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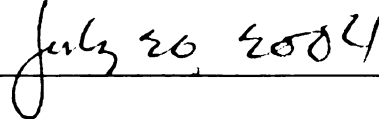
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**DOMESTICATING A FOREIGN IMPORT?
AFRICAN CULTURES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
AT JESUIT MISSIONS IN ZIMBABWE, 1879-1980**

VOLUME I

By

Nicholas Matthew Creary

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

DOMESTICATING A FOREIGN IMPORT? AFRICAN CULTURES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AT JESUIT MISSIONS IN ZIMBABWE, 1879-1980

By

Nicholas Matthew Creary

Catholic theologians in the last forty-five years have developed the relatively new term “inculturation” to discuss the old problem of adapting the church universal to specific local cultures. The theologians’ conception of inculturation is as a dialogue between Christianity (the church) and culture. Europeans required ten centuries to inculturate Christianity from its Judaic roots. The existence of the eastern churches in communion with the Roman Catholic church points to the time in history when there was greater development of the local churches and, consequently, greater inculturation of the church (i.e., prior to the schism of the eleventh century). As such, African efforts to make the church their own in Southern Africa are a manifestation of the same process, but in a much shorter period of time.

African Christians were aware that European missionaries transmitted aspects of their cultures along with the Christian message during the evangelization of Africans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This African Christian consciousness emerged neither in an effort to destroy or appropriate symbols of authority, nor to reclaim appropriated cultural patrimony. It was the product, rather, of a deliberate attempt to introduce and incorporate elements of African religion into the Christian symbolic

system. In Southern Africa, it appears that African Catholic Christians, above all, sought to fashion for themselves a niche, a spiritual home within the church.

This study examines inculturation processes of the Catholic church in Zimbabwe primarily during the colonial period, 1890-1980. It presumes that for “the dialogue between the church and culture” to occur there must be people with the requisite insider knowledge of the culture in place, first examining the formation of African religious women, the African clergy, and African laity. The focus then shifts to the specific issues of marriage, God’s name, and honoring ancestor spirits as sites of inculturation, beginning with the historical development of African cultural beliefs and practices prior to the colonial dispensation, and showing Africans adapting Christianity within the context of their own history. That is, they show Africans making their own history.

This study examines African assimilation of Christianity within the broader context of African religious development in Zimbabwe, focusing on the nature and role of culture in influencing people’s beliefs and actions, and how changes in culture change the ways people act. In trying to determine whether and why a particular segment of a given society converts from one religious practice and belief to another in a specific period of time, this study will contend that European missionaries’ preaching “the word” merely implanted Christianity in Southern Africa. The process of inculturating the church, by which African Christians shed European cultural influences from Christianity and transformed it into an African religious expression, was ultimately more important for the spread of Christianity across the African continent.

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Dedication

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam.

Pamberi na Chimurenga!

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A ChiShona proverb says that success has many mothers but failure is an orphan. To the extent that this completed study is in any way successful I must express my gratitude to the many mothers (and fathers) who helped to give it life. At the same time, I alone take responsibility for any and all of its failings.

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**Domesticating a Foreign Import?
African Cultures and the Catholic Church
at Jesuit Missions in Zimbabwe, 1879-1980**

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Key to Abbreviations

ABSI: Archivum Britannicum Societatis Iesu (British Archives of the Society of Jesus), London

AAH: Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare

ANTT: Arquivo Nacional de Torre de Tombo, Lisbon

JAZ: Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare

NAZ: National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare

Introduction

Setting the Stage

This project began with the crisis of trying to find a job: during my senior year at Georgetown University, I happened across a pamphlet advertising volunteer teaching positions with the Catholic Ancillary Teachers of Rural Zimbabwe (Catoruzi). The pamphlet noted that then-Prime Minister Robert Mugabe had asked the Catholic church to provide teachers for schools in the rural areas. This struck me as being odd: why would an alleged Marxist/socialist entrust the future of a newly liberated nation to the care of an ostensibly reactionary religious institution? At the time I had no idea that Mugabe had been raised as a Catholic at a Jesuit mission.

Four years later (after two years of teaching high school social studies and two years in the novitiate of the Jesuit New York province), I found myself in the M.A. program in American history at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., studying the history of American Catholics of African descent. During a conversation with a fellow graduate student while on a research trip to the Archdiocese of Baltimore's archives, my colleague expressed surprise that I had completed my undergraduate degree with a concentration in African history rather than American history. In explaining to her the things about African history that I found most interesting, I found myself becoming excited about them anew, and longing to return to African history. Two years later, while working with Catholic Relief Services in Angola, after getting to know and working with missionary priests and the Spanish *Hermanas Teresianas* who dedicated their lives to working among the people at the mission of Mary the Mother of God on the outskirts of Cubal, at four o'clock one morning the kernel of the idea for this project struck: the idea

of testing inculturation, or the adaptation of Christianity to a local culture, as a process of social liberation that paralleled the political liberation struggle.

As with many dissertations, field research changed the scope and structure of the inquiry: I had originally intended to trace the histories of three Jesuit missions in Zimbabwe and compare them with the histories of three Jesuit missions in Mozambique, using the Jesuits as a control to test the effects of differences in African and European cultures on the inculturation process. Comparing Jesuit missions in Zimbabwe and Mozambique would have provided a means to examine the practical effects of Jesuit spirituality and missiology, as well as differences in European cultures, colonial systems, and mentalities on the inculturation process. While Jesuits in Asia and the Americas were renowned for their efforts to inculturate the church prior to the nineteenth century, inculturation did not appear to be a priority or strategy within the African context prior to the middle of the twentieth century. Jesuit missions, accordingly, are excellent loci for case studies because Ignatian spirituality allows great flexibility and variety in its implementation, thereby ostensibly making it more amenable to inculturation processes within the Catholic church. Furthermore, the Catholic church's centralized and uniform structures that cross national boundaries, its emphasis on ritual, and its natural law philosophy and theology mitigated against schisms and the formation of African independent churches, as happened more often with many Protestant churches, thus making it well-suited to study African initiatives within the global church and their efforts to transform it.¹

Unfortunately, I was unable to gain access to the records of the Jesuit missions in Mozambique located in the Jesuit archives in Lisbon because the archivist, Padre Vital

Perreira, a spry septuagenarian, was frequently away from the archives hearing the confessions of the nuns and youth of Lisbon. Additionally, the overabundance of material on Chishawasha mission (the oldest Catholic mission established in colonial Zimbabwe) versus the virtual non-existence of material on St. Peter's parish, Harare (the oldest urban parish for African Catholics in Harare) in the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe necessitated that I revise the structure of this project. Further, the political violence in Zimbabwe following the defeat of the constitutional referendum of February 2000 and the parliamentary elections of June 2000 resulted in this project's current format: very few lay people were willing to be interviewed about their experiences during the colonial and *chimurenga* periods, and due to the political situation even some priests and brothers were afraid to speak. Of the 28 interviews I was able to conduct, only six were of lay people (four men and two women). Consequently, the current study relies more heavily on written sources found primarily in the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe and the Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare than I would have preferred, and I have had to glean more African perspective through colonial sources² to compensate for the relative lack of African voice obtained through direct oral research.

I wanted to study Africans adapting and taking charge of the church, making it their own. I accept Basil Davidson's contention that African struggles against European colonialism were struggles for social liberation, and that the political form of the nation-state was accidental, not the goal of the liberation movements in and of itself.³ And so inculturation seemed the best lens through which to test this question within the Catholic church, as well as to test Jean and John Comaroff's theory that Western missionaries

colonized Africans' consciousness, and that the acceptance and external manifestation of Christianity was the manifestation of the results of the colonization process.⁴ Their application of Western cultural experience generally to non-Western societies saw interaction as predominantly one-way, with Western missionaries almost exclusively influencing Africans, and the implication of their premise of the colonization of consciousness is that African Christians could not think for themselves or know their own interests.

Inculturation was a way to show Africans as agents in their own right within the church, and within the drama of history. As I spent time living with the church in Zimbabwe, however, seeing what I can only call the relative lack of the inculturation of the church in Zimbabwe, I began to consider what appeared to be a significant gap between inculturation as written by Catholic theologians (both African and European), and the experience of the process on the ground in Zimbabwe, and to a lesser extent in Mozambique and Angola.

