

Church and Immigrants: Zimbabwe-South African Situation (1999- 2010) “Why and How can the Church play a Prophetic role in such situations like this?”

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Abstract

This research work is a sociologically and theologically reflection on Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The thesis has explored and analysed how the Zimbabwean immigrants are treated both by the government authorities and the church organisations in South African. Because there is much injustice and violence against the immigrants and much suffering and despair among the immigrants. The civil and church structures were still inadequate to accommodate their basic needs.

Through the survey and interviews carried out in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the thesis gave a clear picture of the root causes of migration and vulnerability in all sides of the migration phenomenon, including families devastated by the loss of their loved ones who have undertaken the migration journey and children left alone when parents are removed from them. The treatment of immigrants challenged the conscience of churches in this context, residents of border communities, providers of legal aid and social services to challenge the structures that threatens human dignity and to uphold human rights.

This work has discussed also the need for empowerment, reconciliation and transformation as the possible theories which can be used by the church to address the issue of vulnerability , both at local, national or regional level. The thesis challenged and encouraged the church to be prophetic both in words and deeds, and to stand in solidarity with those who suffer injustice, and for the church to commit itself to pastoral care and to work towards changes in church societal structures that impedes development and justice.

Key Words: *Diaconia, Empowerment, Transformation, Immigrants, Church, Human-Rights*

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Abbreviations

AACC – All African Council of Churches

CNCEIR – Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations

CPIA - Centre For Peace Initiatives In Africa

FMSP – Forced Migration Studies Programme

LUCSA – Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa

LWF – Lutheran World Federation

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

SACC – South African Council of Churches

SAMP – Southern African Migration Project

WCC – World Council of Churches

ZANU- PF – Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

ZCC – Zimbabwe Council of Churches

CHAPTER 1

1. 1 Introduction

The movement of people from one continent to another and from one country to another is not a new phenomena. However in the past decade it has raised concerns due to the way immigrants are treated in other parts of the world today. Most immigrants in the world today are living in a state of fear, lacking protection from the receiving countries. A situation that in turn leads to social and economic discrimination, violation of human rights and dignity. This thesis discusses and analyses the situation of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa, the way Zimbabwean immigrants are treated by the South African government, South Africa citizens and the church. On the part of the church, the thesis will analyse the involvement of the church in trying to empower these immigrants and at the same time the church's involvement in fighting for the rights of immigrants in South Africa. The thesis will challenge the churches in both Zimbabwe and South Africa to be prophetic in their preaching and interpretation of the scriptures. Prophetic here means that the church has to be conscious of what is happening in society, and of its calling to stand for the truth and fight for human dignity.

1. 2 Immigrants

The term immigrant in this context refers to any person who is living in South Africa and is not a South African by birth or nationality. In this case whoever crosses the border to South Africa becomes an immigrant. General there are factors that lead to immigration, and these are pushing and pulling factors. By push factors we mean factors that force people to leave their country of origin, such as poor socio-economic and political violence. On the other hand the pulling factors includes those things that induce people to move. Such attractions or inducements may be better wages, good health and education services. There are different types of immigrants. The first one is called the regular immigrants. These regular immigrants have the legal rights to move in and out of

South Africa freely. They have the rights to live in the country. They have the required documents such as work permits and resident permits. Some have even acquired permanent resident permits, usually through marriage to the South African citizen. The regular immigrants gain certain benefits such as the right to vote, the right to petition the government so that certain of your relatives can join you, and the rights to get good jobs.

The other type of immigrants is called irregular immigrants. This type of immigrants have no legal rights to live in South Africa. They are living illegal and are not welcomed. They entered South Africa through illegal means, like border jumpers. Unlike the regular immigrants, this group always living in fear, hiding from the South African authorities, and have no benefits in what so ever like the regular immigrants. It is believed that about 3million Zimbabwean immigrants are living in South Africa illegal due to poor social and economic situation in Zimbabwe.

The last type of immigrants is called the asylum seekers. This group of immigrants is composed of those who ran away from political persecution. According to the UNHCR report of January 2011, there are 261,500 political refugees who fled from political persecution in Zimbabwe to South Africa when the government started to torture and persecute those who supported the opposition parties like the Movement for Democratic Change in the early 2000s. These people are hiding in South Africa and are trying to get documents from the South African department of Home Affairs. But the problem is that since they crossed the border without permission and without proper documents, it is difficult for them to obtain residents permits. The South African department of Home Affairs requires proof that these people are really political refugees.

In the Republic of South Africa (RSA), as stated in the country's Alien Control Act of 1991, a person is an undocumented immigrant, or illegal alien if he or she;

- enters the Republic of South Africa at a place other than a port of entry,
- remains in the Republic of South Africa without a valid residence permit,
- acts in contravention of his or her residence permit,

- remain in the Republic of South Africa after the expire of a residence permit,
- is prohibited from entering the Republic of South Africa, or
- becomes a prohibited person while in the Republic of South Africa (Hussein, 1996).

What it means is that those who fall under any of these criteria must be termed illegal immigrants and therefore cannot be afforded the protection of the South African government.

1.3 The Theological Perspective

My interest for choosing this subject matter is based on my background as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and my passion and care for the poor. I have worked with many children whose parents went to South Africa six years ago and who have received no support since. I have seen and buried children who died because of hunger due to lack of parental support. I have witnessed the pains of women whose husbands have left them, for South Africa, leaving them to be the heads of the families. As a pastor I came to realise that the church is not doing enough to help these families whose parents are in South Africa. I came to understand how and where we are going wrong. And it is because of this that the thesis will encourage and challenge the churches to redefine its ministry and get involved in social and economic issues that threaten human lives. This realisation stimulated my interest to come up with such a subject.

The writings of the two theologians, Bonhoeffer and Moltmann motivated me. Bonhoeffer's theology of the church gave me a new insight regarding the Zimbabwean church today. His understanding of the church that, "the church is the church only when it is for Others," (Sabine 2007, 151) led me to want to know who are these others in our context today. And this led me to realise that immigrants might be those Others referred to by Bonhoeffer. Because to his understanding, the Others are those who are oppressed, the marginalised or the social outcasts who need to be liberated from social

systems that are oppressive. Bonhoeffer's understanding of the church has a sociological aspect. He sees all human life as essentially social that he developed a theological phenomenology of the human person in relation to Others and to various types of corporate communities and interpreted the Christian gospel within social matrix. For him, Bonhoeffer, the church has a central place in this theology of sociality. He said, "God is present to us in the social relation. God is met and heard only in the real world where human, personal wills encounter one another. God is to be sought in the real experience of social and ethical existence" (Green 1999, 36). The presence of the church in society is to renew the personal and corporate life of humanity, to strengthen their faith, hope and fight against injustice and oppression of all kinds in society. Bonhoeffer understood the church as both word and service. People go to church to receive God's blessings, forgiveness and reconciliation. In turn, the Christian must live these blessings practical in their communities. The church must be lived in reality in our communities, it must be seen reconciling people, fighting against injustice, and responding to concrete issues that threatens human dignity in our society. This is what Bonhoeffer called theology of sociality.

Moltmann's theology of the cross also stimulated my interest in this topic. He understood the cross as the church's foundation of faith, that faith is relevant only if that faith is directed towards the oppressed people in society. For the cross means nothing rather than liberation and reconciliation. Here is what he said about the church and the cross, "it suffers with those who bear the suffering of this present time, and makes the cry of the oppressed its own cry and fills it with hope of liberation and redemption" (Moltmann 1999, 54). Liberation and redemption is the work of the triune God in our society. For Moltmann this unity of God is the unity of persons in relationship, first in the church and also in society, a united society of people without domination and subjection, and a humanity without class rule and without dictatorial oppression.

The cross for Moltmann, brought people back to God, and restores relations between humanity. The church is called to live the life of the cross, to suffer for others, to restore broken relationships among communities, and to fight for the rights of those whose

rights are threatened by unjust social structures. The church for Moltmann is both Word and action. We cannot separate the word and the speaker, they are just one thing. The Word without action is like love without expression. For Moltmann, the church is, “a collective person, and a spirit effected fellowship which finds its goal from God to God. In the Church we find God’s new will or purposes for humanity, the necessity in the world original fellowship, unbroken community in God and the deeds call for God to speak in a new community of believers” (Fahrenholz 2001, 16). These theologians shaped my theology and my understanding of the church, and that is why I am calling for a prophetic theology.

Also my studies of Christian ethics and diaconia sparked my interest in this subject. Christian ethics speaks about how the church can ethically respond to different situations in life. It put the emphasise on love. Love is the core principle of Christianity. Christian ethics emphasis the church ,as a community of virtues. Virtues such as justice, trust, honest and love, and to fight for the rights of those whose rights are threatened. Also diaconia in context emphasises the fight for justice, reconciliation and empowerment of the weak people in the community. It emphasises on the role of the church in society in order to make the kingdom of God realised here on earth. This kingdom is all about justice and love for the neighbour. Here the church is challenged and encouraged to stand for the truth and fight against all systems that hinders development, transformation and justice to prevail in our communities. Above all, the diaconal ministries fights for inclusive fellowships. Fellowships that encompasses both the natives and the strangers, the immigrants. This in turn challenges the church to declare that no one is a stranger, we all share the world as a place given to all of us by God, and no one owns it but God and God alone. Such information motivated me to write about the situation of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa as a way of reminding and encouraging all the churches in this context to play a prophetic role, and help the immigrants, regardless of whether they be irregular.

1. 4 Research Question

The involvement of the Zimbabwean and South African churches regarding the situation of immigrants in South Africa is sometimes questionable. Many times in political and social issues, the church is unseen or unnoticed as it is busy with its core business of preaching the gospel of love and peace, while on the other hand the church seems to be reluctant to fight against the structures that destroy peace and justice in society. In this thesis I will encourage as well as challenge the church to employ theological interpretations that seeks to address the social and economic situation of the Zimbabwean immigrants. In South Africa I will challenge the churches in this context to play a prophetic role and try to approach the situation of immigrants as it is on the ground, that is addressing concrete issues that threatens human rights and dignity. This also calls for the church to work ecumenically with other organisations, such as human rights groups, which are also fighting for justice and human rights protection. Here i mean the rights of illegal immigrants.

In this thesis I will try to research on and answer the following questions which are sociological and theological in nature;

-How have churches in Zimbabwe and South Africa addressed the situation of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa and how do the immigrants perceive the contributions of the church and on which basis can the churches be challenged to become more involved?

-Based on the challenges facing Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa, the calling from the bible and the ecumenical family, why and how should the churches in Zimbabwe and South Africa respond?

As highlighted above, these questions will be approached from two different angles. The first is the sociological perspective. The sociological aspect of the question views the church as part of society and has a role to play in order to enforce justice and the rule of law in society. The church is community of virtues such as peace, justice, love,

forgiveness, reconciliation and respect for human life. Because of that, the church has the responsibility to make sure that people`s rights are protected. Sometimes the church has to ask itself questions like; Why is it that other people are enjoying the resources of the community, whilst others are suffocating in the pool of poverty?, Is there any way of empowering the poor and the immigrants?. I hope that such sociological questions will help the church to apply a holistic approach in its preaching and action. This calls for diaconal praxis.

The second question is the normative or theological approach. The theological aspect will reflect on many theological forms such as interpretation and preaching of the church that can influence transformation and empowerment in society. The theological approach will help the church to be relevant in society by contextualising the gospel such that it will mean something positive to the people. This form of interpretation will help the South Africa church to understand that immigrants are their neighbours who need their protection. It will encourage the church to become an agent for change in society. The reflection on prophetic theology as a liberation theology, which seeks to transform and empower the oppressed and marginalised people in society, will also help the churches in this context to critically analyse the root causes of poverty and sufferings in these communities, with particular attention paid to the situation of the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa.

1. 5 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is a theological reflection, on how the Zimbabwe and South African churches can address the issue of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The thesis will explore the social and economic problems faced by the Zimbabwean immigrants, and discuss the possible theories that can be used by the church to address these problems. The theories that are going to be applied in this thesis are vulnerability, empowerment, reconciliation and transformation. We shall discuss also the problems that caused the churches in this context to be reluctant when it comes to social and economic issues

that have threatened human lives and violate their rights.

But the thesis is not going to discuss much on the Zimbabwean situation since the social, political and economic problems in Zimbabwe are general known. The issue of asylum seekers is not going to be part of this paper, the emphasis is on the situation of the irregular immigrants as defined above, on what and how the church can act in order to address their situation.

CHAPTER 2

2. 0 Methodology

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter is going to show and explore the methods used to gather information from different sources. And three types of methods were used in this thesis. These are; the normative, survey and the interviews carried in South Africa, from 3-5 June 2010, and interviews carried on in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. The surveys in South Africa were carried in areas where many Zimbabweans live such as in Gauteng and Toandou. Both the interview and the survey methods are used to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants` experience. Both the survey and the interview allows the researcher to approach the world from participants` perspectives so that their opinions can be more fully elaborated.

