Sifiso Mpofo of the Christian Alliance, Bishop Anselm Magaya of the Zimbabwe National Pastors’ Conference and Archbishop Pius Ncube of the ZCBC” (Chitando, 2011, see also CCFS, 2012)

In the current political, economic and social crisis the Church through its various organs has engaged the government to seek a solution to the problems facing the country. This as alluded to earlier has been done through actively engaging the government and the opposition, production of documents like the “The Zimbabwe we want” presented and discussed with the political leadership of the country. The church has indeed tried to be involved, besides these efforts the crisis of legitimation, polarisation of the party politics, economic meltdown, intimidation and fear still haunt the population of Zimbabwe. The study shows also that the church is not building within its communities the ideals it has been presenting to the government. Non participation of individual Christians in political arena leaves decisions to be made by corrupt people as observed by one of the pastors in the study. The CCSF in its study of the church and violence reveals that some of the perpetrators of the violence are church members who were even in positions of leadership. “A number of church leaders (elders, deacons and laypersons) seem to be leading both in church and at party level.” (CCSF 2012) The church has not been able to engaged the political body at local level, not as a cooperate body but at individual level and there is very little being done to promote such participation. Individual engagement as Christians in the local communities is not taking place as much as would be desirable. Frustration, anger, cynicism, and alienation toward politics can make the political arena seem too large and distant for individual actions to have an impact These sentiments running through the Zimbabwean nation as election after election

has not brought about the desired change. The lack of effective change has made it difficult to envisage change by participation, however the church ecumenically has demonstrated that by participation change can be achieved. This observation strongly supports my stated hypothesis that there is very little being done to educate or bring awareness to the need of political participation by the youth or individual Christians.

The intention of the study was to find out if the Christian youth are aware of their role in the socio political sphere of their local communities. In the same breath also find out if the church is preparing the young people for such a role in their socio political sphere of their communities. The findings show that the youth see the need for political participation in their communities but lack the knowledge of how and at what level. This is shown as outlined earlier by the fact that the majority of the youth who respondent have not been involved in any community activity. The results confirm my hypothesis that there is little if not nothing being done to adequately prepare the young Christian to actively participate in their societies. As highlighted above lack of a coherent approach to politics has made it difficult for the church to encourage participation in politics.

6.3 Implications:

The lack of meaningful participation by Christians in community politics makes the task of the ecumenical bodies difficult and hard to achieve their goals. This robs the nation of valuable input from the huge and rich manpower base available in the church. It also means that the church is failing to fulfil its mandate as the light of the world. Zimbabwe is said to have approximately 85% of the population claiming to be Christians. It is either just a membership figure without the commitment required to be an actively engaged Christians. In a study by CCSF (2012) statements were by participants which suggested that for some church was like a club their commitment was to their political parties hence they did not speak out against violence. The Diakonia aspect of the church is not incorporating the prophetic role of the Christian in fighting for peace and justice. This could mean that the Christians are not being faithful citizens of their country by not participating in the affairs of their nation.

Studies have shown that social participation by individuals have valuable results to both the individual and community.

“and in light of more recent studies that demonstrate how an active citizenship leads to positive social outcomes such as the strengthening of responsive and accountable governments and the development of inclusive and cohesive societies” (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010),

The youth play a very vital role in the future of any society, therefore it is crucial that society grooms them for the future. This makes it imperative for the youth to be actively engaged in the affairs of the community. Youth activism offers benefits for both the individual and community. The young people can form a basis for change or improvement of society through service and activism. It is therefore important for the church to get the youth engaged in political affairs of their communities. As Christians they bring in high moral dimension into activism.

6.4 Conclusion

The study has had limitations in that the sample size is small to make any meaningful generalisation. Time constraints made it difficult to incorporate many aspects. The study did not consider the gender influence and the different denominational theological interpretations to political engagement. These aspects have also a bearing in making decisions to participate or not. The study however shows that there is no deliberate effort to encourage Christians to participate in politics, at the same time ecumenically there has been a lot achieved by the church, These achievements need to be supplemented by active participation of the Christian in local politics. The influence of the Christian's ethical and moral standards will eventually permeate the whole political environment, seeing that Christianity has the largest share of followers in the country. The power dynamics in the Christian life are such that power creates or gives ability to be of service. Power becomes a tool for service for the common good, the believer is not the one who wields the power but is a steward. The Holy spirit directs and guides the use of that power to bring blessings and empowerment for the marginalised and less privileged. The church needs to emphasis the teaching and practise of diakonia especially prophetic Diakonia to the pastors as they go through theological training. This training will equip them on how to handle issues in their communities that are civic in nature. The trained pastors would be in a position to encourage and also train their lay leaders and congregates on how to actively engage in the politics of their local communities. The Christian community

need to move from the attitude of finger pointing and blame game, and claim their responsibility and be part of the solution in their communities. This can be done as the church gets organised at individual level by learning about issues of governance and taking the time to participate.