Catholic theologians in the last forty-five years have developed the relatively new term "inculturation" to discuss the old problem of adapting the church universal to specific local cultures. The theologians' conception of inculturation is as a dialogue between Christianity (the church) and culture.⁵ The concept of inculturation differs from the anthropological concepts of acculturation, which is the process of adapting to a culture that is not a person's native culture, and enculturation, or the process of learning a culture as one's native culture. Europeans required ten centuries to inculturate Christianity from its Judaic roots. The existence of the eastern churches in communion

with the Roman Catholic church points to the time in history when there was greater development of the local churches and, consequently, greater inculturation of the church (i.e., prior to the schism of the eleventh century).⁶ As such, African efforts to make the church their own is a manifestation of the same process, but in a much shorter period of time.

African Christians were aware that European missionaries transmitted aspects of their cultures along with the Christian message during the evangelization of Africans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This African Christian consciousness emerged neither in an effort to destroy or appropriate symbols of authority, nor to reclaim appropriated cultural patrimony.⁷ It was the product, rather, of a deliberate attempt to introduce and incorporate elements of vernacular African religion into the Christian symbolic system. In Southern Africa, it appears that African Catholic Christians, above all, sought to fashion for themselves a niche, a spiritual home within the church.

Theories of power, such as the Comaroffs' or that of James C. Scott,⁸ that focus explicitly on contestation are of limited value in discussions of religious change, which must account for the religious ideals of unity between and communion among people. If the question had simply pitted African Christians against Western Christians in a contest for cultural patrimony, then African Christians more than likely would have left the Catholic church in greater numbers and joined one of the many African independent/initiated Christian churches, where African Christians were free to formulate doctrines and practices with African symbols without interference from European missionaries. The articulators of African Christian consciousness, however, were deeply

engaged in a “quest for belonging.” They chose to pursue spiritual peace within the Catholic church, where they began to transform the church from below by incorporating African symbols, music, and ways of being Christian into the universal church. In effect, they began to place their cultures on par with Western cultures in the church. Studies of religion and religious interactions within a colonial context, such as that of Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross, expand discourses on power relations and render them more complex by arguing that because true Christians are Christians of their own free will, missionaries cannot impose Christianity on people unwilling to accept it. To argue that Africans’ consciousness was colonized is “akin to saying that it was false. It can only be an insult, . . . a demeaning of the real choice and the real dignity of those who came to accept, in part and in their own ways, the messages of the missionaries.”⁹

Since the 1950s, scholars such as J. F. Ajayi and Roland Oliver have associated Christianity with the European imperial conquest and colonization of Africa.¹⁰ Other scholars, such as Greg Cuthbertson and Paul Landau, have seen Christianity from a materialist perspective and contend that Africans were motivated to become Christians for reasons of material gain.¹¹ These views of Christianity are problematic because they see Christianity merely as part of a hegemonic civil society that Europeans used to make Africans docile subjects of colonial states and do not take seriously either the possibility that Africans may have been sincere in their acceptance of Christian ideology, or Africans Christians’ ability to influence Christian beliefs and practices. As such, Christianity is reduced to a function of European culture. Although many European and African converts and missionaries did collaborate with the imperial powers, the subtlety

and variety of African responses to the Christian message render the problem more complex.

In 1952, Roland Oliver posited that Christianity was a European import to Africa, and that missionaries were part of the vanguard of the colonial enterprise in *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*. Since then, scholars studying the history of Christianity in Africa have had to contend with Oliver's assertion in some form or fashion. Given the variety of approaches and the phases through which the historiography of African Christianity has passed,¹² the current scholarship has become far more subtle and nuanced in its approach to Oliver's legacy: it no longer questions whether or not mission Christianity was complicit with colonialism, but rather the degree and manner in which Christians—both African and European—participated in shaping Christianity as a force for the oppression and/or liberation of Africans.¹³

A different conceptualization of the problem—which moves beyond Oliver's approach—is to consider the history of African Christianity within the broader context of religion in Africa. Lamin Sanneh's work placed African Christianity within the wider context of the history of Christianity. He showed the African presence within Christendom from its earliest days in the first century, and showed Africans actively shaping and spreading the faith, and not merely as the passive recipients of European ministrations. Sanneh, however, also established a history of Christianity within an African context. Focusing on the beliefs and practices of Christians and Muslims in West Africa, he argued that when first-century Christians translated their sacred texts into Greek, they began a process by which the Christian message continually took on the

language and cultural forms of the communities that accepted it. According to Sanneh, this “translatability” is the hallmark of Christianity, despite the intentions and actions of ministers who believed in a fixed version thereof. European missionaries in Africa, therefore, set in motion a process that produced Christian churches with indigenous African leaders, beliefs, and practices. Once the Bible was translated into the vernacular, missionaries could not control its spread and adaptation to local forms and practices. Translation, then, was a necessary first step in the inculturation of the church, or a privileging of the local culture.¹⁴

If, as Sanneh argues, any vernacular language can be a vehicle for Christian ideology and any culture can be a vehicle for its expression, then it is possible to apply this concept (literally to translate, or carry over) to religious expression in general, and speak of *vernacular African religion*, or the religious beliefs and practices that a given African group shares in common in a specific place and time. As with a vernacular language, vernacular religion is subject to change over time based on how people within the group use it.

In “African Conversion,” Robin Horton presumed that when people are confronted with new situations they adapt them in terms of their existing ideas and attitudes, and that when people assimilate new ideas they do so because the ideas make sense to them in terms of notions they already have. He then proposed a “traditional [African religious] world view” in which “lesser spirits underpin events and processes in the microcosm of the local community and environment, whilst the supreme being

underpins events and processes in the macrocosm of which the local community is ultimately a part.”¹⁵

Horton then elaborated several implications that stemmed from his model: given appropriate social changes, certain religious innovations normally associated with the influence of Islam and Christianity (e.g. development of the concept and cult of an active, morally-centered supreme being) are likely to occur even in the absence of these world religions; even where Islam and/or Christianity are present, the ideational changes normally associated with them are likely to occur only in the presence of the appropriate social changes; given the appropriate social changes and the presence of Islam and/or Christianity, acceptance of ideas from the world religions will be highly selective, with that which is accepted or rejected being determined largely by the basic vernacular cosmological structure and by the limits which this structure sets to the cosmology’s potential for adaptive change; given these three points it follows that African responses to Islam and Christianity will be responses which, given the appropriate social and economic conditions, might well have occurred in some recognizable form even in the absence of these world religions.¹⁶

Although Horton presumed a functionalist anthropologist understanding of African religion,¹⁷ his work is significant because it validated vernacular African religion (i.e., it is not inferior to Christianity or Islam) while making a strong argument for the adaptability of Christianity (and less so for Islam) to African culture, as well as for the capacity of Africans to adapt Christianity to their cultures selectively. In other words,

Africans did not necessarily have to surrender their indigenous cultures and become more European when they converted to Christianity.

Humphrey Fisher disagreed strongly with Horton's position, criticizing him for having taken most of his evidence from "Christian African experience" and generalizing from it for both Islam and Christianity. Examining the phenomenon of conversion to Islam, and using Uthman dan Fodio and the rise of the Sokoto caliphate as his primary example, Fisher posited a three-phased process through which Islam established itself and spread through West Africa: Quarantine, or the period in which Muslims entered a given area and maintained a "relatively secure" orthodoxy "because there are no converts, and thus no one to bring into the Muslim community heterodox beliefs and observances drawn from his or her non-Muslim past;" mixing, where "as local people converted in increasing numbers. . . people combined the profession of Islam, and as it might be the quite sincere observance of many Islamic tenets, with many pagan survivals." After a period of time ("often after the lapse of centuries"), mixing is replaced by a period of reform in which "clerics. . . succeed in maintaining an element of quarantine against the mixing all round them" and return to a more orthodox practice. He then proposed two senses of the meaning of conversion: "exchange of one faith (or none) for another, and exchanging indifference and dilution for fervency within the same faith." Because Horton's paradigm relied on the former definition "the essential, underlying movement of religious growth, through the first conversion towards the second, is lost." According to Fisher, European Christian missionaries tried to maintain the quarantine phase, and the

rise of independent African Christian churches represented the mixing stage in Christianity.¹⁸

Horton's theory that African religious responses to Islam and Christianity could have happened independently of the presence of the world religions opens new possibilities for studying Christianity in Africa, particularly when combined with Fisher's models of the spread of Islam and the conversion process. Christianity no longer remains an external imposition, but becomes one of myriad elements that contribute to the development of distinctively African worldviews. Such a methodology also effectively centers Africans and their perspectives in studies of Christian presence on the continent.