The normative method will help us to understand the ethical responsibility of the church in society. This calls for the theological reflections on socio-economic and political issues and the church`s ethical mandate in society. The mandate of the church is both verbal and action. The church has to preach the saving and empowering Word of God for the community to be changed, and at the same time the church should live practical what it preaches, for I believe that the ultimate goal of the church is not just the interpretation of scriptures, but living the practical word of God. In other words the normative method will define the role of the church in society. And below, I will show how the survey and the interviews were carried out.

2. 2 Survey

2. 2. 1 How I choose the areas

I tried to look for the areas in South Africa where most of the Zimbabwean immigrants live. It was not that difficult for me to get to Gauteng (these are South African provinces) since I had a friend called Munatsi Zhou, who accompanied me to these places. Munatsi is also a Zimbabwean immigrant who has lived in South Africa for five years now. I choose to visit two different regions, Gauteng and Musina. Gauteng is about 450km from Johannesburg and Musina is about 1000km from Johannesburg, but Musina is close to the Zimbabwean border post, Beitbridge. I did this because I wanted to find out how Zimbabwean immigrants live and treated in these different provinces. I wanted to find the difference between those who own houses and those who struggle to have shelter over their heads everyday. I choose locations that are not close to the main cities, but those that are close to the industrial sites and farms since most of them work in farms where it is easier to get employed.

2. 2. 2 How I carried the survey

I had a structured questionnaire with seven sections (see appendix). The questionnaire asked for one`s personal details, like one`s background, if the person has valid documents or not, level of education, if the person is employed or not, and if so ,how he or she is treated at work place. The questionnaire also asked about one`s present situation and about their families too. The questionnaire wanted to know if these Zimbabwean immigrants were getting any form of assistance either from the churches, government or non governmental organisations.

The format used to carry the survey seemed to be fair since the questionnaire had many different questions that addresses different life situations and since the questions helped the researcher to get the appropriate information. But there was one area the questionnaire did not address and it was an important area. It left out a section that talked about immigrants` families in Zimbabwe, like how do they managed to support their families back home, what kind of support they give to their families, how often they send that kind of support and the difficulties in sending support. That is why I had to

carry some interviews in South Africa in order to address those issues.

2. 2. 3 The difficulties in trying to get the respondents

It was not easy for me to get the respondents. Some of them were not willing to cooperate. They did not understand me because it was their first time to have such an experience. They never had a such an exercise before. Some thought I was trying to find out who were legal and illegal immigrants since the questionnaire was asking for the Zimbabwean immigrants only. Because of that they feared that if they fill out the paper they would be known and be deported back to Zimbabwe. So I had a difficult time to explain who I was and why I was carrying out the exercise. My friend Munatsi helped alot. He came to be known by other Zimbabwean immigrants and he explained to them also that I was a student from Norway not a student from Zimbabwe. It was after I showed them my student IDs and the letter from the school, that some of them started to accept my invitation.

2. 2. 4 Qualifications

I did randomly choose the respondents, but to qualify as a respondent one was supposed to be over eighteen years of age, male or female, married or single. One was supposed to have lived in South Africa for not less than six months, whether as regular or irregular Zimbabwean immigrant, but not as an asylum seeker.

2. 2. 5 How people responded to the questionnaire

People responded quite well, there were no sections of the questionnaire that was not answered. People answered the questions fairly, although six of the respondents did not answer the last question that asked them what they think the church should do to

address the situation of immigrants in South Africa. Overall the questionnaire was well understood and answered fairly.

2. 2. 6 Time frame

The sections had few questions and most of the questions needed a “yes” or “ no” answer. Very few, about three questions, required them to give a short explanation or to write something as demanded by the question. So each questionnaire took a maximum of about five minutes.

2. 3 Interviews

Unlike the survey, the interviews were carried in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. I choose participants from both countries. The reason why I choose to interview South Africans is that I wanted to hear from them what they feel when they see Zimbabwean immigrants in their country. I also wanted to see how they viewed the South African role in the Zimbabwean situation. Questions like, do you accept the presence of the Zimbabweans here? Do you help them? How? were asked to the South African people. Since I do not understand Zulu and Ndebele, South African languages, I chose those who could understand English because I did not want an interpreter.

I interviewed also those who had no documents or permits to live in South Africa. I asked them questions like, why they came to South Africa without documents, how they came to South Africa, how difficulty it was to come to South Africa. I asked them also about their situation in South Africa and their families back home, where they get assistance, that is if there are such provisions.

I interviewed even those who had work permits or resident permits. I wanted to understand how they got work and resident permits, and to understand if there were

difference in terms of treatment between legal and the illegal immigrants.

In Zimbabwe, I used another criteria to select the interviewees. In Zimbabwe I chose those who were in church leadership or church based organisations like ZCC, where I interviewed three members, Zwana, Marozva and Moyo. I chose also local church members, or children or spouses whose parents or husbands are immigrant in South Africa. The reasons for choosing children or spouses of those whose parents or husbands are in South Africa was because these are the most affected people in the community. Interviews in Zimbabwe were carried out in December 10-23, 2010.

I had interviews with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), secretary general, Solomon Zwana who lives in the city of Harare. I wanted to know the role of the ZCC, as the mother body of the churches in Zimbabwe, and if they are involved in socio-economic and political issues in Zimbabwe. I wanted to find out if the ZCC is in contact with the non governmental organisations that are trying to help the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa or if the ZCC was working with the South African Council Of Churches (SACC) in this matter.

I had interviewed children and women whose parents or husbands are immigrants in South Africa. Five of these children and three of these women are living in Mberengwa district, under Chegato Parish. I wanted to know how often do their parents or husbands communicate with them, send money or visit them. I also wanted to know if these families get any assistance either from the government or the church. I chose this area because there are many child-headed families and single mothers.

The last group of people I also interviewed were the local church members in Harare, Harare North Parish. From them I wanted to find out whom they think should help the children of those whose parents are in South Africa, and what do they think should be the role of the church in our Zimbabwean situation. I wanted also to know what they think about the socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe, and if the church should leave this to the politicians or the church sees it as its calling.

I used unscheduled probing questions to get more information from the interviewees, rather than adopting a rigid interview protocol, the interviewer took a flexible approach that allowed participants to bring up topics that were important to them. The interviews lasted about 40minutes with each participant.

All participants volunteered to participate and I made it clear to them that they were free to refuse to answer certain questions or to withdraw from the interview at their own will. But all the interviewed people contributed so much and were willing to give me the information I was searching for. In Zimbabwe I interviewed 21 people, including three ZCC officials as indicated above.

Figure 1, below shows where the survey and the interviews were carried out, together with the number of the respondents

Questionnaire	21
Interviews in SA to ordinary people	11(SA), 7(ZIM)
Interview in Zimb. ZCC officials	3
Interview in Zimb. to ordinary people	18

Figure 1.

CHAPTER 3

3. 0 Theory

3. 1 Introduction

Both the interviews carried out in Zimbabwean and the surveys carried in South African indicated that people are convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that as a way forward, the church needs to openly get involved in political, social and economic issues and redefine a new map approach towards the problems in Zimbabwe and the situation of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The church should come up with a strategy or workable theory that can bring in positive change to restore transparency, justice, peace, employment and respect of human rights. In this thesis possible theories will be suggested. A theory should be understood as a way of presenting concepts, or ideas that are testable, and it is a model-based framework for analysing the subject under discussion.

3. 2 Vulnerability Theory

Vulnerability theory is a theory that seeks to analyse the social problems or situation of a given context. Usually the term is mostly used to refer to natural disasters like tsunami. For example, Blaikei, is one of the theorists who defined vulnerability as “the characteristic of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard “ (2004,11). But here it will be used as a theory to analyse the situation of the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa.

Since human beings were created in the image of God, it means that every human being has the fundamental right to be taken care of and to be protected from disasters and human abuse. The general understanding of vulnerability now is that;

"Vulnerability represents a unique capacity for susceptibility and compassion that enables people to recognise and fulfil their ethical responsibility for their fellow human beings, their community and their surroundings" (CNCEIR 2002, 11).

Vulnerability theory assumes that human beings have the capability to take care for themselves, to help each other, to transform the community into a better place for all to live. It is the person of good heart who can protect another person against violence and atrocities. It is a fellow human being who can recognise the security of others such as strangers or immigrants. It is said that,

"Vulnerability is a condition for acting humanely, it is a condition for humankind's ethical capacity and responsibility, vulnerability implies openness to one's surroundings, to one's fellow human beings, to specific others, which enables people to recognise the pains of others as their own and accept responsibility for alleviating the distress of others" (ibid, 13).

Vulnerability theory seeks for justice where vulnerable people are treated unjustly. The prophet Amos emphasised on justice towards the vulnerable people in the Jewish communities. He warned the leaders of the day to protect the vulnerable people against oppression, injustices at the market places and for the whole entire community to be responsible for one another, especially the poor, widows, strangers and the orphans. The Israelites were called to extend their hospitality to the vulnerable members of the community as a way of experiencing their own dignity. "Human dignity means that we are created male and female in God's image," (Norwegian Church Aid 2005, 6). Reflecting views, a church of Norway document says;

"It is in the specific encounter with another human being that we experience our own dignity, in this meeting we also experience humanity, a humanity with its basis in the experience of being part of a larger context, which also put us under an obligation as responsible persons" (CNCEIR, 14).

From the above statement, our encounter with the poor is a test, to see how we love others, how we respond to their problems whether as individuals or as a community. As Christians vulnerability questions our daily Christian lives, like how we live with our neighbours or strangers. In this case vulnerability calls us to fight for the rights of the

immigrants, who are the vulnerable people in this context. In Matthew 25:31-46, we learn that, "even in the final judgement, when everything is at stake, Christ refers us to the care of the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, strangers and the naked and the imprisoned" (ibid, 15). Every human being has the fundamental right to protection and to protect others too.

This theory will be discussed in chapter 6, and will help us to analyse the social services given to the immigrants, such as violation of human rights, education, health, accommodation and also the issue of employment.

From the above understandings of vulnerability, and myself as a pastor and for the purpose of my thesis, vulnerability would be discussed in line with the general theory in chapter 6, as defined above, that vulnerable people needs protection, rights and respect as human beings.

3.3 Empowerment Theory

Since the marginalised Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa have no opportunities for self reliance and depend totally on charity, empowerment theory seeks to obtain the values and the basic opportunities for such people. Hence they become independent and able to define their destiny, that is to provide food for themselves and be able to support their families back home. Though empowerment is defined differently by many people we shall go by the following understanding of empowerment which says,

"Empowerment is the capacity of individuals, groups or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals and the process by which individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives" (Robert 2008, 17).

Empowerment theory helps people to be able to analyse the sources of their problem for themselves to explore their own needs and develop their own strategies. The definition given above includes three important elements in development, and these are, people's

capacity, the process by which they exercise power, and their achievements, not just individually, but also mutually through empowering experience with others (ibid). People are empowered to empower others, an individual's achievement should be viewed as a community's achievement. Meyers believes that empowerment can be achieved through, "teaching people to read, to understand and interpret their context, to figure out what and who is contributing to their current situation, and then to decide what they want to do about it" (Meyers 2008, 117). This applies to both the individuals, community or institutions as defined above.

This theory emphasises on the distribution of resources and, "implies shifting of power, which means that imbalances of power must be dealt with critically" (LWF 2009a, 46). What it also mean is that if those in power refuse to share the resources with those without, empowerment can be difficult to be achieved. But in order for people to be empowered, people need the power to change key aspects of their environment, such as fear, injustice, and an understanding of themselves as well as the motivation to work individually and collectively towards change

We shall discuss in chapter 6, the alternative tools which can be used to empower vulnerable people in our communities such that they can be able to take control of their circumstances, participate in the communities they live and be able to contribute in decision-making processes that concerns their present and future.

3. 4 Reconciliation Theory

The message of reconciliation through faith in Jesus Christ is the core of the life and ministry of the church. The incarnation of Jesus is all about God who had been wronged and seriously offended by the human rebellion against him in Adam and Eve, taking the first step to bring about reconciliation between himself and humanity. In our understanding it is the guilty party that must take the first step and seek forgiveness from

the person who has been wronged. But what Jesus did defies all human imagination and understanding of what reconciliation is all about. The church, as the bearer of that message, should be the instrument through which God continues to reconcile humanity and the entire creation to himself, and to reconcile people with one another regardless of race, colour of skin or religious affiliation.

With the theory of reconciliation, reconciliation is not something that must be proclaimed, but rather be lived out. In that way bringing about transformation as people begin to live in peace and in harmony with each other. Johnsen's theory of reconciliation shows that reconciliation is a process with three stages before total reconciliation is achieved. These stages are, recognition, repentance and restoration, then reconciliation. These stages are equally important, and for Johnsen, the victim must be satisfied with the process and out-come at each stage before moving to the next stage, hence the victim determines the pace. (Johnsen 2007, 104-8). Reconciliation theory will be discussed later in chapter 7 ,

Reconciliation is about healing both the spiritual and the physical wounds. This theory seeks also to built a peaceful and united society in which people can love and care for one another, live in true fellowship with God and others. But to achieve peace and unity in society the truth should be told;

"really reconciliation can not happen if the truth about the past is not revealed, reconciliation is more than the removal of suffering for the victim and conversion for the oppressor. It takes people to a new place, it empowers them for renewed relations and responsibilities" (LWF 2009, 45).