6.5 Recommendations:

The important thing to note is that ecumenically the church in Zimbabwe has achieved a lot in terms of trying to help the ordinary man. The different para church organisations are actively participating in making the individual aware of their rights and also providing information about issues that concern the ordinary person. The ecumenical body has managed to some degree put pressure on the ZANU PF government through a continuous call for dialogue. It has also effectively used methods such as lobbying regional and international institutions and leaders, and using the regional and international media so as to keep the crisis on the public agenda. This pressure resulted in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). This gave the people some breathing space. I believe that change in Zimbabwe will come through a change in the culture of politics. The church would need to play a major role in this change. The vehicle for this change would be through Diakonia and active citizenship.

The participation of Christians in their local politics will go a long way in influencing change in the way the political field operates. In Diakonia the motive for participation is love, this changes the atmosphere of the politics arena. Those seeking positions of authority will not be motivated by greed but by the need to serve fellow citizens. The power dynamics change in that the Christians view of power is different in that those who serve are the powerful. “ But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. ...And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:” Mt. 23.11, 20.27. The church needs to emphasize that fact the influence of the kingdom is not spread only by proclamation but through Christians living out the principles of the gospel in their day to day life, through participation in their society. Their participation will bring in the divine dimension that is missing in secular politics where people are motivated by greed and are willing to do anything to gain or stay in political power. Individual Diakonia should go beyond the church programs and go into civic engagement. Civic engagement does not always mean party politics but sharing and participating in issues that affect daily lives of people in the community.

A combination of Diakonia and a consciousness of the power of active citizenship would be a strong force to help deliver the changes that society wants. Christians feel overwhelmed because they have been on the sidelines of civic life and have a sense that politics is evil or is of this world. Jesus said “be of good cheer for I have overcome the world” Jn 16.33.

Christians have no excuse for not participating in the affairs of their communities.

In view of the results which show that the church has not clearly articulated the role of the Christian in their communities. The church needs to include in its pastor training curricula subjects like Diakonia all its aspects emphasizing prophetic Diakonia. The church needs to emphasis on the need to go out and love our neighbor Diakonia. A special effort should be made for the church congregates to take time to learn about issues that affect their communities. This will enable them to identify areas that they can participate in and be the salt. The church should encourage the congregates to be involved in social justice, meeting people ‘s basic needs, fixing social structures and systems to ensure equitable distribution of resources. This kind of engagement by congregates directly exhibits the mandate for diakonia this can be done without necessarily seeking any political affiliation. Currently any political affiliation brings about unnecessary tension. The church however can have the opportunity to demonstrate democracy by the it engages its self in the community.

The church also needs to get the young people to actively participate in their communities. In this way they learn at early age that they can engage society and still be able to keep and live out their Christian lives positively. Active participation in social issues will give them a sense of belonging and develop patriotism within them. The current young people seem to have their had their future stolen from them by the adverse social and economic conditions prevailing. Politicians are bent on just using young people to perpetrate violence against their opponents. The past decade has disenfranchised the young people of their future as result the current generation are living without any hope as long as the political system remains the same. The church has the opportunity to a make difference among the young people by fostering hope which is found in God through Jesus Christ. As outlined earlier that activism generates positive outcomes, the church should concentrate on factors that will increase Christians youth’s civic participation. The church should encourage young people in the church to engage in local affairs and stay current on local and national issues.

Further and more comprehensive research is needed to clearly establish the participatory rate of the Christian in Zimbabwe. Results from this study cannot give basis for generalization.

More research is required to take into consideration the different theological interpretations of Diakonia and citizenship. One can also look at the dynamics of political field with the fact that a large percentage of the Zimbabwean people claim to be Christian approximately(85%) but the political field is characterized by violence and dishonest. The large percentage is not translating into positive influence. The church needs to learn from the first century church had turned the known world upside down, there engaged in the lively hoods of their communities. The church in Zimbabwe still has a lot of influence and this can be further enhanced if the individual Christian became active participants in the affairs of their communities.