Historians of Southern Africa have also studied the interactions between vernacular African religions and Western Christianity, and shown the value of studying Christianity within the context of African religious development. David N. Beach studied the cultural history of the region associated with the modern state of Zimbabwe, including religious developments, dating back to the ninth century.¹⁹ Ngwabi Bhebe, who studied the development of AmaNdebele religion in western Zimbabwe, showed that it was the "amalgamation" of several African religious traditions, including those of AmaNdebele, BaTswana, and VaShona. According to Bhebe, this process began before European missionaries arrived, and it significantly contributed to their early failures. Gabriel Setiloane examined the persistent resistance of vernacular BaSotho and BaTswana religions in Botswana and South Africa to European missionaries' teachings, arguing that African acceptance of Christianity was due less to individual convictions

than to the significant social changes wrought by European aggressions during the nineteenth century.²⁰

Paul Landau's seminal study of the indigenization of Christianity among the BaNgwato of Botswana contended that Christianity was a "polymorphous construction built from the practice of actual people."²¹ He argued that the Ngwato chiefdom under Khama wrested control of "ecclesiastical statehood" from the words and actions of European missionaries and created a state that thrived within the context of British colonialism. African Christians succeeded in creating a political "realm of the word" through an alliance between Ngwato royalty, British clergy, and Tswana women, as well as the support of the British colonial administration. Landau did not take for granted the *a priori* acceptance of faith on the part of African Christians. It is this starting point that made his work controversial, and which laid the basis for his critique of the Comaroffs and Lamin Sanneh.

Landau argued that religion is a specifically western concept that Europeans used to categorize non-Europeans whom they did not understand. He rejected the notion of transcendent religious symbols as "unreal [in] nature" and, employing Wittgenstein's referential theory of meaning, highlighted the "colonizing" nature of translation as a model for understanding missionary discourse. He then argued that meaning must come from linguistic usage or practice, and not from transliteration of concepts, as to do so is to impose the translator's concepts onto the other's worldview. This is a direct affront to Sanneh, who argued that the historic ability to transcend culture is the hallmark of the Christian message. While the Comaroffs would agree with Landau on this point, he took

issue with them, however, because they postulated that Tswana Christians identify with the language and symbolic order that “European hegemonists” appropriate. This privileges Christianity (and by extension Western culture), and sees it as being imposed, and Tswana culture as lived, and according to Landau, the opposite was more likely to be true. He posited that Christianity diffused through Tswana society as did Tswana cosmology, and that BaTswana generated their own conflicts, and thus, their own history. Thus, Landau revolutionized the conventional understanding of African religion, as well as struck a major victory for African agency within the colonial discourse.

Similarly, English historian Richard Gray demonstrated the extent of the successful evangelization of the kingdom of Soyo, showing that the people’s acceptance of Catholic Christianity was more than superficial. The mission, however, failed primarily due to the complicity of secular clergy with Portuguese slave traders, in spite of the Vatican’s 1686 condemnation of the slave trade. He further refuted the idea that Christianity in Africa was coeval with the missionaries’ understanding of it. Evangelization depended heavily on African catechists, teachers, and migrant laborers, thus they had a significant influence on the shape that Christianity took by means of their interpretations and understanding of concepts and categories, such as those of good and evil. Gray posited religious pluralism instead of religious syncretism, arguing that literacy and other means of mass communication aided Africans in the spread of their varieties of Christianity, rather than privileging European missionary perspective.²²

Although scholars have examined the role of both vernacular African religions and Christianity prior to and during Zimbabwe’s liberation war,²³ discussions of the

Catholic church during the second *chimurenga* deal almost exclusively with its politicization in the face of an increasingly belligerent Rhodesian settler state. While there have been several studies of the development of the institutional church,²⁴ no single study examines the pastoral mission of the church or the efforts of African Christians to shed European influences and create an African religious expression, that is, to inculturate the church.

Ian Linden, Terence Ranger, and more recently Janice McLaughlin, Barbara Moss, and David Maxwell have shown that in Zimbabwe African Christians played significant roles in directing and leading the struggle for independence.²⁵ They show, however, that it was not a uniform process and that not all parts of the church (be it Catholic or that mythic mystic communion of all Christians) acted in a united front. The realities on the ground resulted in a much more fractious involvement in and influence upon Christianity's expressions during and after the time of the second *chimurenga*. So too, then, the process of inculturation within the Catholic church: it was a very uneven, un-universal process that took root in some parts of the church in some parts of Zimbabwe more readily than others. The study that follows will show that the areas under the care of the fathers and brothers of the Society of Jesus (a.k.a., the Jesuits) were some of the least inculturated in Zimbabwe, and not for want of desire on the part of the African Christians in their charge. There were significant battles within the church between Africans and Europeans, but also among Africans and Europeans, respectively. If the Jesuits were most resistant to inculturation, and other orders such as the Bethlehem Mission Society (Bethlehem Fathers) and Spanish Missionary Institute were more open

to the idea of inculturation, why study the Jesuits' relative failure to inculturate the church? Because their failures, particularly in the early decades while they had exclusive control of the Zambezi mission, set the stage for the uphill battles against which these other missionary orders had to work; because the repercussions of the choices and decisions that they made are still playing themselves out today. The issues addressed in this study are still very much live issues, and to some degree will always be so. But issues such *kurova guva*, or rites to honor the spirits of the dead, and marriage are still playing themselves out, and so I hope to contribute in a small way to the current debates that still confront the Catholic church in Zimbabwe.

This study examines inculturation processes in Zimbabwe primarily during the colonial period, 1890-1980. It presumes that for "the dialogue between the church and culture" to occur there must be people with the requisite insider knowledge of the culture in place: thus, three chapters on the formation of African religious women, the African clergy, and African laity. The focus then shifts to the specific issues of marriage, God's name, and honoring ancestor spirits as sites of inculturation. These chapters begin with the historical development of African cultural beliefs and practices prior to the colonial dispensation, and show Africans adapting Christianity within the context of their own history. That is, they show Africans making their own history. As will be seen, Europeans had to adapt to African cultures at least as much as Africans had to adapt to European cultures.

This study will examine African assimilation of Christianity within the broader context of African religious development in Zimbabwe, focusing on the nature and role

of culture in influencing people's beliefs and actions, and how changes in culture—deliberate or accidental—change the ways people act. In trying to determine whether and why a particular segment of a given society converts from one religious practice and belief to another in a specific period of time, this study will contend that European missionaries' preaching "the word" merely implanted Christianity in Southern Africa. The process of *inculturating* the church, by which African Christians shed the European cultural influences from Christianity and transformed it into an African religious expression, was ultimately more important for the spread of Christianity across the African continent.

This study will contribute significantly to scholarship concerning Christianity in Africa by placing the history of African Christianity within the broader context of the history of religion in Africa. By so doing, Christianity will no longer be seen as an external imposition, but as one of many elements which contributed to the development of distinctively African world views. This methodology will also effectively center Africans and their perspectives by showing that Africans discerned the differences between Christian ideology and elements of European cultures that European missionaries transmitted with the Christian message and adapted Christianity to their own respective cultural contexts. It will also speak to the history of religion in general, providing concrete examples of complex processes of interactions between different cultural groups at the levels of religious belief and practice. It also addresses and fits within the corpus of literature concerning Western missionary-African Christian "dialogues."