For total reconciliation to be achieved, those who tortured, raped and those who lost their beloved ones must be allowed to name the perpetrators such that justice can be done. Hiding matters under the carpet, in this case does not help. If need be the perpetrators must compensate the victims..

The theory believes that reconciliation without justice is not reconciliation at all. In the

bible, the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-9, is a very good example of what reconciliation with God demands on the part of those who want to be reconciled with Him and fellow human beings. Face to face with Jesus Zacchaeus could not help but to be converted to a new way of looking at things and relating to others. His whole life changed and he immediately looked for concrete and visible action to reconcile himself not only with God but with fellow human beings and committed himself to returning whatever he had taken from others through unjust means. The theory seeks to achieve, restoration, repentance and forgiveness among people in society.

3.5 Transformation Theory

Transformation theory seeks to change a situation that is unfriendly or bad for the existence of people in society. It seeks to change both the people and the community from unjust manners to a point where people can realise the importance for their existence.

"It is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes and desecrates life and adherence to that which affirms the sanctity of life and gifts in everyone and promotes peace and justice in society. Transformation engages and changes all who are a part of it" (LWF 2009, 43).

This theory emphasizes that for any change to take place in the community, those elements which are an obstacle to progress should be addressed. It calls for all stakeholders to get involved. In this case, the church's activities should include a commitment to a social teaching ministry where it deals with general themes of public policy, duties of citizenship, and the relationship of personal and public virtue. The church should carry out its teaching ministry through a non-partisan and objective exposition of the biblical ecclesiastical moral principles in a general way that enable its members to make informed choices on policies that affect their lives.

It is believed by many illegal immigrants I have interviewed that sometimes poverty is caused by sin. Because sin leads to greed, selfishness, unjust manners and even to the

destruction of human lives. To change such manners, the church has to preach strongly about repentance. This transforms people`s attitude towards each other. It changes a broken mind to a restored mind. Unjust social systems becomes just social systems with well defined relationships, and a community, becomes a reconciled community (Meyers1999, 93). Through this process, people will star to recognize their rights and duties as participate in society. To research in collaboration with others, for the common good and well being of everyone especially in this case, the immigrants. In chapter 7, we shall discuss the alternatives which can be used for transformation to be achieved in our communities, some of which are, educational workshops, micro-credits and advocacy.

The theories above are relevant to the situation of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The community and the people need to be transformed such that they can understand that no matter if one is an immigrant or not, we are all children of God and we have to help each other in all life circumstances. Vulnerability, empowerment, reconciliation and transformation theories can guide us with ideas of how to restore our human rights, and respect for each other in our communities.

CHAPTER 4

4. 0 The Context of the Zimbabwean Immigrants in South Africa, biblical reflection on immigrants and a review of relevant church statements

4. 1 Introduction

Migration and immigrations are human issues. As human issues, they inherently deal with the worth, destiny, right and responsibilities of humans. The bible discusses the creation of human as the pinnacle of creation (Gen. 1) which carries the image of God. Humans, as God's image on earth are meant to represent him, God person, carried this image and the potential for a relationship with God and other people around us. And one way the majority cultures or native people can reflect this image is to show compassion to immigrants who are seeking a better way of life in their land. In this chapter we shall apply both the sociological and the theological approaches. The sociological approach seeks to present the context of Zimbabwean immigrants in South African, and how the government of South Africa and its citizens had responded to the Zimbabwean situation, while the theological approach will help us to understand what God says in both the old testament and the new testament, about the immigrants or stranger in our midst.

4. 2 Political Context attitudinal as well as short review of relevant church statements

4. 2. 1 The South African Government's response

The situation of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa is worsened by the South African government and authorities' response to the Zimbabwean situation. The South African government has not addressed this situation of Zimbabwean immigrants. It has not publicly denounce the attacks on the immigrants by its citizens or spoken against the Zimbabwean government for its failure to protect its people. South Africa's lack of response to Zimbabweans' situation in South Africa is closely associated with its role in

mediating the political crisis within Zimbabwe. The government of South Africa's response must therefore be designed to complement rather than undermine South Africa's supportive role in reconciling and reconstructing Zimbabwe (FMSP 2007, 8). The other reason is that,

"there was lack of agreement among the emergency response actors on what characterized the crisis at hand. Because of the official South African position that there was no crisis in Zimbabwe, government departments were reluctant to admit the necessity for contingency planning" (Marion 2003, 27).

On the other hand the department of home affairs, and the police are accused of abusing the immigrants. They are reports where the police officers are accused of denying detainees the opportunity to collect their valid immigrants documents from their homes, and the police destroy immigrants' documents so that they can accuse them for living in South Africa illegally. It is also reported that the police use their power to arrest and detain immigrants to extract bribes. This has been widely reported not only during the operations but also as a standard procedure within the police force. In one particular alarming case, a Zimbabwean citizen was awarded damages after the state conceded that two police officers had unlawfully assaulted him and shot him in the legs following an unsuccessfully attempt to extract a bribe from him (Amnesty International, 2002). This led the department of home affairs to introduce new guidelines for the police in relation to the arrest of illegal immigrants. These require the police officers to have a reasonable grounds when arresting foreigners on suspicion of being illegal in the country, and also to provide a documented proof of the reasons for arrest (Crush 2003, 6). Unfortunately these guidelines seems to be in principle, just guidelines written on paper, but not implemented. Immigrants are still abused by the police officers on duty.

Others are trying to apply for resident permits, but since they have no passports it is difficult for their applications to be processed. Also they can not go back to Zimbabwe to apply for passports, as it is expensive and takes a long time. Some skilled Zimbabweans do however continue to apply for and receive normal work and study permits, as was the case before the escalation of the Zimbabwean crisis. Unfortunately

the process for one to be given a work permit is said to be expensive and slow (Tara 2008, 10)

4. 2. 2 Assistance given to immigrants

The Constitutional Court of South Africa (CCSA), has said that assistance is to be made to those in need, including vulnerable persons (CCSA 2004, 32). The director general of the Department of Social Development, Mr Madonsela went on to say,

”The right to access to social security, including social assistance, for those unable to support themselves and their departments is entrenched because as a society we value human beings and want to ensure that people are afforded their basic needs. A society must seek to ensure that the basic necessities of life are accessible to all if it is to be a society in which human dignity, freedom and equality are foundation” (ibid, 33).

But this does not apply to everyone living in South Africa, rather it only applies to the South Africa citizens and other immigrants who qualify for such assistance. Illegal immigrants, who are the most vulnerable, are not included in this policy.

The South African people are trying by all means to drive the Zimbabwean immigrants back home. Though these two countries share the same culture, that includes language, the Zimbabweans are not welcomed by most of the South Africans. However we do have some evidence that show South Africans giving assistance to the Zimbabwean immigrants. For example, after the break of xenophobia in 2008, the most heart-warming reaction came from ordinary individual people. Not only those who helped their friends and neighbours hide from the mobs, but also the largely middle-class civil society response which provided food, blankets and other necessities for the displaced (Michael 2010, 122). Winnie Madikizela Mandela was singled as one of the officials who had been, “ out of the media spotlight for some time, consoled the victims and even offered a family the temporary use of her home” (ibid).

4. 2. 3 South African Citizens' response

Unfortunately the majority of the South Africans reacted so badly to the Zimbabwean immigrants. The foreigners are accused of placing a heavy burden on South Africa's social and economic services. Their presence in South Africa disadvantage the South Africans to get jobs and, "undermine labour standards and wage levels in unskilled sectors, and being a burden on the public purse by adding to number of poor and destitute in need of services" (FMSP 2007, 17). This is Zimbabweans are accused of not demanding pay increase because of their situation back home. Zimbabweans are afraid of losing jobs if they go for strike demanding wage increase. Because of that many white farmers favour to employ Zimbabweans even if they do not have residents or work permits.

In 2005 and 2008, because of the deterioration in service deliveries and out breaks of cholera, the South African citizens put more pressure to the immigrants as a way of forcing them out of the country. During xenophobia in May 2008, many foreigners were tortured, beaten and some of the immigrants were burnt to death. Those who had small businesses saw their premises destroyed and looted. The immigration camps, these are illegal settlements where immigrants live, were destroyed and this increased the accommodation problem. These events happened in low density areas like Gauteng, where in 2005, "foreign Africans were chased from the townships, informal settlement and from their houses, shops and businesses. In July in Western Cape, shops were damaged and in August the same year (Neocosmos 2010, 119). According to the witnesses, the police officers did nothing to stop this on the ground, while on the televisions, the department of home affairs was heard criticising the attacks. Even the ex-minister of Home Affairs Mangosutu Buthelezi, whose xenophobic statements were notorious when he was in power, made sure that he was on television crying for the plight of the victims (ibid, 122).

4. 2. 4 Zimbabweans' expectations of the Church in Society

Many ordinary people have asked themselves why the churches in Zimbabwe have remained passive and not spoken out against the social and economic injustices that are taking place in the country. There are many church organisations, like the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the Zimbabwe Church Alliance and the Zimbabwe Catholic for Peace and Justice who could have acted.

However there are some exceptions. In the Catholic church, people can single out one brave priest called Pius Ncube of the Bulawayo diocese, who in many cases risked his life, by publicly denounces injustice, torture and corruption. In 2002, he even went so far as to publicly accuse the president Robert Mugabe for causing unrest in the country. He openly demanded Mugabe to step-down and make way for younger leaders to take over. Ncube also went to the extreme of asking the Zimbabweans to pray for the president`s death because he is the cause of all the sufferings in Zimbabwe. Like other theologians who have spoken against their political leaders in defence of the people (such as Bonhoeffer who planned to kill Hitler in 1945 to stop the killings of so many people especially the Jews), Pius Ncube also planned an unsuccessful demonstration march demanding the president's resignation in 2003. Ncube is a singularly and brave priest who accepts the diaconal role of the church in society.

Today, looking at the church organisations from a distance, they give the appearance of taking positive action. For instance, ZCC has different departments such as the Zimbabwe Christian Care, that is responsible for assisting the people in need. Unfortunately, my research has revealed that the department of Zimbabwe Christian Care has done nothing so far to help the children or families of those whose parents are immigrants in South Africa. I personally visited the Zimbabwe Christian Care head offices in Hatfield, Harare in December 2010, in search for information to use in this work. When I enquired about what support they provided to the families of those whose parents went to South Africa, they said that as of now they do not have a programme to address the situation. They have not taken an interest in how these families live, what

problems they have and what kind of support do they need. The department later referred me to the ZCC head office, which is also in Harare. The ZCC has also the department of Peace and Justice, and before I also visited the ZCC department for peace and justice and spoke to the lawyer Mr. Murozvaitis. He said that;

“Our department is not involved in this issue of immigrants or their families here in Zimbabwe. We never had such a programme. Maybe in the future when we see it fit , we will probably look into that area”

The people of Zimbabwe expect both the church in Zimbabwe and in South Africa to take a leading role in social and economic issues that have forced many young people to abandon their country for South Africa. The expectation has grown out of the positive history of the church. During the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and apartheid in South Africa, churches were used as sanctuaries for refugees, the sick and the needy. People were given shelter, clothing and food by the church, regardless of their nationality, tribe or colour. In Zimbabwe, Christian Care provided humanitarian aid to homeless people during the liberation struggle. Desmond Tutu and the SACC members actively denounced racism and human rights violation by the white government. The church had influence and people supported the church and its voice against injustice. From this history people still view the church as the only institution that can bring in about change in Zimbabwe and in the region.

As explained above people understand the church as a sanctuary, as a life giving institution, a healing community. They they expect the SACC will assist those who are in need. The Zimbabwean immigrants, for example expected to see the SACC, being concerned with their situation as immigrants. They expected the Church in South Africa to heal their wounds, their sorrows and to comfort them as a healing and life giving community. The immigrants thought the church would embrace its mission to assist the strangers, the poor and the marginalised. For in the Gospel of Matthew 25: 31ff, Jesus illustrated how Jesus revealed himself to us, in the form of strangers, the thirsty, the naked and the prisoners. Zimbabwean immigrants hoped that the church would protect them from human rights abuse, to give them food and shelter and act as go-between for

the immigrants and the government. The immigrants assumed that every person has the right to protection whether illegally or legally, that we are all human beings with the same human rights. Unfortunately the church in South Africa was not ready to help. Instead the church left everything in the hands of the politicians, who in some cases encouraged the unjust arrest and deportation of illegal immigrants.