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Appendix 1

Youth Questionnaire:

My Name is Keith Nyenya I am currently studying for Master Degree in Diakonia and Christian Social Practice at Diakonhjemmet University College in Oslo Norway. I am doing a study on the following topic.. **“How is the local church in Mbare Zimbabwe preparing the youth to participate in the socio-political system of their community”** as a fulfilment of the master program. As part of the study I need some help in answering the question by requesting for information in the form of a questionnaire. Participation in this study will be highly valued and appreciated, the information will be anonymous as no names are required. This would only take about five minutes of your time. **Answer the following as objectively as possible, there is no right or wrong answer. Your identity is not required do not write your name.**

1. What is your understanding of the word citizenship (choose one)
 - a. Member of a party
 - b. a local resident
 - c. a person with a legal permanent stay in a country
 - d. a person who has legal right to participate In the affairs of the community/country.
2. Have you participated in any community based organisation e.g. neighbourhood watch, youth Centre. Feeding program etc. if yes what type of activity or organisation.....
3. What is your motivation for participating in the community activities (choose two that best describe your motivation)
 - i) As an obligation
 - ii) Its ones right to determine/ express their opinion
 - iii) Friends
 - iv) Organization you are a member of.
 - v) To be of service to my community
 - vi) My faith in God
4. How does being a Christian encourage you to be concerned with the day today affairs of your community.
5. The bible does not support the notion that the church is to be the voice of the marginalised.

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. Jesus dealt with the spiritual and not the social matters of his time.

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7. Christians Should withdraw from history and society and have nothing to do with political situations.

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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8. Jesus Talks of the “Kingdom of God is at hand” He meant a spiritual Kingdom which had nothing to do with this life on earth.

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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9. Important community decisions should be made solely by bureaucrats and elected officials?

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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10. The Church is actively preparing individuals for a meaningful role as Christian in socio-political matters of their local Community.

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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11. The ordinary person has no influence on politics.....

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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12. I think I am better informed about politics and government than most.....

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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13. should Church leaders put what is right ahead of simply protecting the interests of their church?..

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Appendix 2

Pastors Interview Guide

Introduction:

My Name is Keith Nyenya I am currently studying for Master Degree in Diakonia and Christian Social Practice at Diakonhjemmet University College in Oslo Norway. I am doing a study on the following topic.. **“How is the local church in Mbare Zimbabwe preparing the youth to participate in the socio-political system of their community”** as fulfilment of the master program. As part of the study I need some help in answering the question by requesting for information in form of a questionnaire. Participation in this study will be highly valued and appreciated, the information will be anonymous as no names are required. This would only take about five minutes of your time.

Background

The church in Zimbabwe has been able to voice the concerns of its congregates through the Ecumenical bodies namely the Zimbabwe Council of churches(ZCC), Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, Heads of Christian denominations, *Fambidzano Yamakereke Avatema* and many other para-church organisations. Zimbabwe has about 85% of its population claiming to be Christian, if the church was effectively living out its calling then one would safely assume that the rate of corruption and violence would be less than what it is. Zimbabwe is facing a glaring socio-political and economic decay that is destroying the lively hoods of Christians and non Christians alike. This begs the question is the individual Christian active in their socio-political environment. This project seeks to find out to what extent is the Church preparing its young people to participate meaningfully in their communities socio-political life. Christians are known to be vocal and critical to the way community services are provided or how there is a lot of corruption in both local and national institutes. Is it enough to just complain and not participate or influence the way things are run as Christians? Young people form the basis for a continued survival of any community hence I have decided to target them.

The results of the survey will not be treated individually but will be analysed in a group format. No names will written in the final document unless otherwise requested.

1) What do you understand by the term politics.

.....
.....

2) What is your opinion about the church' involvement in promoting political awareness and participation?

.....
.....

3) The Church should be concerned with spiritual matters only and have nothing to do with politics. Mark your answer with an X in the box

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4) How should the church be involved in issues that concern the socio-wellbeing of congregates?

.....

5) The Kingdom of God is a culture which alters or shapes a persons social life..

Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6) Should the

church encourage or equip congregates to participate in Local politics.....

.....

7) If yes (Q 6) In what ways are you promoting and preparing the young people for participation in local politics.

.....

8) What do you think people expect the church to do for them

.....

9) If 85% of the people in Zimbabwe are said to be Christians what is your opinion to this fact when there is so much corruption and political violence.

.....

10) In your own opinion what are the advantages or disadvantages of Christians (1) engaging or (2) not engaging in their socio-political issues of their community.....

.....

..... Thank you for participation,.