Following David Maxwell, this study moves beyond the material level and examines the interactions between Africans and Western missionaries in colonial Zimbabwe at an intellectual level over an extended time frame, focusing on ideas such as the existence of a supreme being, what that being should be called, and how that being ought to be recognized (as opposed to the recognition due potentially lesser spiritual beings), and the implementation or practice of those ideas.²⁶ Where Maxwell concerns himself with “the social significance of religion,”²⁷ I attempt to address similar issues at the spiritual, or theological, level as well. For example, in discussing VaShona Catholic marriage practices, it will be seen that by the 1960s approximately 80 percent of African Catholics were not marrying according to church law. A materialist explanation of this fact would claim that African Catholics opted not to marry according to canon law because there was no concrete, tangible material benefit to doing so. A social historical analysis would argue that the development of African “customary law” by means of a series of marriage ordinances intersected with African marriage practices and the strictures of Catholic canon law to preclude the vast majority from forming canonically regular unions. A theological explanation seeks to identify the reasons why and how African Catholic couples chose to marry according to canonical form, and what the implications of that choice were for them, as well as the implications for those who did not.

Restoring a Positive View of Theological Analysis to Religious Studies

In his analysis of the literature concerning “primitive religions,” E.E. Evans-Pritchard raised the issue of the religious background (or lack thereof) of scholars of

religion—specifically functionalist anthropologists—its significance for their studies, and the implications for broader understandings of religion. He wrote:

we have to bear in mind, in estimating theories of primitive religion, what the words used in them meant to the scholars who used them. If one is to understand the interpretations of primitive mentality they put forward, one has to know their own mentality, broadly where they stood; to enter into their way of looking at things, a way of their class, sex, and period. As far as religion goes, they all had. . . a religious background in one form or another. . . but with one or two exceptions, whatever the background may have been, the persons whose writings have been most influential have been at the time they wrote agnostics or atheists.²⁸

Evans-Pritchard argued that anthropologists generally viewed religion as “an illusion,” and that their “impassioned rationalism” had “coloured their assessment of primitive religions and has given their writings, as we read them today [1965], a flavour of smugness which one may find either irritating or risible.”²⁹ This, he argued, led them to consider all religion as ultimately irrational and “absurd,” and to explain religion’s “absurdity” in “psychological or sociological terms.”³⁰ He further noted his belief that an anthropologist need not subscribe to a religious faith because “there is no possibility of [the anthropologist] *knowing* whether the spiritual beings of primitive religions or of any others have any existence or not, and since that is the case he [sic] cannot take the question into consideration.”³¹ Religion, thus becomes a sociological phenomenon:

The beliefs for [the anthropologist] are sociological facts, not theological facts, and his [sic] sole concern is with their relation to each other and to other social facts. His problems are scientific, not metaphysical or ontological. The method. . . [is often called] the phenomenological one—a comparative study of beliefs and rites, such as god, sacrament, and sacrifice to determine their meaning and social significance. The validity of the belief lies in the domain of what may broadly be designated the philosophy of religion.³²

Evans-Pritchard felt that the rationalist functionalist anthropologists had taken a theological position, “albeit a negative and implicit one,” and that their efforts to explain religious phenomena causally went “beyond the legitimate bounds of the subject.”³³ Sociological and psychological studies of religion are still popular among contemporary scholars of religion, as the program of the 2000 congress of the International Association for the History of Religions attests.³⁴

The negative theological positions about which Evans-Pritchard complained, however, seem to have become explicit. In one case, a scholar argued that since religion’s relation to the sacred was what made it distinctive, it was necessary to sever that link in order to arrive at a purely sociological study of religion.³⁵ This highlights the problematic nature of phenomenological studies of religion, that is, studying religion as merely a sociological and/or psychological phenomenon, while discounting theological aspects.

In *Nuer Religion*, Evans-Pritchard also raised the issue of the religious background of anthropologists of religion:

It may be said that in describing and interpreting a primitive religion it should make no difference whether the writer is an agnostic or a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, or whatever he may be, but in fact it makes a great deal of difference, for even in a descriptive study judgment can in no way be avoided. Those who give assent to the religious beliefs of their own people feel and think, and therefore also write, differently about the beliefs of other peoples from those who do not give assent to them.³⁶

Although many scholars would take issue with Evans-Pritchard,³⁷ he raised the issue of the kinds of judgments, and hence conclusions, scholars make concerning religion in general, and “African religion” (the quintessential “primitive” religion) specifically. Whether or not scholars of religion who hold religious beliefs write

differently from those who don't is certainly a matter for debate. The kinds of questions that these scholars ask in terms of framing their studies and the kinds of information they seek, however, do differ, and consequently have significant implications for the study of religion, as a brief examination of the history of African Christianity will demonstrate.

With regard to what historians can know about the past, Philip Gleason identified three levels of historical inquiry: the factual level (i.e., what happened?); the explanatory level (i.e., why did it happen?); and the evaluative level (i.e., was what happened good or bad?). What a historian can know with certainty decreases with each level of inquiry. There is a high degree of certitude at the factual level that is limited by the nature of the events in question and the sources of information available. At the explanatory level, certitude is limited by the historian's inferences about the relationship between events and the influences thereupon. The evaluative level contains the least certainty because the historian's value system and beliefs influence any judgments that the historian makes.³⁸

Gleason noted that while separating the three levels of inquiry was useful for analyzing the historian's craft, in the practice of writing about history they are inextricably intertwined. The historian sees facts in relation to one another, and thus historical interpretations combine explanations and evaluations of those facts either implicitly or explicitly.³⁹ And like historical knowledge itself, historiographical interpretations are limited by the incompleteness and subjectivity of their perspectives. Recalling that Gleason characterized the evaluative level of historical epistemology as being influenced by the historian's values and beliefs, the application and operation of religious beliefs and values will affect a study of religion in ways that their absence will not.

Thomas Spear, a historian of East Africa, in examining the historiography of Christianity in Africa, argued that few studies “have taken up the critical sociological and theological issues involved if we are to define precisely how Africans interpreted the Christian message and appropriated it in terms of their own historical and cultural experiences.”⁴⁰ Noting that while studies of African independent Christian churches made by church historians came closest to this objective, Spear posited that “academic studies of the historical or mainstream churches have tended to assume rather mechanical models of conversion that focus on socio-political and economic factors rather than religious belief and practice.”⁴¹:

Questions of religious belief pose problems for academic social scientists, many of whom are made uncomfortable, for example by Sanneh’s conclusion that, while the missionaries themselves failed, God’s mission (*missio dei*) in Africa succeeded. We need to cross the boundaries between academic and religious scholarly discourses if we are to understand those converts who say that while they were initially attracted by the schools and jobs, they were captured by ‘the poetry of the religion.’ How else, after all, can we understand the sacrifice of the Buganda martyrs, the motivations of catechists who labored for the church with little material rewards, the philosophic basis of Nyerere’s concept of *ujamaa*, the abundant religious symbolism contained in Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *Matigari*, the principled political opposition of Kenya’s churches, or the resurgent dynamism of the faith today?

The study of African Christianity has drawn variously on Church History as well as academic history, anthropology, and religious studies, but the differences between them have not been as dramatic as might be imagined. Nor have there necessarily been great differences between scholars writing from within and outside the churches. Thus, while it was largely academic historians . . . together with some church historians. . . who pioneered revisionist studies of missions, it was primarily church historians who rejected mission condemnations of the independent churches to stress their fundamental Christianity. Conversely, academic scholars. . . have been forthright in developing African religious history, but church historians. . . have probed religious ideas in great depth. The most significant fault lines in the literature have thus not been religious, but political, functions of the changing political climate over the past century as concerns have shifted from metropolitan and ecclesiastical to nationalist and African religious history.⁴²

Thus, there appears to be a great need to study “African religion” in its own right, not merely as a function or reflection of socio-political processes.

I am not here calling for the religious conversion (in either of Fisher’s senses of the word) of scholars of religion, nor am I saying that only those with religious beliefs can study religion well, or better than those without them. Scholars of religion in Africa must address and take seriously in their own right—not merely as functions or reflections of social processes—the theologies at work in a given community’s religious beliefs and practices, or to put it simply, they must include some form of theological analysis at some level. I do not take the narrow Catholic meaning of “theological analysis” that Pope John Paul suggested in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, rather I take it to mean a perspective that addresses and incorporates a given community’s relationship with the sacred as well as—not merely—their perceptions of that relationship, especially if we follow Landau’s position that “African religion” is a Western intellectual fiction that does not exist.