4.3 The Biblical Reflection

4.3.1 Immigrants in the Old Testament

God is present in the Old Testament and, reveals himself even in the harsh stories of migration. We have many examples of where the chosen people of God (Israelites) gave hospitality to foreigners or immigrants. Abraham stepped out in faith to respond to God's call (Gen 12:1). He and Sarah extended bounteous hospitality to three strangers who were actually a manifestation of the Lord. Abraham's actions became a paradigm for the response expected of Abraham's descendants to strangers. The key events in the history of the chosen people of enslavement by the Egyptians and of liberation led to commandments regarding strangers. In Exodus 23: 9, the Lord says "Also thou shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers in the land of Egypt". The Israelites were once ill treated strangers in Egypt and God therefore wanted them to be more generous in their treatment of strangers. Israelites experienced all sorts of human torture and knew very well how painful it was to be a stranger. And here God is calling them to be a loving community that welcomes strangers. Such welcome to the strangers is both an imitation of God and the primary, specific Old Testament manifestation of the great commandment to love one's neighbour:

"For the Lord, your God, is the Lord of lords, the Great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favourites, accepts no bribes, who executes justice for the orphan and widows, and befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him. So you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the Land of Egypt" (Deut 10: 17-19).

The Old Testament teaches us to reach out to and care for vulnerable people including non-citizens and resident aliens: “If your brother being in straits, comes under your authority, and you hold him as though a resident alien, let him live by your side” (Lev 24:35). It also teaches us the well-known scripture that defend the rights of the immigrants, Lev 19:33, “And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, you shall not vex him”. God knew how immigrants were treated in these societies and hence set up rules and laws to protect the rights and dignities of the immigrants. He wanted people to treat each other as brothers and sisters who belong to the one human family of God. That we are all one family created in His image.

In the Old Testament aliens have special privileges specifically because they were landless and without power. Widows and orphans, along with the other unfortunates, aliens were allowed to harvest the gleanings on land owned by others and receive a share of a special tithe collected every three years (Lev. 19: 10). This shows that God is a God of the weak, the oppressed and the excluded. His love for his people cannot be changed by our national laws towards the strangers. He loves them as he do the natives and wished that the line that separates them be broken. And it is only love that can break this line. For being an alien,an illegal or legal immigrant or a native does not make one less human.

We should also recall that most of these immigrants mentioned in the old testament were also forced to leave their home-land due to bad economic situations in their lands. For example, the book of Ruth in the old testament opens by explaining why Elimelech moved to Moab, ”In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his family” (Ruth 1:1). And Israel’s sojourn to Egypt is traced back to a famine that drove Joseph’s brother to Egypt (Gen 47:4). Also Sarah and Abraham went to Egypt due to famine conditions (Gen 12:10). These examples help us to understand that not all people want to leave their countries, but that they are forced by the condition in their countries. Some of the conditions today might include corruption, political violent, violation of human

rights and human dignity, as in the Zimbabwean case.

4. 3. 2 The New Testament's Teaching on Strangers

Jesus' ministry in the New Testament brought a new understanding and a universal norm for how we should treat our neighbours. It also gives us a new understanding on who our real neighbours are in our communities. Jesus' ministry was characterised by his solidarity with the poor and the powerless. The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25ff, is one good example which shows how the church should treat strangers. The levite and the priest failed to give help to the wounded man just because he was not one of them. He was not a Jew. However the Samaritan, when he saw the wounded man, felt compassion, took him to the hospital and promised to pay all the bills.

In Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus identifies himself with the strangers when he says, "I was a stranger and you invited me in" (Vs. 35). God will view our relations to him through the lens of "whatever we did for the least of these", we did to God (Vs. 35-40). God will judge us on how we treat and welcome strangers, holding each of us accountable for our actions.

"The church's response to strangers demonstrate its love for them and is a sign for our faithfulness to God, we need to grow in our ability to identify potential and actual practices of the Christian hospitality (Koenig 1985, 6).

Hospitality means that we should not be quiet when we have the opportunity to speak up against unjust legislation and the mistreatment of strangers. In Matthew 25:31-46, we have seen that Jesus identified himself with the strangers, the immigrants who are hungry, thirsty, naked and imprisoned for being foreigners or illegal immigrants. These are the vulnerable people who need the Church's help. Jesus demonstrated in his ministry how to love the outcast by inviting them to his table. It was good news to the strangers and the outcasts, those who were excluded in society for social or religious reasons. Jesus restored the outcasts by healing those who were sick, and the blinds

received their sight. They were transformed, empowered and reconciled at the same time with both the community and their families. Joel says, "What is forgiveness but removing the barriers that had previously excluded one from one's community? And what is healing if not at least the removal of the barriers that had kept one from one's own community?" (Green, 79). In the book of Luke, release signifies wholeness, freedom from diabolic and social chains.

In the New Testament, especially in the book of Luke, salvation is the coming of the kingdom of God. The coming of God's reign of justice, that will deconstruct the worldly system and values that are at odds with the purpose of God. Salvation also entails,

"membership in the new community God is drawing together around Jesus, a community into which all, especially the excluded for reasons of sin, despised status are invited to participate in the blessings of the kingdom as well as to share in its service" (ibid, 94).

The kingdom of God is a kingdom for all. Just as Jesus invited the sinners and outcasts to the table, the immigrants as the outcast in our societies, are Jesus' friends. Loving Jesus is loving strangers. There is no better way for the church to demonstrate Jesus' love for the world than by loving those living at the margin, those that are the hungry, the naked and those whose rights are violated. Koenig says,

" Whenever we consider the migration of any people for any reason, the bible reminds us that we inhabit ultimately belongs to God, God's generous care is constant and universal for all humanity, we are called to extend genuine hospitality toward those who, like us, are strangers and pilgrims on this earth" (8).

The New Testament is concerned with how we express our love to our neighbour. And our neighbours, as Jesus illustrated in the story of the Good Samaritan, (Luke 10: 25-46), are those who are in need, those who need our help regardless of their status, whether illegal or legal immigrants. We are encouraged to render them our services. We should love them as we love ourselves.

4. 4 Church Statements on Human Rights, particularly of immigrants

Since the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948, the Council 's main objective was to fight against violation of human rights, promote peace and justice and to be in solidarity with the uprooted people, such as refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. The WCC, has long been at the forefront of advocacy for improved standards for the protection of human rights. The Council issued a statement that,

“We welcome, in this context, the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of Rights for All Migrant Workers and Members of their families, and urge the Churches to promote the wider dissemination and discussion of these standards and press upon their governments for ratification of the Convention” (WCC 1998, 14).

The WCC's object is that Churches should promote and protect the rights of the uprooted people in our societies. For example, at the WCC meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975, churches were encouraged to speak out against human rights violations in their respective countries, in recognition of the fact that political structures have been responsible for dehumanizing large sections of the people. Four years later, in 1979, the WCC central committee issued a statement urging Churches,

“To facilitate diaconal services to and with uprooted people as a central part of the life of the churches, and to change the situation facing uprooted people by supporting and facilitating practical actions of solidarity at the local level” (WCC, 2002).

The AACC acknowledged that the church should assist the uprooted people since the Church is the first place where uprooted people go when in need. Therefore in their mid-year report of 2006, stated that their overall objective is to minister to uprooted and displaced people on the continent and to create awareness on issues facing uprooted people and to build the capacity of Churches and Christian Councils to respond to emergency situations and address the needs of uprooted people. The AACC also issued

a statement on human rights during its 9th General Assembly in Maputo. The assembly's statement said, "We want to see the churches in Africa capacitated and being salt and light in their respective nations and region. We want to see the words and actions by churches in Africa founded in a thorough theological reflections" (AACC, 2009).

In chapter 8, we shall see if these ecumenical statements were implemented, and if not, we shall discuss the reasons why the Church is failing to live according to its expectations.

CHAPTER 5

5. 0 Presentation of Findings from the Survey and Interviews

5. 1 Introduction

The questionnaire-based surveys were carried out in South Africa together with some of the interviews. The objective of these surveys and interviews was to collect information to use in this study. The information would also be provided for the churches to use in potential policy development to bring change to the people of Zimbabwe. Policies that are liberative and supportive in order to transform the lives of the Zimbabwean immigrants who are living in South Africa. Also these surveys and interviews were meant to explore the root causes of emigration as well as their welfare in South Africa. The survey was done through the use of a structured questionnaire. The structure follows the format of the questionnaire, except for the document which is presented as the first section.

5. 2 Questionnaire (21)

5. 2. 1 Documents

Nearly 21% of the respondents have work permits, they have the rights to live in South Africa. Most of these people are working in big cities like Pretoria and Johannesburg. Professionals like teachers, however, are working in rural areas and sign a two year contract with the ministry of education in South Africa. Most of those with documents work in government sectors such as health and education. The rest are living in South Africa illegally. They came through illegal means, as border-jumpers, and border jumpers are people who entered in South Africa at a place other than a port of entry. About 75% of the respondents have Zimbabwe national identity cards and birth-certificates. They do not have passports or emergency travelling documents (ITDs) which would make it easy to apply for residents or work permits in South Africa.

5. 2. 2 Migration Patterns

The survey carried out shows that there is a tremendous change in migration patterns since 2000, and that this change was caused by the social, economic and political instability in Zimbabwe. From the survey about 15% of the respondent came to South Africa the period between 1995-1999, compared to the year 2002 where an estimation of 85% of the respondents left the country. This happened immediately after the presidential elections of 2002. Still during the survey exercise many Zimbabweans were coming to South Africa. And from the look of things it shows that if the situation in Zimbabwe is not addressed, many people will continue to leave Zimbabwe. It also shows that the number of immigrants from Zimbabwe double every monthy.

5. 2. 3 Demographic

Over 91% of the respondents are below 36 years of age. This is an indication that it is the active working population that is leaving Zimbabwe in big number. The demographic also shows that about 64% of the respondents are male. However, due to changing social and traditional norms husbands are no longer regarded as the sole bread winners in the family, causing a big shift in migration patterns. There is an increase in number of Zimbabwean singles both male and female leaving Zimbabwe for South Africa.

5. 2. 4 Migration Driving Force

Nearly 75% of the respondents have given economic and social issues as the reasons for why they left Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe had no employment opportunities for them, and so they came to South Africa looking for work. Very few of the respondents came as students. About 20% of the respondents left Zimbabwe due to political violence or

because they were threatened by the state agents, and this was after the presidential elections of 2002 and 2008. These people came illegally to South Africa. I found that immigration before the 1998s was driven by the ambitions to start a new life in another country or to join their relatives somewhere, not because of pressure within Zimbabwe. Movement was totally voluntary. It was one`s choice to leave. But during the last decade, it shows that people have been forced to leave Zimbabwe because of bad governance and bad economic conditions.

5. 2. 5 Skills Level and Economic Activities

Almost 86% of the respondents had education qualifications, like O`Level and A`Level certificates, college diplomas or university degree qualifications in different disciplines. Some of them wish to further their studies in South Africa, but they find it difficult because they are not given loans for studies. Some of them can also not apply for loans since they are living there illegally. Those who are employed are being discriminated against. They are not promoted to higher posts despite better qualifications or experience. High posts are reserved for the South Africans regardless of their working experiences. Nearly 70% of the respondents indicated that they had difficulties in getting jobs. Some are reported to be self-employed, selling sweets along the streets, others, especially women, sell African mats and pots in the streets. Most of these women went to South Africa before the World Cup of 2010, to sell their goods, and never returned to Zimbabwe.

It was found that most of those who are working, are not well paid. They are being exploited by virtue of having no legal status or because of their desperate situation back home. I found that even though they are getting little money from the jobs they do, some of them still do send money back home to support their families. The money is sent through what they call "Malaitscha". This refers to the people who are used to transporting goods back home to Zimbabwe from South Africa. They said that it is easier and cheaper since the money is given to a person they know and trust.

5. 2. 6 Health Services

Most of the Zimbabwean immigrants have no medical aid. It is difficult for them to get proper medication from the clinics or hospitals since the doctors would require to know where they live, where they work and their addresses. As they are illegal immigrants they cannot get the socially services for free. Most of them fear that if they go to the clinics they might be caught by the police and deported back to Zimbabwe. This makes the situation more difficult to those who went to South Africa hoping that they would get better treatment, especially those who were HIV/AIDS.

5. 2. 7 Churches` assistance

Over 95% of the respondents shows that they know nothing about the assistance given to the Zimbabwean immigrants by the churches. They have heard nothing about the churches` involvement in trying to address the welfare of the immigrants. Only 5% of the respondents indicated that they had heard about assistance given to the immigrants by the church, and this was during the time of Xenophobia when most of the immigrants were attacked by the South Africans. Many immigrants lost their properties when their houses or camps were destroyed during that time. Churches therefore, provided shelter and food to the displaced immigrants. However the responses showed that just a few number of churches did this, and the Methodist Church in Johannesburg under the leadership of Bishop Paul Verryn, was singled as the only church that was genuinely involved even before the Xenophobia event.

5. 2. 8 Long Term Aspiration

The Israelites when they were in exile, always dreamt for a time they would go back home and rebuilt Jerusalem. This is the same spirit most of the Zimbabwean immigrants have. Nearly 97% of the respondents hope to go back to Zimbabwe some

day. They are praying for social, economical and political change to take place in Zimbabwe. About 90% of the respondents indicated that they pay regular visits to their families, usually during big holidays such as Christmas and easter holidays. The link is still there and strong too. However about 3% of the respondents do not know whether they would come back to Zimbabwe even if the situation would change. The reason being that these people have legal rights to live in South Africa and many of them have bought houses there and have been in South Africa for more than 13 years.

The figure below explains well the information given above, but note that the figures for health and long term aspiration includes both the survey and the interviews.

	Docum. Zim. IDs	M.Pattern	M.Drive force economic reasons	Skilles level	Health service	Long term aspiration
Legal	21%	15%	25%	15%	3%	3%
Illegal	79%	85%	75%	85%	97%	97%

Figure 2.

5. 3 Interviews

5. 3. 1 ZCC, Staff

The interview I had with the ZCC Secretary General in December 2010 at the ZCC main offices in Harare, indicated that the church is trying to get involved in social, economic and political issues. The secretary general noted that the church leadership is divided

along political lines and that it is difficult to speak with one voice. The Secretary General said they had no plan intended to deal with the issue of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. He indicated that though they sometimes meet with the South African Council of Churches, they have never discussed the subject of immigration. This shows that the church has to be challenged to get involved in this issue that of human dignity.

Zwana also cited the social and economic situation in Zimbabwe as the push factor that drives people out of the country in search of greener pastures. Since they have not carried out a survey on this issue, the Secretary General could not give me an actual number of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa, but estimated that they may be over 3 million. The ZCC does not provide specific assistance to the families whose parents or husbands are in South Africa. They do not have such a programme for addressing the situation.

I also interviewed the former deputy bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, Dr Aynos Moyo, who is a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, faculty of Religion and Philosophy. Dr Moyo represents the Lutheran church on the ZCC. So he attends and participates in the ZCC meetings and deliberation. I asked him why the ZCC is not playing an active role on the economic and social issues surrounding immigration. Dr Moyo said that;

“The problem we have in the ZCC is a leadership problem. The leadership is divided along political lines and they cannot decide on one thing and follow it. Others do benefit from this corrupt system and they forget that they are called to fight for the common people, to fight against oppression and systems that marginalise others. What the leadership say on Conferences is not what they do. They are not speaking with one voice and this has destroyed the church’s social mandate”

My interview with Dr Moyo indicated that the church has a serious leadership problem on account of which it is failing to act according to the expectations of the people today. This calls for the church to redefine its mission in order to positively represent the common people.

5. 3. 2 Other Zimbabweans

My interview with one of the children (a girl aged 15 years) whose parents are in South Africa indicated that the church, her local church, the Chegato Parish has done nothing so far to help the orphans, widows and the poor in this community. She said the parish leadership demand too much support for the pastor from the poor people who are even failing to look after themselves, yet the parish has projects. This girl said;

“Chegato parish has two projects, the grinding-mill and the tuckshop. These two projects generate more money in the parish. But the leadership does not tell people how much money is generated by these projects. The money from these projects does not help the poor in this community. Instead the leadership continue to demand money from these poor Christians also expect the church to help them”

This girl showed us how corrupt some church leaders can be. The church leadership is concerned with beating the annual budget and not about serving those who are in need. This overshadowed the church’s mission to the poor.

I also interviewed local church members in the Harare North Parish. I asked if the church assisted the children and spouses whose parents or husbands are immigrants in South Africa. The response made it clear that the church had no money to cater for such people, children and women. There is no budget for those who are in need. The local church members said the budget only covers the mission work, administration and the pastors’ welfare. When I asked them what they think should be done for the budget to include the need. Mr T. Zhou, one of those I interviewed in this parish responded,

“I think the church should take seriously the issue of these children and spouses whose parents or husbands are immigrants in South Africa, if the church wants to be relevant today. The church should start to think about having a separate budget for such people. Because we have many children in our church and community who are failing to go to school because of school fees. Most of them, especially girls ended up abuse sexually by those who pretend to take care of them, or girls turn into prostitution, whilst young boys are exploited, working in

farms just for food. I think the church should look into this issue seriously”.

Zhou understands very much how life is to these children, especially in rural areas. Though he lives in the town of Harare, he often travels to his rural home in Mberengwa district where many men have left Zimbabwe for South Africa because of the district's closeness to the Zimbabwe – South African border.

5. 4 Other Surveys-by Daniel Makina

Daniel Makina is a lecturer at the University Southern Africa (UNISA), in South Africa. He carried out a survey under the umbrella of the Zimbabwe Disapora Forum in 2007, to document the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa.

Makina`s survey shows that there has been a change in migration pattern of Zimbabweans to South Africa since 2000. His survey of 4,654 migrants captured arrivals since 1979. Of which 4,300 (92%) migrated between 2000 and mid-2007. This shows that about 8% of the total immigrants arrived between 1979 and 1999. Makina wants to believe that in 2006, the Zimbabwean population in South Africa was between 800,000 and 1,000,000. But the number has increased to about 3 million at the present time.

Makina`s survey shows that 2000 Zimbabwean immigrants came to South Africa in search of security. They came as asylum seekers, running away from political persecution. But during the period covered by the survey, employment and economic reasons overtook political reasons, just as indicated in the survey above.

In his findings, Makina indicated that there were some organisations that were providing assistance to the immigrants. He cited Zimbabwean non governmental organisation (NGOs), including churches based in South Africa (29%). Here I want to believe that Makina is talking about Zimbabwean individual Christians who are grouping together to help their fellow brothers and sisters, but not a well established organisation. He cited

also the South African NGOs (5%), South African government(3%) and South African Churches (2%). However his survey showed that churches are not doing much to help the Zimbabwean immigrants (Makina, 2007).

CHAPTER 6

6. 0 A Critical Analyses of the Zimbabwean Immigrants' situation in South Africa and possible ways of improving the situation

6. 1 Introduction

This chapter is going to discuss both vulnerability and empowerment theories. That is the situations that creates vulnerability and how the church together with the local communities can protect others from vulnerability in a better, more humane and more ethical way. To reduce vulnerability, the vulnerable need to be empowered in such a way that they can be able to gain control over their own lives and their communities by acting on issues they define as important. Here I am not going to redefine these terms, vulnerability and empowerment, as they have already been defined in chapter 3. However for us to understand vulnerability in this context, I will analyse human rights violations and investigate how vulnerability and empowerment theories challenge such violations.

6. 2 Social Vulnerability

This section is going to discuss both the negative and positive effects of vulnerability. But my main emphasis will be on the negative effects since these effects explore the real situation on the ground.

6. 2. 1 Violence against immigrants

Most of the illegal Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa have no proper accommodation. There is therefore a high rate of physical attacks and persecutions by the local South African people. There are reports from other townships like, Soweto, Musina and Kwazulu Natal, that South Africans attack those who are heard speaking Shona, the Zimbabwean language, instead of Ndebele or Zulu, the South African languages. Those who are found speaking Shona are beaten. Sometimes the

Zimbabwean immigrants are not allowed in public bars. This is a clear violation of the human rights. One old woman said to me;

“If you are caught by the police speaking shona, you are either deported back to Zimbabwe or brutally beaten. They say we do not have shonas here. And it is most difficult for the new comers because most of them who come from central and eastern part of Zimbabwe do not understand Ndebele. Our rights are being violated. We are being abused both by the South African authorities and the citizens, both physical and emotional. But there is nothing we can do”

The rate of human rights violation is increasing in South Africa. We must remember that human beings were created with dignity, to respect one another and to help each other. In certain circumstances,

“Vulnerability, especially of girls and women often increase during emergencies and crises, in which their vulnerable situation can be exploited, relief and emergency assistance are not always well organised to protect the dignity and respect for people as rights holders with their own resources and capacities” (Norwegian Church Aid 2005, 11).

Illegal immigrants, as vulnerable people, lack human rights protection from the authorities and the police because they do not have the right to live in South Africa. The interview carried out in South Africa revealed that sometime the police officers demand bribes for captured immigrants to be released. Those who refuse are tortured or sent to prison and then deported to Zimbabwe later. The most painful thing is that, these illegal immigrants are also denied the rights to clean water, better jobs, health services and education, as we shall see in the following sections.

6. 2. 2 Health services

Immigrants, especially irregular immigrants, have very poor access to health services . The government of South Africa has made it clear that,

“the rights of basic health care and education is guaranteed in the Constitution for everyone in South Africa, irrespective of legal status, and the department of health set out the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, whether documented or not, to access ART through the public health care systems” (FMSP 2007, 25).

Unfortunately this directive has not been followed. Zimbabwean immigrants, mainly those who went to South Africa hoping to get better medical services, like those with HIV/AIDS, are dying without getting any proper treatment. Women, even pregnant women, are denied treatment in most of the municipality clinics, like in Gauteng province. They are, as patients, required to produce a proof of resident first. One woman I talked to said,

“We have a serious problem here in South Africa more than we thought. We can not go to the hospitals or clinics because they require us to produce either a work permit or a proof of resident. Yet we do not have them. Because we came here hoping that the South African government would understand our situation back home as our neighbours.”

A serious consequence of this is that even if one gets sick at ones work place, it is also difficult for the employer to take him or her to the clinic. If one decides to go to the clinic, that person will either be deported back to Zimbabwe or taken to prison for staying illegal in the country. Many of the immigrants therefore never visit the hospitals for fear of punishment or deportation. Those who have the right to live in South Africa are treated differently. They get health services since they contribute to the social services in the country. There are registered and are paying taxes to the government. However there are regular immigrants who in some areas still are discriminated against and, treated like they are illegal immigrants. Some one said;

“I have lived here for four years now. I have the permission to live here because I have a resident permit. But still when I go to the clinic here in Gauteng, I get interrogated all the time. They want to see my passport, my work permit, where I live, and it becomes so boring. Sometimes they tell you that we do not have the type of drugs you want, come next week. And they would be lying. Just to frustrate you”.

So sometimes, regardless of whether you have the rights to live or not, you face the

same problems. Health service is a problem to many Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. The government policy that says, “health for all” is just on paper and on televisions, but in reality there is nothing provided for the immigrants.

6. 2. 3 Accommodation

Many Zimbabwean immigrants have no permanent or proper places to stay. They are living everywhere, dispersed throughout the country, “The large numbers living in Gauteng, and also in townships and informal settlements around large cities, small provincial towns such as Polokwane, Nelspruit, Bloomfontein, Port Elizabeth, and in rural areas” (ibid, 6). Most of these immigrants are border jumpers. They have no legal rights to be in South Africa or to own houses. Monthly rents are too high and many of them can not afford it. So they live in plastic camps, shunts places and under bridges. Most of these places have no clean water, electricity or roads. There are no schools or clinics. In these areas there is high risk of diseases out-break, such as malaria and cholera. These condition also leads to sexual abuses of women and to the spread of HIV/AIDS. During the night it is reported that many young women are raped and killed. These conditions also lead women to become prostitutes, so as to get accommodation. Itinerant traders display high infection rates and the infection rate is spectacularly high amongst truck drivers and migrant sex workers (Crush 2006, 25). This said to affect especially the new comers who does not know the situation. One old woman who is also an illegal immigrant said;

“Usually young women are prone to prostitution because they need accommodation so dearly to the extent that they sell themselves to whoever promises to provide shelter over their heads. And they do not care whether that person is old or younger than them. What they need is a place to stay”.

The South African department of housing has taken no action in response to Zimbabwean immigrants’ issue of accommodation (FMSP 2007, 12). The government of South Africa, is failing to provide adequate and better accommodation for its own

citizens. There may be pressure from South Africans who are living also in poor houses and plastic houses also. Therefore the government's response to the Zimbabwean immigrants, is of lower priority. The other thing probably is that, the South African government alone can not cope with the increasing number of Zimbabwean immigrants who are said to arrive in big numbers every day. The pressure becomes too much for the government, and so the South African government instead chooses to ignore the Zimbabwean immigration issue.

6. 2. 4 Employment

The government of South Africa is said to be doing something in trying to employ the Zimbabwean people. The South African government have employed the skilled Zimbabweans in the ministry of education. The government had done this in order to address labour shortages.

"Skilled Zimbabweans are already being recruited by the department of education to teach maths, science and English. A programme could be developed to expedite the application for work permits in specific skill sectors, for example, education, health care, for Zimbabweans already in the country" (ibid, 24).

Zimbabwe has a highly qualified human resource and because of the Zimbabwean situation the South African government wants to take advantage of that. Of course the South African government wants to help Zimbabweans to get jobs and be able to support their families back home. But it is not in all sectors where Zimbabweans are given such a welcome. Even in the education sector, there is a high level of racism and discrimination.

For example, many Zimbabwean teachers who are teaching in South Africa, work in poor rural areas where conditions are unfriendly. They live in poor accommodation, usually in farm schools that are too far from the cities. Some of these areas have no electricity and are prone to thugs who are said to rob teachers on pay days. It is a silent exploitation by the South African government, as these teachers are not promoted to

high posts. High posts are reserved for the South Africans, regardless of the fact that Zimbabwean teachers are more qualified than some of their counterparts. There was an incident where a Zimbabwean teacher was threatened and told to leave South Africa or die, after he complained to the ministry of education that he could not be headed by a junior South African teacher who had lower qualifications than himself.