Landau’s argument that “African religion” is an imposition of Western intellectual categories on African societies rather than an indigenous African phenomenon effectively renders the concept as *bricolage*, or as French philosopher Jacques Derrida would say, places it “under erasure.”⁴³ Effectively, being *bricolage* or under erasure means that the term “African religion” can no longer be used because of its inaccuracy and inadequacy. Scholars, however, like a *bricoleur*, continue to use it as there is not yet an appropriate concept to describe or analyze the reality of “African religious” beliefs and practices.

Whether or not the concept “African religion” exists remains a matter for further debate and discussion. In some respects it is a secondary consideration which ultimately

and unnecessarily detracts from the more important sociological fact that across the African continent—regardless of what Western scholars have called it—people have seen and continue to see a relationship between and among the realm of humanity, the realm of the “spirits,” and the “divine” (i.e, god/supreme being). If it is no longer possible to apply customary Western religious concepts to African realities, then scholars of “African religion”—in this case, of ChiShona-speakers in colonial Zimbabwe—must find a way to address and speak about the relationships between and among *munhu* [human], *mudzimu* [ancestor spirit], and *Mwari* [god/supreme being]. And unlike the early anthropologists whom Evans-Prichard criticized, we must do so with better and more accurate knowledge and understanding of the concepts as found in respective African cultural groups, bearing in mind that concepts—like cultures themselves—are dynamic, changing over time.

Catholic Historiographical Methodology

The 1990 apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, called on scholars at Catholic universities and Catholic scholars at non-Catholic institutions to conduct research that included an interdisciplinary integration of knowledge and a theological perspective.⁴⁴ Although significant debate over the juridical norms found in *Ex Corde* and their implementation continued for over a decade, the constitution also contains some very useful and challenging pastoral theology for an academic context, including the call for the establishment of distinctly Catholic methods in the respective academic disciplines.

Within the academic discipline of history there has been significant debate among historians of the Catholic church as to whether there exists a distinctive Catholic

historiography, and whether it constitutes the content of a specific field of inquiry, or a distinctive methodology.⁴⁵ The historical writing about the Catholic church in Africa treats Church history as the content of a specific field of inquiry, either being hagiographic chronicles of the activities of (Western) missionaries frequently written by other members of the same religious community, or the subject matter of academic historians who study the church as a sub-field of religious history.⁴⁶ No historian of the church in Africa has seen Catholic history as a distinct historiographical methodology. Historians of Catholicism in the United States, however, have developed sophisticated arguments about (American) Catholic historiography,⁴⁷ but most of these scholars also treat Catholic history as the content of a specific field of inquiry, and not as a methodology.

Elsewhere, I have addressed the post-modern challenge to the existence of an objective reality, and established the nature of the epistemology of history.⁴⁸ Here, I present a model of Catholic historiography as a method of historical inquiry that is interdisciplinary—integrating history and anthropology—and informed by a theological perspective, as called for in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. In order to facilitate the discussion that follows, some preliminary definitions are required.

Insofar as people and situations existed in time, this is historical truth or reality. History is that part of time (i.e., the systematic record of an irreversible succession of passing events) which constitutes events that have passed. The academic discipline of History is the study of the human past in relation to the present and future. Historiography is the writing of history, or specifically how historians have conceived of and presented the human past. The relation between historiography and history is akin to

the relationship between thought and reality in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: it is a representation of a separate, independent, objective reality.⁴⁹ Although historians endeavor to do more than merely represent the facts of history—they boldly attempt to explain them—the nature of historical knowledge emanates from this relationship.

History is akin to a jig-saw puzzle in a box without the picture on the box top as a guide and several of the pieces missing. The task of the historian is to put the puzzle together, and the end product is historiography, which will be partial, incomplete, and imperfect. If this is the model that represents the nature of historical knowledge, is this type of knowledge useful? Yes, because negative knowledge is not the absence of knowledge, and historical knowledge of this type is positive, though partial, knowledge of the past. If each piece of the puzzle represents one perspective of the case study recaptured by a historian, then the whole picture—which can never be completed—is the sum-total of the reality being studied, and as with any puzzle the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The historian is able to recapture at least partially the ideas, beliefs, and actions of real people of a different time (i.e., a diachronic era) and present them in his/her own. It is the evaluation of diachronic evidence (i.e., sources) that enables a historian to identify and explain change over time in human societies.⁵⁰

Within the United States, historians of the Catholic church and communities with Catholic identities have not devoted much effort to methodological reflections upon their craft. Significant exceptions to this include Philip Gleason's *Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present*, Eric Cochrane's "What is Catholic Historiography?", and

David O'Brien's "History and the Present Crisis" from *The Renewal of American Catholicism*.

Philip Gleason's collection of essays, *Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present*, was a shrill diatribe against the "marginalization" of the pre-conciliar generations of American Catholics by the Second Vatican Council and the "present-minded" understanding of history (i.e., using history for present purposes) espoused by contemporary philosophers and theologians. Gleason posited that there was no real technical historical method, rather that historical reasoning is a sophisticated extension of common sense reasoning. In his concluding "methodological confession of faith" he argued that the historian's task is to explicate the past, that there is truth in the past, and that it is possible for historians to "attain a faithful likeness to certain aspects of what actually was the case in the past."⁵¹

Eric Cochrane argued that Catholic historians and historians of Catholicism must "rescue" the Catholic church from "historical misrepresentations" and need to develop a positive Catholic historiography. The Catholic historian must see history as a vocation, not a career, making a commitment to the history of religion in general and Catholic Christianity in particular. According to Cochrane, Catholic historiography must be truly Catholic in scholarship—and not nationalistic—including multilingual ability on the part of the historian.

David O'Brien saw the historian as an activist who must use the past positively and concretely to shape the present and improve the future. In O'Brien's view, the Second Vatican Council's reintroduction of "a more dynamic and humble conception of history" into Catholic orthodoxy suggested "that scholarship requires an activist stance

and an examination of public role and responsibility, tasks particularly incumbent upon historians. . . .Adoption of such a point of view would mark a true revolution in historical scholarship, heretofore preoccupied with objective, detached analysis and fixed categories.”⁵²

The implications of these three views of Catholic historiography are significant for how historians of Catholicism and Catholic historians ought to understand their craft. Gleason’s call to the Catholic historian to return to a practical logic (as opposed to “the logic of practice”) is a call to return to common sense, or the idea that a concept, theory, premise, proposition, or action accords with the collective experience of a given community and demonstrates good judgment based on the cultural beliefs and values of that community. This presumes a standard of good and bad determined by a community with the result that thoughts, words, and actions derive evaluative meaning from that standard, and also emphasizes that scholars must be aware of the operative cultural norms of right and wrong and the assumptions that underlie them. Scholars should also bear in mind that cultural norms, like languages, are constructed arbitrarily and subject to change over time, and that the awareness of cultural norms and their simultaneously arbitrary and dynamic nature should inform and influence the development of theory and its application. In other words, theoretical knowledge should be commonsensical in that it should accord with the practical lived experience of the group(s) from which the theory is developed and to whom it is applied and addressed.