Many Zimbabwean immigrants work in commercial farms, far from the cities where there are few police officers working in the area. Here the farmers employ them knowing that they are illegal immigrants. This leads farmers to exploit the Zimbabweans in other ways. As the farmers know that the Zimbabweans will not demand salary increases as they are only temporarily employed. The farmers can give them low salaries. Someone I interviewed said;

“The problem is that, there are times when the harvest is big and the worker at the farm are few. What the white man do is that, he hired many labourers to do his work. And when the work is over, he starts to think about the money he will give to such a big number of hired people. He will tell them that come tomorrow in the morning and collect your money. Then tomorrow the white man will call the police that there are troublesome Zimbabweans here at my farm. Then the police will come with their trucks, and once those people who are waiting for their money see the police trucks, they run away because they are living there illegal. This happens many times mostly during planting or harvesting seasons”.

The exploitation of young Zimbabwean people is increasing in these South African commercial farms. Zimbabwean children living in these commercial farms in South Africa are being exploited as cheap labour. The alarming rise in the abuse of minors stems from the collapse of economic and social service structures in Zimbabwe. Schools were in the past a safety net for children in farming areas and the disturbance of their schooling activities led to some of them turning into child-labourers. The majority of children who failed to further their primary and secondary education subsequently became young adult-workers in these South African commercial farms. In South Africa, child labour now appears formalised because of the economic conditions in Zimbabwe. The traditional concept of helping one another in times of need and the idea that any child in the community is everyone’s responsibility has died. What these farmers want is

profit, they do not care about the future of these young boys and girls, especially to illegal immigrants whom they know that they have no rights to live in South Africa.

South African construction companies employ a big number of illegal Zimbabwean immigrants especially during the World Cup preparation. But most of these constructors are said to be too abusive. The company exposed them to dangerous working conditions and made the immigrants to work without protective clothing. One I interviewed said;

“At times we do rock-blasting without any form of protective clothing. Some even work without shoes or gloves and a number of us have sustained cut on our hands from carrying fragments of rocks with bare hands while others have sustained various injuries because we are not given any form of protective clothing”

Workers are forced to work on weekends without overtime allowances, and are not allowed to sign any formal contract and if the contractor decides to stop them or any worker from working, he just tell them or that particular person to stop coming to work, and the contractor will recruit new workers. Life of illegal immigrants is really tough and calls for an urgent intervention of the church to address the situation as shall be discussed below.

One of the positive effects of vulnerability is that, it enabled the Zimbabwean immigrants to be strong and adjust to these hard conditions, and how they can define their own destiny. Vulnerability made Zimbabweans to be much more concerned for each other more than before, that's why in other sections we talked about students coming together and help other illegal and new immigrants.

6.3 Empowerment

The church together with other civil organisations should be active in promoting human empowerment, and protect immigrants' rights as human beings who have the rights to

protection. Human empowerment here means, "people are able to acquire the necessary socio-economic opportunities and resources to liberate themselves from the struggle for daily survival, it means freedom from fear, that people are protected from violence and torture" (Norwegian Church Aid 2005, 7). Since the vulnerable people, in this case, the Zimbabwean illegal immigrants in South Africa, have no opportunities for self sufficiency and depend total on charity, empowerment seeks to obtain the values, the rights, and the basic opportunities for such people so that they become independent and be able to define their destiny, be able to work and support their families, and to be protected from human abuse. This can be achieved through the following initiatives; social network, formation of immigrants churches, education and temporary work permits.

6. 3. 1 Social Network

Of central importance here is migrant network which provides a source of information, financial assistance and support for those considering moving and which can provide economic, social and psychological support on arrival. Social network is a major migrant source for empowerment in South Africa. Because people leave Zimbabwe for South Africa because they know there are other Zimbabweans who will provide them with food, shelter and information about the area, where and how to get jobs. The new comers are assisted economically/ financially by their Zimbabwean counterparts on arrival. This gives the new comers the sense of belonging and comfort when things are hard. Zimbabweans sometimes meet in groups to discuss the situation at home and strengthen one another, to keep focused no matter how difficult the situation might.

6. 3. 2 The Formation of immigrant Churches

The Zimbabwean have a small Christian fellowship group at Kwazulu Natal where they assembly and prayer together asking God to protect them, guide them and asking God

to protect their families back home. Such groups are important. Even though most of them are illegal immigrants, but these gatherings make them feel at home and seeing the reason to why they should keep on struggling. Gatherings empower them.

Unfortunately, as of now both the churches of Zimbabwe and South Africa have no formal way of supporting Zimbabwean immigrants. I hope that such a cooperation between these two church organisation, ZCC and the SACC, will provide immigrants with the necessary help they want, such as fighting for immigrants' rights as human beings created in the image of God. It will encourage even the immigrants to see that they also have the responsibility amongst themselves. They have to help each other too. To share the little they have and to fight for their own rights.

Also the pastors should be trained in such a way that they respond positively to the needs of the immigrants and their families back home in Zimbabwe. The pastors can form bible study groups where the immigrants can come together and share the word of God as well as their live stories. The celebration of the eucharist as a symbol of suffering and victory, to be administered to the community. Such fellowships will strengthen the immigrants to remain focused believing that God is also God of the immigrants, the poor and the outcast. And such fellowships make the immigrants retain their culture and identity.

6. 3. 3 Education

General, empowerment is much to do with education. It is the primary and the fundamental element for empowerment. People, as individuals and communities need to understand their surrounds and be able to respond well to situations that affects them daily. Education makes people to gain control over their own lives and to be able to speak for themselves without fear. Education reduces poverty as people are introduced to new technology, like new farming methods, communication system and creation of democratic societies. For example in the case of Zimbabwe, people need to be

educated in terms of their voting rights such that they participate in elections knowing that the out come of the results rest on their choice. Because the issues of transformation, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, can not be effectively achieved if the people concerned are not educated, though education is part of that transformation.

Therefore the church should try to come up with a policy that seeks to assist those children who are poor with school fees. Education is children' s rights and denying them this privilege, is the same as denying their exisitence. The church should help immigrants by introducing private education in the areas where most of the immigrants live, like Musina, Kwazulu Natal and Tooyandou. This might be in the form of informal education to help the children of the immigrants to learn, preparing for their future rather than employed as child labour in farms and construction sectors in South Africa and the region at large.

6. 3. 4 Immigrants to be given temporary work permits

I am not encouraging illegal migration. We know that each nation has the right to protect itself from illegal migrants, but because of the situation in Zimbabwe, the churches both the ZCC and the SACC, should demand that these immigrants be given temporary work permits so that they can work freely for themselves and support their families. Permits will enable them to get social services such as health, education for their children and decent accommodation, for these are the basic human needs. Because right now illegal immigrants cannot get proper medication, send their children to school or apply for better jobs. They are afraid of the police officers, who can deport them back to Zimbabwe. Temporary permits will reduce robbery, prostitution and enables the immigrants to be protected by the law. The temporary permits can for example last for six month and to be renewed until the situation in Zimbabwe is favourable for their return. Because as of now illegal immigrants are abused both by the society and by the employers for not have work permits. Illegal immigrants have no protection even from

the police officers. So permits can make them breath for a while.

CHAPTER 7

7. 0 Church and Transformation

7. 1 Introduction

We are going to analyse the role played by the church in trying to assist the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. Like what kind of assistance, if any, has been given by the church?. In this chapter we shall also apply two other theories, reconciliation and transformation, as defined above, and see how these theories can address the issues of social exclusion and marginalisation in this context. My approach will be both visionary and practical. For example, transformation occurs when there will be a profound structure that can creates something new. It demands for a radical shifts in mindset. The practical part of it is that, both reconciliation and transformation occur through a system of continual questioning, challenging, and embraces new learning and taking actions based on the new discoveries. In this chapter we shall see that restoration and transformation will be presented separately though the terms will be used interchangeably

7. 2 How the Church has Responded to the issue of Zimbabwean Immigrants in South Africa

Zimbabwean Christians in South Africa, like students, could collect clothing and food, and give them to their fellow Zimbabweans. I talked to one Zimbabwean student in South Africa about how they help their fellow Zimbabweans, and he said:

“ Here at the college, Kwazulu Natal University, we formed a Christian Union Group for students. We gather every Tuesday and Sunday for prayers. So when we hear that there are new Zimbabweans here in Kwazulu Natal area, we try to locate them and see how we can help them. But usually we help with food stuffs and clothing. Its difficult to provide them with accommodation since we are students.”

Unfortunately, as noted previously, the SACC, from the research I have carried out, had no programmes for the Zimbabwean illegal immigrants. The SACC view this matter as a political issue and have therefore distanced themselves. Daniel Makina, one of the researchers, said organisations cited as rendering some assistance include Zimbabwean NGOs (including churches) based in South Africa (29%), and South African Churches (2%) (Makina 2007, 3). Daniel Makina referred to the Methodist church and other individual Christians who sympathised with the Zimbabwean immigrants.

The one exception congregation that has been involved is the Central Methodist congregation in Johannesburg under the leadership of Bishop Paul Verryn. This congregation once accommodated about 3000 foreigners. Out of this number 85% were Zimbabwean illegal immigrants. In addition to accommodation, the church also provided the immigrants with food and clothing. Unfortunately this programme did not last. It became impossible to continue as the number of immigrants increased. The church authorities and the Head Office did not like the presence of immigrants. They said immigrants destroy their property since they were accommodated in the church. Toilets became over used and water bills increased every month. The other problem was that, the police also accused the church for keeping illegal immigrants an act which was against the South Africa Immigration Law. At the same time the Methodist Church Head Office, accused Bishop Verryn of converting the church premises into a refugee camp. The Bishop responded that it was the duty and mission of the church to protect the vulnerable, and promised that he would continue to help Zimbabwean immigrants. Unfortunately, the police raided the church premises and many Zimbabweans were caught. During this same period, the Methodist Church Council ordered the Bishop Verryn not to keep foreigners again and that disobedience would mean suspension.

The Lutheran Communion of Southern Africa (LUCSA) has no programme for immigrants, despite the fact that some of its core values are justice, respect for all, promotion of human rights, transparency and holistic approach. LUCSA provides assistance to HIV/AIDS programmes in the region. It covers nine countries in the

Southern part of Africa; Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Unfortunately it has however not been providing assistance to the immigrants. Other church organisation such as All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) and the WCC, work in collaboration with the church organisations within many African countries, like the ZCC and the SACC. Which means that, if the ZCC and the SACC, are not involved in immigration issues the AACC and the WCC can not work outside these organisations. Church organisations are nowhere to be seen involved in providing assistance to the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. We hear what they plan to do, but see no action. The issue of immigration challenges all church organisations to be practical in their words and action, and that is to protect the rights of immigrants and their families. The church is called to identify itself with the strangers, the oppressed and the marginalised. The role of the church in society will be discussed in the following chapter.

7.3 The Challenges of the Church

7.3.1 Reconciliation

The message of reconciliation through faith in Jesus Christ is at the core of the life and ministry of the Church. The church as the bearer of that message should be the instrument through which God continues to reconcile humanity and the entire creation to himself. And to reconcile people with one another regardless of race, colour of skin, political or religious affiliation.

We should understand that to reconcile means to restore, to heal, to make whole again. It is to atone, to bring together and to make one those who were once apart (Hoffman 2009, 171). For the apostle Paul, reconciliation means becoming another kind of person which in its turn means that reconciliation involves change. God, in Christ, has reconciled us to himself, restoring the broken relationship between him and us, no

longer holding our sins against us (2 Cor.5: 19). Paul testified that God has also reconciled the world to himself through Christ (2 Cor. 5: 18-19). This points to a broader and more structural dimension of the act of God. It is in this section that we shall apply Johnsen's four steps of his theory of reconciliation, (recognition, repentance, restoration and then reconciliation), to the church's role in promoting justice. The above provide an alternative tool that we shall discuss below. We shall be discussed just as Johnsen presented them.

7. 3. 1. 1 Recognition

Johnsen believes that recognition is important and the first step towards reconciliation. When the church wants to achieve reconciliation in society, history should not be forgotten. By history I mean that whatever happened in the past should be told in order to heal the wounds of the offended or victims. Because there is no conflict without history. People should know how the conflict started, why it happened and how people were affected. Johnsen (104) pointed out that, a reconciliation process that ignores recognition or that put a blind eye to the past misses the point. Just like in church every Sunday the congregation start the service of the day with a confession prayer to God. This is understood to mean that we are sinners. We sin every day, and we present ourselves before God so that God will forgive us and reconcile us with Him. People should acknowledge when they have wrong others and should return to them in order to amend the relationship and allow reconciliation to take place.

7. 3. 1. 1 Preaching on Repentance

The Church believes that sin is the only element that can separate the community, sin breeds greed, selfishness and corruption by overshadowing God's gifts of love, peace and fellowship. To transform the corrupt hearts and minds of people, the church should

preach, without ceasing, on repentance. The apostle Paul says,

”Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom.12:2).

Repentance is characterised by increased holiness of life, reconciliation of relationships and an increased relevance to and participation in greater society. Preaching on repentance changes people’s attitude towards others. People will start to recognise how special they are to one another. The fruits of the spirit, which can be brought by repentance, are love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and against such things there is no law (Gal.5:22-23) Such a society of love unites strangers and natives together. The outcasts are welcome and the bridge between the poor and the rich is constructed. It is also important to note that repentance is not just about personal change, but rather can be applied corporately to groups and communities. The politicians are called on to change from selfish and irresponsible leaders to responsible leaders who can listen and address the sufferings of their citizens. Transformation seeks positive change in the whole of human life; materially, socially, and spiritually, by recovering our true identity as human beings, created in the image of God and discovering our true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for our world and its people.