Cochrane called the Catholic historian to see the historian’s craft as a vocation. If one considers the “traditional” Catholic understanding of vocation within a religious context (i.e., vocation to the religious life or clergy) and applies it to the historian’s task

the implications are profound. A religious vocation calls a person to be a “person for others,”⁵³ that is, to dedicate one’s life and labor to the service of God and God’s people in specific communities in specific places at specific times. It requires an abnegation of the individual self so that s/he may become a servant of the community and an instrument of divine will, concretely manifested in the vow of obedience to do the will of one’s religious superior who stands *in loco Christi*.⁵⁴ History as a vocation, therefore, requires of the historian first a deep sense of humility rooted in an awareness of one’s limitations and flaws as a human being, but also in the limitations and flaws inherent in historical knowledge. Accordingly, there is no room for hubris or conceit in a Catholic historian or historian of Catholicism. Secondly, the historian’s vocation requires that historians have a spirit of dedicated service to the communities they represent in research and to the communities they serve as teachers and scholars. This spirit of service must have a profound respect for the people that historians study: they cannot be “subjects” for study or objectification but must be seen as fellow human beings with flaws and limitations, and positive qualities deserving of the same respect accorded to people of the present. Similarly, the historians’ mission to teach must be a service that helps their students grow into the fullness of their human potential. Thus, an understanding of the academic discipline of history’s place within the liberal arts and its relation to other disciplines is fundamental for holistic and humanistic development.⁵⁵

O’Brien’s call to activism is certainly one practical response to Cochrane’s call to live history as a vocation. It requires the historian to descend from the ivory tower and work concretely to improve the collective lives of not only the intellectual communities that historians serve, but all communities that constitute the “people of God.” Historians

cannot sit idly ruminating on past events and their meaning, but must find practical applications of knowledge of the past in order to develop solutions to the problems that confront a given community in the historian's present and thereby make for a better future. In many respects, O'Brien's call to activism is echoed in Richard W. Thomas' call to servant-scholarship.⁵⁶

A Catholic historian, then, is a historian who is either Catholic or who has had "a significant experience with Catholicism"⁵⁷ whose Catholic identity or experience informs or shapes his/her work as a historian (e.g., the questions that a historian asks which will structure a given work). A Catholic historian need not necessarily study Catholic communities or communities with a Catholic religious identity, and need not (in fact, must not) allow his/her Catholic faith or experience to determine the answers to the questions that they ask. A historian of Catholicism is a historian, not necessarily Catholic, who studies Catholic communities or communities with a Catholic religious identity.

The academic study of history is the study of the human past. The study of God's involvement therein, the purported "centrality" of Christ in human history,⁵⁸ and the human response thereto are properly within the purview of theology. Bearing in mind Gleason's complaints that present-minded philosophers and theologians consider "history too important to be left to the historians" and that they blur the line between philosophy and history, Catholic historiographical methodology must address human interactions in light of divine revelation and the changing human understanding thereof. This methodology rests on two significant assumptions: first, that God reveals himself to different people in different places at different times in different ways.⁵⁹ This implies a dynamic and on-going, temporally bound revelation *process*, allows for the possibility

and probability that God had and has the ability and desire to reveal himself to people beyond the ancient kingdom of Israel, and confirms the scripturally revealed doctrine that Christ came to save all peoples and not just the Israelites. Second, that humans play a significant part in the revelation process, e.g., missionary work, or theologians and/or the Magisterium interpreting Revelation. According to Christian scriptures, God revealed himself gradually over approximately two millennia, beginning with Abraham and culminating with Jesus Christ. According to Catholic tradition, the content of Revelation is immutable. The human understanding of Revelation, however, is not and has changed significantly and often over the last two thousand years. Notable examples of such changes include the question of the purely spiritual nature of angels, the question of a celibate clergy, the notion of human freedom and its implication for church-state relations, Galileo's finding that the earth revolved around the sun, the question of the humanity of Native Americans, the morality of slavery and the African slave trade, and the approbation of *kurova guva* rites for honoring ancestors by the Zimbabwean Catholic bishops.⁶⁰

Catholic historians and historians of Catholicism, therefore, must: develop theological analyses to discern manifestations of divine revelation within a given culture at a given time; distinguish between what constitutes Revelation and what a given group of people at a given time determines to be Revelation; and develop an anthropology that does not essentialize or reify categories and/or institutions, but is sensitive to the dynamics of cultural change over time and geographic space—in other words, that recognizes that culture is not static.⁶¹

If Catholic historiographical methodology is to be universal—as its name purports to be—it, therefore, necessarily must not confine itself to parochial studies of Catholic communities or their leadership and/or institutions (i.e., merely the content of historical inquiry), as is frequently the case with historians of the Catholic church in the United States. It must be open to address *all* communities, Catholic and non-Catholic, and how the various peoples within each respective community interact with one another as well as how they interact with external communities. It must evaluate these actions in light of Revelation and its manifestations specific to the time and place under study (e.g., fourth century Christian Ethiopia vs. tenth century pre-Christian Eastern Europe vs. third century B.C.E. Confucian China vs. nineteenth century Catholic New York), as well as respective cultural perceptions of Revelation.

Once Catholic historians and historians of Catholicism have broadened the scope of their inquiries, they must then evaluate historical events in light of Revelation and perceptions thereof specific to given cultural and historical contexts. Catholic historiographical methodology must apply Catholic principles (e.g., sanctity of human life, religious freedom, social justice, etc.) to particular case studies, including non-Catholic or non-Christian groups, bearing in mind the relative locus of the context within the process of Revelation. Recalling that Gleason characterized the evaluative level of historical epistemology as being influenced by the historian's values and beliefs,⁶² what makes the methodology elaborated here specifically “Catholic” is the application and operation of Catholic cultural beliefs and values to a commonsensical understanding of the nature of history and historical knowledge.

American Catholic historians at the University of Notre Dame have been and continue to be concerned with trying to integrate American Catholic history into the “mainstream” of American history. The Cushwa Center’s *Catholicism in Twentieth Century America* project alludes to the continuing intellectual parochialism of the field of Catholic history in the United States. Among the project’s objectives is the “[integration of] the experiences and contributions of Catholics more fully into the narratives of American history.”⁶³ The implications of this goal are that Catholic historiography in the U.S. is isolated from “mainstream” American historiography and that the historians of Catholicism are essentially talking to one another and not to scholars who work beyond the pale of the one, true Faith’s fold. If the definition of Catholic historiography is as content then integration is possible: it is a question of dialogue between Catholic and non-Catholic historians about incorporating the corpus of Catholic subject matter into the wider body of the literature on American history. If the definition of Catholic historiography is as a method, however, then integration is a contradiction: if there is a distinct Catholic historiographical method (i.e., way of doing history), then it cannot be integrated into the “mainstream” of American historiography because it is distinct from specifically non-Catholic historiographical methods (e.g., Marxist methods or post-modern methods). Methodologically, American Catholic historiography has emphasized biography, institutional history, and polemics against anti-Catholics. While many scholars such as John McGreevy and James Carroll have incorporated more contemporary methods of social history and oral history into their work, many Catholic historians have not availed themselves of the many methodological and theoretical resources that have driven the discipline of history for the last forty five years.⁶⁴ Perhaps

this is why Catholic historians and non-Catholic historians do not speak across the great divide: in a sense they are speaking different (methodological) languages.

And here, perhaps, is where historians of Catholic America can learn from historians of the church in Africa. Religious history is a fully integrated sub-field within African history. Studies of Christian missions, African Christians, and African Independent churches are among the required readings for any doctoral student of African history.⁶⁵ Additionally, scholars of African history such as Richard Gray, Adrian Hastings, Ian Linden, Matthew Schoffeleers, and Terence Ranger are all Catholics, yet they don't work exclusively on Catholic communities. Their works are accepted in "mainstream" African history (i.e., by historians of Africa) because their studies of Catholic (and non-Catholic) communities raise broader issues of general historical, anthropological, and theological significance without necessarily presenting conclusions predetermined or in accord with their Catholic faith.⁶⁶ Their faith seems to inform their work but doesn't dictate its outcome. They engage the church critically, freely pointing to moments when the church in or with regard to Africa has erred, yet remain faithful.

For examples of good African Christian historiography and useful methods (i.e., ways of writing about the past), Lamin Sanneh's *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Ngwabi Bhebe's *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe*, and Gabriel Setiloane's *The Image of God among the Sotho-Tswana* would be very profitable.⁶⁷ For studies whose contents deal specifically with the Catholic church, Richard Gray's *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, and Janice McLaughlin's *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* provide excellent examples of modern scholarship that integrate traditional archival

research and more contemporary methods of oral research and anthropological theories.⁶⁸ These studies, and many others like them, should point historians of the church in the United States to useful and contemporary methods that will encourage their integration into the “mainstream” of American historiographical content, and hopefully encourage them to open the fold of Catholic history to include Africa.