Prophetic preaching castigates evil acts and call every member of the society to play his or her role as a chosen child of God. When people’s minds are changed their behaviour changes too. For example, if government officials who are manipulating and oppressing their citizens realise that they are also called by God to serve his people fairly and without prejudice, then the whole nation can positively be changed. The nation will start to experience good governance, development, just application of the rule of law, protection of human rights and property. God called every person his disciple, that is what the apostle Peter, called the priesthood of all believers. That means every person, wherever he or she works, whatever one does, at the end of the day we are all accountable to God. The love Jesus showed us, is the love that we should show to

strangers, regardless of their status. Our love for strangers will destroy national boundaries as we see how important we are to each other.

7.3.1.3 Restorative Justice

In Zimbabwe, long periods of violence have eroded people's relations that left others dead, others crippled and great loss of personal properties. Even among of those who managed to cross the border for South Africa experienced abuse on the way. Some of them were sexually abused as a payment for passage at illegal entrances. They suffered both spiritually and physically. I believe that restorative justice can be an alternative tool for empowerment that can be helpful in restoring human dignity and relationships. Restorative justice should be understood as a way to respond to a criminal act. It puts the emphasis on the wrong done to a person as well as to the community. Restorative justice requires the offenders to recognise the harm they have caused and to accept responsibility for their actions.

Restorative justice offers hope for more constructive responses to harm inflicted by humans on one another. The overall goal of restorative justice is to empower the victims and is done through counselling and education,

"Restorative justice programmes address the needs and issues of victims affected by crimes through support and counselling, victim-offender mediation and restitution. The programme facilitators also recognise the needs of the offenders for good social rehabilitation through positive discipline, therapeutic communities and good employment" (WCC 2005, 7).

Since there are many victims who have been traumatised by violence and by the loss of their beloved ones, the counselling relationship can serve as a powerful tool in helping immigrants or victims find an alternative course towards self-fulfilment. This is especially the case when counselling helps people build on their strengths. Of special relevance to victimization is the gaining of a sense of personal power, assuming responsibility for recovery and the change which may in turn help others.

With the well trained counsellors or facilitators who are sensitive to the needs of victims and offenders, restorative justice has the potential to foster new conditions and capacities for communities. These conditions and capacities include community dialogue between the victim and the offender, the recognition of the community's responsibilities and a contribution towards the good of the community. By so doing the community is reconciled and healed. People can forgive each other and the community is made whole again (ibid 7-8).

In the ministry of Jesus Christ, restoration was inseparable from his work of liberation. It took place securely within the framework of liberation. Without the liberating activity of God in Jesus the Messiah, the work of reconciliation cannot be properly understood. To deny this, and to remove restoration or reconciliation from the framework of liberation is to make of it an ideology alien to the redemptive purpose of Christ. God liberates in order to reconcile. Restoration is thus promoted between people, people who face each other honestly as human beings. It is only possible when the abuse of immigrants no longer exists and when both the stranger and the native are free and equal as human beings. And if restoration is transformation of people and the world they live in, then restoration means liberation.

7. 3. 1. 4 Reconciliation

.For total reconciliation to be achieved, the victims should be allowed to tell their stories openly without fear and the perpetrators should be punished accordingly (LWF 2009a, 44). If there is need for the victims to be compensated, they should be compensated. In Zimbabwe, for example, where many people have lost their homes and properties and where others have been injured, beaten up and raped, reconciliation cannot mean anything rather than compensation and the punishment of the perpetrators. Reconciliation is justice, and justice should be done. The story in the book of Nehemiah chapter 5, is a good example of reconciliation and justice. In this chapter Nehemiah

demanded that those among the Jewish community who had acquired their wealth through exploitation and impoverishment of their kindred should immediately take action,

”restore to them this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, their houses, and the interest on money, wine, grain, and oil you have been exacting from them” (Nehemiah 5:11).

And to this challenge from Nehemiah the rich responded by saying “we will restore everything and demand nothing more from them” (vs. 11). God is still today demanding that justice be done. Those who exploited the poor should be exposed for true reconciliation and justice to be achieved.

7. 3. 2 Transformation

In chapter 3, I defined the meaning of transformation and its importance in the lives of the marginalised people like Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. Therefore in this section I am going to discuss the alternative tools, as listed in chapter 3, that can be used by the church to achieve a total change in socio-economic and political issues in the region.

7. 3. 2. 1 Educational Workshops

The Church should embark on an awareness campaign both at a local and national level. During these workshops, “the church should raise awareness about the increasing nationalism that is affecting the country” (WCC, 2005, 11). The workshops should try to involve both women and men, local government officials, local chiefs and police officers. Everybody should be given an opportunity to contribute towards the process of national healing and change. The real causes of migration and conflicts need to be discussed in detail so that a solution to such problems might be found, as “acting to prevent violence that can stem from nationalism is an important step in creating a more just society”(ibid). The police officers should be taken for refresher courses first, and trained to maintain justice and peace in the country. Refresher courses should try to change the mentality of

police officers towards politics, emphasising that they should remain non-partisans. They are there to serve the nation and not a particular party, nor an individual or a certain tribe, but rather the people of community, even strangers.

Workshops can be held at local levels either at the church or in the community. People should know the aim of the workshop before the meeting starts. This will mean they can prepare themselves as the subjects to be discussed would concern their present and future. Theological reflections on peace and unity should be highlighted. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Peace is possible when people can have time to discuss. In Zimbabwe many people, especially in the western part of the country, have never experienced peace. People in the western region experience hunger almost every time. At the same time the state machinery, the militia are always terrorising people in this region for supporting the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which nearly removed president Mubage and his party from power in 2008. So I suggest that workshops should be relevant to the situations on the ground and should be held often until the behaviour of people towards one another have changed. The Church should even mention the importance of these local workshops in church meetings.

7. 3. 2. 2 International Workshops.

The ZCC and the SACC, should hold cooperative workshops where they can discuss the Zimbabwean immigration issues in South Africa. And how they can address their status and humanitarian aid. These cooperative workshops between the ZCC and the SACC, can address the issues of forgiveness and reconciliation, peace building and conflict resolutions, and encourage churches and communities to be accepting and gracious towards illegal immigrants and their families (ibid). Workshops should try to make the South African churches and their communities understand that the Zimbabwean immigrants did not come to take over their resources, jobs or to steal, but that they are in need of social services such as education, health and jobs which the

Zimbabwean government cannot provide because of their economic and political situation. In these workshops the church should put more emphasis on the main scriptures that talk about neighbours, the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, and Matthew 25:31-46. These texts call for our hospitality to strangers. We minister to Jesus through helping strangers, for Jesus comes to us in the form of strangers, as hungry persons, thirsty, naked and asking for help. Rejecting them is the same as refusing to minister to Jesus Christ.

7. 3. 2. 3 Micro-Finance (Eclof)

Eclof is financial institution founded in 1946, just before the formation of the in 1948. Both Eclof and LWF, share the same values such as the promotion of human dignity, social justice and solidarity. Its head office is in Geneva, and in Africa it has offices in Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Since Eclof is a financial institution that offers vulnerable people access to capital resources that enable them to build sustainable livelihood, I suggest that both ZCC and SACC, should request for the establishment of Eclof offices in the southern region, to enable the individuals and the communities to have access to credits to improve their situation by productive investments. Because sometimes the Church organisations, ZCC and SACC, have no money to assist the immigrants with. The good part of Eclof is that, it is people centred, than in making profit for the organisation. From the Eclof 2009 report, it shows that its interest rates are much lower than charged by commercial banks because its purpose is to serve the marginalised and the poor.

For example in Zimbabwe it is difficult for poor people to take loans from the bank, because banks were previously hit by inflation, so their interest rates are too high and only the rich can afford the loans. For Eclof, the interest rates are lower and the interest they make is circulated so that it can expand its services. Also the provision of the safe savings as a service helps clients build a foundation capacity that can significantly reduce the level of their vulnerability (Eclof 2009, 5-13).

The churches should embark on financial projects. Projects that can not only address individual and family economic issues, but that can also empower communities to act on other issues of concern and, together, these groups are seeking justice (WCC 2005, 7). Micro-credit enables poor people to start small projects that can generate income for their families. It means they can support themselves, send children to school and cover basic family needs. In order to increase employment in rural areas the youth can be enabled to start youth projects for self employment such as carpentry, dressmaking, and hairdressing in their areas. Such projects empower women to participate fully on family and community issues that concerns women, and to take part in decisions that concern them too. In Zimbabwe most of the men have left for South Africa and projects of this nature will help women to support their families, send their children to school, provide food and be able to pay hospital bills. Micro-credit projects have been successful in many countries. For example in Japan,

”Among Filipino migrant communities in Japan, economic insecurity is a real problem and because they are outside of their own context, the immigrants are quite vulnerable. Through a unique partnership between churches in Japan and the Philippines, the center for Japanese-Filipino families created a traditional Christmas lantern project that generated income for the immigrants and also provided a method for retaining their cultures and sharing it with their churches” (ibid, 7).

For the sake of efficiency, the church should select committee members to monitor the development of these projects and to evaluate if such projects are benefiting the intended people. These projects can change people’s lives and restore human dignity and encourages everyone to participate in the welfare of the society.

7. 3. 2. 4 Advocacy

The Church should represent the marginalised people in society. The church is both the ear and the voice of the voiceless. The Church should ensure that minority and disadvantaged people and groups like the immigrants have a means to know about, and

gain, the same life opportunities as others. The Church should investigate and know very well what troubles people in society. It would then be able to represent people well. The Church should understand the real causes of injustice and the situation faced by immigrants and their families. For without such information, it is difficult for the Church to represent the marginalised people properly.

The Church, like in the case of immigrants, should fight against violations of immigrants' rights and try to discuss such issues of violence with the relevant authorities on behalf of immigrants. Because it is believed, from the research I have carried out that, immigrants are abused, assaulted and made to pay bribes. And they have nowhere to report their cases. The Zimbabwean immigrants are ignored because they have difficulty in gaining the attention that is needed to make sure their views and opinions are listened to and acted upon. This leads them being marginalised and often socially excluded. The Church should be a bridge between the immigrants and the government authorities. The Church should offer support to those people who are seeking resolutions to any issues that are of a concern to them. The Church should work to make their voice heard and ensure that they understand their civil and human rights. The church as the mouth-piece of the underprivileged people in society should see that everyone has the right to be respected and listened to. That everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives, and the right to aspirations for their future.

CHAPTER 8

8. 0 The Church as a Caring Community

8. 1 Introduction

In this final chapter I shall discuss, in a summary form, the prophetic role of the church towards the uprooted and marginalised immigrants and poor people in society. And the difficulties faced by the church in trying to be prophetic and in addressing the social and economic issues. I shall also present my recommendations, as a way of challenging and encouraging the church to remain focused and revive its prophetic mission to the oppressed people.

8. 2 The Reasons for unfulfilled expectations

We have seen in chapter 4, the statements from the ecumenical movement. The expectations of the Zimbabwean immigrants and people in general as to what and how they expect the Church should do to uphold human rights in their respective nations and regions. However we are left with many questions of why is it difficult for the church to live up to these statements and expectation?. I believe that one of the reasons is that the Church itself and its own structures (church leadership) often times violate the human rights of its members. With undemocratic structures and leadership the class interests of the governing elites are maintained, and the poor are usual sidelined. For example in many churches, and even in large church organisations women are suppressed. The traditional beliefs that women are inferior to men still exists in our churches. The rights of women are still violated in our churches. In Assemblies and Conferences the church leadership wears a brave humane heart and talk of how the church can improve the lives of the uprooted people and the poor. While in reality it is difficult for the church to implement these statements in a proper and just way.

The other reason which I think is of importance is that, church leaders are human

beings, with their own ambitions and visions to fulfil in life. Some of their ambitions are ungodly and promotes corruption. Some leaders view the Church as a ladder to achieve their ambitions. They want power and do not want to serve the people. This is why, as discussed earlier, some church leaders are active in dirty politics, in the promotion of injustice, greed and selfishness in society. Jesus clearly said that one can not serve two masters, one can not serve God and the mammon. Either you shall love and serve the other and forget to serve the other. Some church leaders have chosen to love the mammon instead of serving God and his people.

Like in the issue of the Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa, the church lacks the courage to address the issue of human rights. The problem is that, it seems there are very few pastors (if ever there is one) who are prepared to stand against the tyrannic rule of most of the dictators like Robert Mugabe. They lack an approach, they lack training on how to address human rights issues both at church and community level. What we see is the missionary work and pulpit sermons without diaconal action. That is why the Church in Southern Africa has no solution to the problems of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa. That is why the Church (except the Methodist congregation in Johannesburg) did not me up with a mechanism to assist the immigrants in any way. This condition in which the Church leaders ignore their calling as servants of Christ, needs to be changed in order for the church to have credibility in the human rights struggle.