Catholic Higher Education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, and Academic Freedom

One of the beauties of the introduction to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is that it affirms the traditions of Catholic higher education and intellectual inquiry that are the very nature and mission of a university.⁶⁹ One of the beauties of Catholic higher education is that it affords the freedom to inquire about and discuss religious and/or spiritual topics in ways that secular institutions preclude (e.g., the freedom to presume the *a priori* existence of a supernatural/spiritual realm), and that more fundamentalist Christian institutions committed to rigid dogmatism will not allow.⁷⁰ In this respect, Catholic higher education affords a unique opportunity not only for a real, meaningful dialogue between (Christian) faith and (secular) reason, but also for dialogue between and among different Christian *faiths*. Catholic institutions of higher education should not only teach Catholics what they “should” as Catholics believe, but they should also help their students to understand why they believe what they as Catholics believe. Similarly, by so doing, these institutions ought to help their students and faculty who are not Catholic to reflect on their respective beliefs and to understand why they hold those beliefs. As much as Catholic educators would wish for their students to accept that which they teach, students at Catholic colleges and universities must be allowed the freedom to accept and/or reject such teaching as part of their academic freedom and as part of their privacy of conscience.

A juxtaposing the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure With 1970 Interpretive Comments”⁷¹ and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* yields some very fascinating parallels:

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.⁷²

It is the honor and responsibility of a Catholic university to consecrate itself without reserve to the cause of truth. This is its way of serving at one and the same time both the dignity of man and the good of the Church, which has “an intimate conviction that truth is its real ally. . .and that knowledge and reason are sure ministers to faith.” Without in any way neglecting the acquisition of useful knowledge, a Catholic university is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God.⁷³

What is most striking about the AAUP statement are the ordering of higher education to the “common good” and the humility that is implicitly required of individual scholars, and the statement that the common good is dependent on a free search for truth. Similarly, *Ex Corde* dedicates Catholic universities to a *free* search for the *whole* truth.

The authors of the AAUP statement on academic freedom subjected a scholar’s entitlement “to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results” to “the adequate performance of their other academic duties.” Similarly, teachers with freedom to discuss “their subject” in the classroom were cautioned to “be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.” A 1970 interpretive note stated that the intent was not to discourage controversial matter, rather

“to underscore the need for teachers to avoid persistently intruding material which has no relation to their subject.”⁷⁴ These passages, combined with the proviso that limits on academic freedom at an institution for religious reasons be put in writing at the time of appointment, point toward a holistic vision of the scholar in the academy that many institutions of higher learning seem to be losing, and which *Ex Corde* reaffirms. There is a concern that scholars not just be research machines churning out books and articles. Scholars have “other academic duties” and obligations to people other than themselves. An individual scholar’s pursuit of truth is not absolute: it is conditioned by his/her relations to other members of the academy, be they colleagues in the same department or discipline or institution, or students. These obligations require the time and energies of the scholar, and—ideally—should complement rather than detract from the pursuit of truth. It would appear that the AAUP implies a concern for the scholar as a whole human being with positive, healthy human relations with members of the academy and (ideally) with people beyond academe. In Catholic circles this is called *cura personalis*, that is, caring for the whole person in body, mind, and soul.

While the AAUP will never (in fact, can never) describe it as such, faculty at Catholic institutions of higher education not only have the luxury but the responsibility to be such ministers of Grace to one another. And this is what is at the heart of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Although many scholars have expressed misgivings about the practical applications of the mandate (N.B., the guidelines passed by the U.S. bishops in June 2001 “are to be reviewed after five years by a committee appointed by the [bishops’] Conference President.”), in this light not only is there ample room to reconcile academic freedom and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, but in careful (meant literally as full of

care), open, and respectful dialogue it is possible to find more common threads between the AAUP and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

While *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* provides a wealth of material for theological and intellectual reflection, it also contains assumptions and juridical norms with dangerous implications for Catholic historians. The danger lies in the potential assault that the apostolic constitution could bring to bear on academic freedom.

Ex Corde stipulates that Catholic universities have academic freedom “so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good,”⁷⁵ and that the “free search for the whole truth about nature, man, and God” explores humanity and the world in light of Revelation.⁷⁶ Furthermore, according to the apostolic constitution, the world needs the proclamation of “the meaning of truth,”⁷⁷ (i.e., an interpretation) and the bishops are the “authentic” interpreters of “revealed truth.”⁷⁸ This implies that academic freedom to search for the “whole truth” is circumscribed by the Magisterium’s “authentic” interpretation of reality (i.e., revealed truth).

According to *Ex Corde*, “research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God,”⁷⁹ and the answers to the questions of human reason “can only come from above through faith.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, the consequence of the Catholic university’s relationship to the church is “a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals.”⁸¹ Thus, academic freedom is further constrained to develop conclusions that accord with church teaching regarding faith and morals. In effect,

academic freedom—which some members of the hierarchy do not consider an absolute freedom⁸²—is free so long as its results arrive at the church's predetermined positions.

While the debate over the application of the juridic norms to theologians continued for over a decade, it is significant to consider implications for scholars in other disciplines, in this case the academic discipline of history. While historians ostensibly do not come under the episcopal mandate, the U.S. bishops' guidelines for the academic mandatum required by *Ex Corde* state that “all Catholics who teach theological disciplines in a Catholic university are required to have a mandatum” in order to fulfill the requirements of canon 812. “Teaching” is defined as the “regular presentation of academic material in an academic institution,” and “theological disciplines” include “Sacred Scripture, dogmatic theology, moral theology, pastoral theology, canon law, liturgy, and Church history.”⁸³

Does the mandatum apply to Catholic historians in history departments at Catholic universities teaching lay students the history of the Catholic church where there are no separate departments of Church history? The guidelines seem rather vague on this point. They suggest a comparison with canon 252 §3, which includes “ecclesiastical history” among the subjects that candidates for the priesthood should study. Although several bishops and theologians have opined that the mandate does not apply to historians,⁸⁴ the particular difficulty with the guidelines as written is that they leave the power to grant or withdraw (and by implication the power to require a scholar to request) the mandatum with the local ordinary.⁸⁵ While it is improbable that an academic historian teaching a course in Church history in a history department at a Catholic university in the United States will be required to obtain a mandatum, it is unclear what would happen if an

individual diocesan bishop were to decide that such a course constituted part of “a theological discipline” and required the historian in question to apply for a mandatum.

The call to faithful assent to the Magisterium’s teaching regarding faith and morals raises some serious questions for Catholic historians. What would the effects of such a limited understanding of academic freedom be for a scholar who questioned the morality of the debate within the church regarding the humanity of Native Americans?⁸⁶ Or for those scholars who were to criticize the church for allowing slavery as a morally justifiable practice for 20 centuries?⁸⁷ In light of *Ex Corde* and the limits it purports to place on academic freedom, is it possible for a Catholic scholar to conclude—and publicly present a conclusion—that the church, as the guardian of revealed truth, was not only wrong but sinful and guilty of corrupting the deposit of faith by not only admitting slavery as morally justifiable, but also by its bishops, clergy, and religious participating in the acquisition, use, and sale of human beings as chattel in light of revealed truth concerning the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person?⁸⁸ While arguable that the church teaches that humans have the freedom to choose sinful behavior and that the Holy Spirit protects the church from error despite human failings, the church’s teachings on slavery would seem to point to either a failing on the part of the Holy Spirit and/or serious error on the part of the church’s Magisterium. In any event, the Magisterium should grant scholars at least the same margin for error that the Holy Spirit apparently gives to the Magisterium.⁸⁹

Were church historians required to arrive at the Magisterium’s understanding of historical truth, effectively the academic discipline of history would cease to be scholarship and devolve into apologetics by returning to the old polemical defense of the

church, its teachings, and its actions. For historians specifically (and all scholars generally), the limits of academic freedom must be the limits of truth itself, i.e., that which is at present or was in the past, and not necessarily a particular interpretation thereof, including that of the church's Magisterium. If academic inquiry is to be meaningful as scholarship and not merely apologetics, it must have the freedom to arrive at conclusions that are based in that which is real or actual, i.e., the truth, and—in light of truth—at variance with the Magisterium. While this may necessitate developing a separate theological concept of academic freedom to accommodate the theologian's particular relationship with the hierarchy as the “authentic” interpreter of revealed truth (as suggested by Avery Dulles),⁹⁰ the rest of the academic world can ill afford such constraints.