The Church should accept its role as given and illustrated by Jesus Christ. The Church must understand that God's word is Christ in the lives of the poor, the marginalised and the strangers. It is the grace of Christ revealed in the character and wrought out in good work. The principle of the gospel should not be disconnected from the department of practical life. Love is the basis of Godliness and every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representative of the life and love of Jesus Christ. No Christian has pure love for God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. If we love God because he loved us first, we have to love all for who Jesus died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity. Loving your neighbour is the same as

loving your enemy, the stranger and the social marginalised people. The more we love our neighbours, the more we transform their lives and create an inclusive fellowships.

The church of Christ was established such that it can take care of its neighbours. It is a Church that was founded on the principle of love for one another. It was love that took Jesus to the cross so that we can be saved forever. And the church celebrates this victory and love of Jesus every time it celebrates the eucharist. This shows that the existence of the Church in the world is the sign of hope for those who are still living under oppressive social systems.

8. 3 The Church's Witness and Accountability

8. 3. 1 The Light of the World

Jesus said to his disciples,

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its flavour; wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be out, and to be trodden under foot of men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Matthew 5:13-15).

Jesus expects a lot from the church. He wants the church, like salt, to preserve the ethical standard of our society. To maintain and protect the dignity and rights of every person, for we are all created in the image of God. Immigrants, legal or illegal, are all human beings. God knows what immigrants are going through, how they are refused the rights to live peacefully with others in the same world. From the scripture above, Jesus commanded and trusted that the church would protect the identities and dignity of the marginalised people of society. The problem arises when the church loses its taste like salt, Jesus said, "it is good for nothing" (Vs.13)

It is only when the church strengthens its relationship with Christ that it can be the light to the world. The church must always remember it is through the light of Christ that it can

reach out to the down trodden and listen attentively to the cry of the victims. It is through the light of Christ that the church can renew its mission. The mission of the church must not be empty words, but God's action of liberation and renewal,

"The churches should renew the objectives of their diaconal ministry to be relevant in society. They should try to reflect on a prophetic diaconia in order to become the voice for the voiceless, just and compassionate, through active participation in resolving socioeconomic problems of the community, especially for those who are displaced, marginalised, dehumanised, neglected, oppressed and underprivileged" (Harahap 2009, 48).

The church should give practical expression to our sense of freedom, a sharing community and solidarity inspired by our faith in Jesus Christ. The church should follow the example of Jesus and concentrate on healing and transforming people into humble, honest, caring and loving children of God. Children who can live like Jesus, fighting the battles with darkness, bring truth to the blind and ignorant, bring hope to those whose hopes are shattered and bring acceptance to the forgotten and unloved people.

"The church as a communion of people, should have at heart both the spiritual and the daily problems of its members, it should be part of their members' lives not just on Sunday, but every day, it must go to the field and discuss with members what problems they are facing" (Sihombing 2009, 138).

The Church should also be a migrant Church, moving with its people, knowing what they eat, where they sleep and what troubles them. When the church lives by the principles of Jesus, it will have a profound influence on the world we live in by,

"challenging patterns of corruption and insisting that governments carry out their appropriate, God-given responsibility to provide for the basic needs and political, economic, social and cultural rights of their people" (ibid, 21).

8. 3. 2 The Church as the agent of Liberation

In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus said,

"The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good

news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour".

This was the mission of Jesus, to free the oppressed and to fight for their rights. If the mission of Christ is our mission, then the Church has to engage with the unjust social systems that put other people into slavery. The text above shows God's compassion, love and mercy towards the oppressed. In the old testament we see how God cared for the oppressed people, the immigrants. When the Israelites were in Egypt under the oppressive rule of King Pharaoh, they cried to God, and God heard their cries. He had seen the afflictions of his people and understood their pain (Exod.3:1-10). But God did not stop there, he acted and liberated his people from this unjust and oppressive situation. God wanted the Israelites to start a new life. A life that was supposed to be characterised by relationships, justice, love for each other, and a social existence that would depend on and articulate that freedom. We should understand that, "Exodus is the story of moving from slavery to freedom, from injustice towards a just society, from dependence to independence" (Myers 1999, p31). Moses became God's tool for liberation, so that the Israelites could hope for a just future. Through Moses God constructed a new reality utterly different from the slavery they had experienced in Egypt. A social reality consistent with God's liberating act.

Today, in the world, in our communities, there is a groan, a cry and a plea for help, just like in the time of Moses. Strangers are crying for our help. They are in need of food, clothing, shelter and freedom. The Church should listen, and as the agent for liberation, the Church has been sent to liberate and free the oppressed. To serve the strangers. The Church is the eyes and hands of God. It must see and act in order to bring about justice and freedom to those who are socially, economically and politically oppressed. It must lead them to responsible living and social relationships that are liberating and just. Liberation struggles are always generated as a reaction to unjust laws and oppressive practices. Our society must be based upon ethical principles that foster justice, impartiality and honesty. Freedom and inclusive fellowships can be realised only in opposition to these laws and practices.

The biblical notion of salvation is equated with the process of liberation from oppression and injustice towards the strangers, the marginalised and the outcasts. The diaconal Church for all practical purpose, should equate loving your neighbour with loving God. God is found in our neighbour and is clothed with poverty, he is the one without food and shelter (Green 1995, 89). In this case salvation is identified with the liberation of the neighbour. Jesus' ministry was a struggle to set people free. To bring return the outcast, the poor, the widows and the sick to the community. They were discriminated and marginalised for different social reasons. They had lost everything, respect, dignity and the dream for their future, but Jesus brought them hope, freedom, faith, respect and a future. Jesus fought for their rights and freedom. Jesus was against such structures that barred them from social privileges. Jesus demonstrated how and what it means to serve God. One can not love God without serving his or her neighbour. The church should direct its faith towards its neighbours, for, "to talk about the righteousness of God, therefore is to talk about God's compassion and mercy" (Ateek 1990, 143). To fulfil its faith in Jesus Christ, the Church should create inclusive fellowships in areas where there are immigrants and show them that we are all children of God. We all have the same fundamental dignity, rights and responsibility.

8. 3. 3 The Church with the Strangers

The commission Jesus gave to his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, and to baptise them in the name of the triune God (Matthew 28:19), is a clear indication that the Church should move further from the known to the unknown, from the loved to the unloved and from the native to the stranger. It was a commission that was meant to invite the stranger in, so that relationships can be established. The Church is sent to the world to minister, through the provision of hospitality. Hospitality that offers protection and respect to strangers while it also sustains fundamental moral bonds among the Church members. In the first century of the church, Christians gave hospitality to strangers with a distinctive emphasis on welcoming the weak and those least likely to be

able to reciprocate. The diaconal Church should relate to strangers, street kids, orphans, widows, and illegal immigrants. Solidarity should be a basic category for dealing with social differences and breaking social boundaries that excluded certain kinds of persons. The Church should fight for the persons who seems to have little to offer. Solidarity with strangers remind us that justice and friendship belong together. The Church's concern and effort must be grounded in the wisdom that comes from living alongside those whose lives have been overlooked or undervalued by the larger society.

In the story of the Good Samaritan Luke 10, we are told that the Lawyer went to Jesus and asked Jesus what he can do to inherit eternal life (Vs.25). When Jesus asked the Lawyer what was written in the law, he answered and said, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself". Jesus said to him, you have answered correctly, do this and you shall live" (Luke 10:27-29). In the following verses Jesus gives him an illustration, a story to make him understand who his neighbour was. It was a problem for the Jewish community to accept or welcome someone who was not a Jew. Their understanding of the neighbour was confined to their Jewish community, their kinsmen or fellow Jews. The story given by Jesus, is like a commandment about relationships and not law. It is about who we must love, not simply what we must believe, it is about what we must do. It is a commandment for transformation. For to love God with all your heart, your strength, soul and mind, will definitely lead you to think beyond your traditional and religious boundaries and beliefs and towards other people. Loving your neighbour as yourself, goes beyond national or family ties, and beyond social interaction and economic bonds. In this story, the Samaritan, an outcast was the only one who stopped to give help to the person whose life was in danger.

The question we can ask ourselves today is, how do we, as a church, treat our neighbour?. Today the world is experiencing war, unemployment and economic hardship that forces many people to leave their own countries for others in hope of protection. Some of these people are living as refugees, as illegal immigrants or as strangers in our countries. How do we receive them? Does the Church treat them as its

neighbours or as strangers? Does the Church give them the protection they need? Does the Church respect their humane or identities as people created in the image of God or as strangers and outsiders? These are the question the church should always ask itself if it wants to be relevant today. The Church ,”should no longer be just a gathered community, or a chosen people, it should be a people’s movement, helping the community being in visible solidarity with people living in the concrete social situations in church the churches are located” (LWF 2009b, 51).

8. 4 The Future Development

The future of the Zimbabwean immigrants in South African can be viewed in both negatives and positive changes in both socio-economic and political developments in Zimbabwe. Looking on the negative developments, one could say that if the Zimbabwean situation will not change for the better, many Zimbabweans will continue to leave Zimbabwe for South Africa even though the situation for Zimbabwean immigrants is unbearable. Zimbabweans will be forced to live under harsh conditions, but at least they have food to eat, jobs and some can support their families.

If the situation in Zimbabwe will take long to change, the South African, both the government and citizens, will put more pressure on the Zimbabwean immigrant so that they would leave South African. Human rights violation will increase. Many Zimbabwean immigrants will die. This will be caused by the fact that job markets will be flooded and unemployment will increase in South Africa. The Zimbabweans will be blamed for this. The social standards of services, like education, health and accommodation, will deteriorate because of over demand. We can foresee the government of South Africa stopping to issue visas or permits even to regular immigrants. Zimbabweans will be forced to return to their country.

However if the situation changes for the positive, many Zimbabweans will come back home to rebuilt their nation. In my research, about 97% of the respondece indicated

that they will return to Zimbabwe, they don't want to die in a foreign land struggling for survival. If the Zimbabwean situation changes, jobs will be created, the issue of employment will be addressed and this in turn will reduce the movement of people to South Africa. The Church will also benefit from this change because its membership will increase and the problems of children or spouses without parents or husbands to look after them will be reduced.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE: IMMIGRANTS/ REFUGEES

This survey was prepared by the Pastor and master student Tawanda Chovere in cooperation with Diakonhjemmet University, in Oslo. The goal is to get a better overview of the social and well being of the immigrant/ refugees, and possibly find out what can be done to improve their social lives, by the church and the community at large. This survey will also be used as a basis for the thesis iam going to write in the next fall. I really appreciate if you take your time to fill our this form that do not take more than few minutes. It is also important to emphasize that the survey is completely anonymous.

A. BACKGROUND

- a) Gender: Male Female
- b) Age: Under 18 18-25 26-35 Over 36
- c) Country of origin.....
- d) How long have you been here?.....
- e) Are you living with relatives?.....
Yes No
- f) Marital status: single married divorced
- g) How many children do you have?
- h) Are you living with them? Yes No
- i) What sort of accommodation do you have?
Private share irregular no other
- j) Do you have problems communicating in the local spoken language?
Yes, severe problems Yes, minor problems No, not at all

B. DOCUMENTS

- a) Do you have a birth-certificate/ID? Yes No
- b) If your answer is NO, is it possible for you to obtain it? Yes No
- c) Do you have proper travelling documents, e.g. Passport, ETD? Yes No
- d) If your answer is NO, is it easy for you to get one? Yes No

e) Do you have the permission to stay here? Yes No

f) If your answer is NO, why? Give

reasons.....
.....

C. EDUCATION

a) Are you educated? Yes No

b) Which level of education do you have?

Primary O level A level College University

b) Do you have the opportunity to go to school here? Yes No

d) If your answer is NO, give

reasons.....
.....

D. EMPLOYMENT

a) Are you employed?

Yes No

b) Are you a professional worker?

Yes No

c) If your answer is YES, what kind of job?

d) If your answer is NO, what kind of job are you looking for?

Permanent temporary day-to-day basis

d) Do you have working experience from your home country?

Yes No

e) Do you have a work permit?

Yes No

f) Is there any discrimination when applying for a job?

You have experienced yourself

Heard about experiences from others

E. HEALTH SERVICES

a) Do you have medical insurance?

Yes No

b) If your answer is YES, what type?.....

c) Is it easy to get treatment?

Yes No

d) Is treatment affordable?

Yes No

e) Do you get any assistance from the ministry of health?

Yes No

F. PRESENT SITUATION

a) Why are you here? (tick as many as suitable)

Looking for a job

Protection from persecution

Bad political situation at home

No employment opportunities back home

Joining family relatives

b) How would you describe your current situation, taking into account all dimensions of life?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Not good

Very bad

c) Who assists you here?

Church

Municipality

Individuals

The government

NGOs

d) Do you know any assistance offered by a congregation, church or any other organisations?

Yes No

e) If any, what kind of assistance does the church offer?

f) Have you considered asking for help from the church?

Yes No

g) What do you think should be the role of the church in a situation like

this?.....
.....

G. RELIGION

- a) What is your religion?.....
- b) In the current situation, is it easy to practice your religion in community with other?