The Magisterium, while demanding the fidelity of Catholic scholars, must grant them the latitude necessary to investigate objective reality and to speculate upon their findings. The Magisterium must also develop interpretations of Revelation that transcend cultural limitations and assumptions (i.e., be truly Catholic), especially those assumptions rooted in Western or European cultural biases (e.g., that spirit possession is entirely involuntary).⁹¹

In a pastoral letter on evangelization, *What We Have Seen and Heard*, the American bishops of African descent in the United States declared that “to be Catholic is to be universal. To be universal is not to be uniform.”⁹² If there is to be a Catholic historiographical method it must address general religious and specifically Catholic issues, transcend the bound of nationalism, orient itself toward the past, and be commonsensical, as Cochrane and Gleason have suggested. But it must also have the

capacity to be inclusive of all peoples in the world at all periods of human history. It must also take seriously and treat respectfully their respective understandings of Revelation, and the changes in those understandings over time.

Notes on Catholic Church Hierarchy and Structures⁹³

This section of the introduction provides a brief overview of the structures of the hierarchy of the Catholic church. It is intended primarily for those readers who may not be familiar with the “bride of Christ’s” organization on the material plane, and will hopefully serve as a quick reference point for questions about specific terms or institutional relationships.

According to Catholic doctrine, the head of church is Jesus Christ, the incarnate son of God, born of the virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died, was buried, rose from the dead after three days, and forty days later ascended to Heaven. Catholic teaching further holds that during the period between the resurrection and the ascension, Jesus appointed Peter to be the leader of the apostles, Christ’s first and preferred followers. Peter and the other eleven apostles became the leaders of the nascent church when the Holy Spirit descended upon them ten days after Jesus’ ascension on what has come to be known as Pentecost (i.e., fifty days after Easter).

The church’s hierarchy and authority structures are rooted in and mirror these core tenets of Catholic Christian faith. At the top of the hierarchy is the *pope*, the successor to Peter and Jesus Christ’s visible vicar on earth. As such, he is the guardian of the deposit of faith—or the corpus of divine revelations beginning with Abraham and the Hebrew patriarchs culminating with the revelations of Jesus Christ—and the ultimate authority in interpreting sacred scripture (i.e., the Bible) and the traditions that have developed since

the first century of the common era. Since the First Vatican Council (1870-71), church doctrine has held that the pope speaking *ex cathedra* (from the throne) on matters of faith and morals is infallible.

Just as the pope is believed to be Peter's successor, so the **bishops** are the successors to the apostles. For the most part, bishops are appointed by the pope to provide for the pastoral care for the Catholics in a given fixed geographic territory called a **diocese** (or **see**), and usually based in an urban center. Over time, church tradition and law have established that a bishop is independent and ultimately responsible only to the pope or his delegates, i.e., a bishop cannot interfere in the administration of another bishop's diocese. The bishop has the power to ordain priests and appoint them as pastors of parishes or to other ministries, to confer the sacrament of confirmation, and to administer the temporal property of the diocese. A diocese in a larger urban center is often elevated in status to become an **archdiocese**, or **metropolitan see**, and the bishop called an **archbishop** (and metropolitan). In addition to caring for his own diocese, an archbishop is responsible for overseeing the administration of smaller, or suffragan, dioceses. The archdiocese and its suffragan sees comprise a metropolitan province. Thus, for example, in 1955 the metropolitan province of Salisbury consisted of the Archdiocese of Salisbury and the suffragan dioceses of Bulawayo, Umtali, Gwelo, and Wankie. A new diocese is usually established when the Catholic population is large enough and financially able to support a bishop and his administration (or chancery). For example, in 1998 the diocese of Masvingo was established from the southern region of the diocese of Gweru. Usually, an archdiocese will also have one or more auxiliary bishops to assist the archbishop in caring for the people and institutions of the archdiocese.

Within a diocese, the basic pastoral and administrative unit is the *parish*. Parishes are generally local communities of lay people that worship and socialize together and support each other in the faith. A parish is usually named after a saint or person who led an exemplary Christian life in the Catholic church. The head of the parish is the *pastor*, who is a priest appointed by the bishop and who serves at his pleasure. Where there are sufficient numbers of priests, a pastor will often have assistant priests to help with saying masses, hearing confessions, presiding at weddings, and performing baptisms and anointings of the sick and dying. Generally, priests who serve in parishes are diocesan clergy, that is, priests who were trained to serve in a specific diocese and ordained by the diocesan bishop.

The single largest part of the Catholic church is the laity, or “all the faithful except those in holy orders [i.e., priests, deacons, and bishops] and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church [i.e., members of religious communities of men and women respectively].”⁹⁴ Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), lay people were not considered part of the church’s hierarchy, rather they were subject to it:

“The laity are the members of this society [i.e., the church] who remain where they were placed by baptism, while the clergy. . . have been raised by ordination to a higher class, and placed in the sacred hierarchy. The Church is. . . composed of two kinds of members: in the first place, those who are the depositaries of sacred or spiritual authority under its triple aspect, government, teaching, and worship, i.e. the clergy, the sacred hierarchy established by Divine law; in the second place, those over whom this power is exercised, who are governed, taught, and sanctified, the Christian people, the laity. . . . But the laity are not the depositaries of spiritual power; they are the flock confided to the care of the shepherds, the disciples who are instructed in the Word of God, the subjects who are guided by the successors of the Apostles towards the last end, which is eternal life. Such is the constitution which Our Saviour has given to His Church.

“Further, the laity, being subject to ecclesiastical authority, must obey and respect it; but in return they have the right to obtain from it direction, protection, and service.

“[T]he duties and rights of the laity towards the ecclesiastical authority as such. . . consist in submission and obedience to legitimate hierarchical authority: the pope, the bishops, and, in a proportionate degree, the parish priests and other acting ecclesiastics.

“Since the laity is distinct from the clergy, and since Divine worship, doctrinal teaching, and ecclesiastical government are reserved, at least in essentials, to the latter, it follows that the former may not interfere in purely clerical offices; they can participate only in a secondary and accessory manner, and that in virtue of a more or less explicit authorization. Any other interference would be an unlawful and guilty usurpation, punishable at times with censures and penalties.

“As to Jurisdiction and Administration[,] The principle is that the laity as such have no share in the spiritual jurisdiction and government of the Church; but they may be commissioned or delegated by ecclesiastical authority to exercise certain rights, especially when there is no question of strictly spiritual jurisdiction, for instance, in the administration of property. The laity are incapable, if not by Divine law at least by canon law, of real jurisdiction in the Church. . . ,i.e., the laity have no authority over things or persons ecclesiastical; it is their duty to obey not to command. Therefore no official acts requiring real ecclesiastical jurisdiction can be properly performed by the laity; if performed by them, they are null and void.”⁹⁵

Despite radically reinterpreting the nature and mission of the laity in theological terms of “the people of God” and stating that lay people shared in “the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ,” the bishops assembled at Vatican II clearly retained and reaffirmed the hierarchical nature of the Catholic church with the pope and bishops above the laity.⁹⁶ According to this new ecclesiology, or theology of the church, the laity was distinguished from the hierarchy and religious institutes by its “secular nature.”:

[The] laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are

called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.⁹⁷

The mission of the laity is

to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification, since this very energy is a gift of the Creator and a blessing of the Redeemer. . . . Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself “according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal.”⁹⁸

Additionally, lay people could (and can) now hold ecclesiastical offices (e.g., lectors in church liturgies) as well as share in the exercise of the power of governance (e.g., parochial administrators when there are insufficient priests to serve as pastors).⁹⁹

From the earliest days of the Catholic church, there have been communities of people that chose to live together and dedicate themselves to prayer and/or service to God and the church. These have come to be known as **religious communities** (or orders, or institutes, or congregations). A religious community of men or women is distinguished by its **charism**, or specific way of living a Christian life characterized by the type of work the members perform. Generally, there are two types of religious communities within the church: **monastic** (i.e., those communities whose members generally withdraw from the world and live together in a self-sufficient community of prayer, e.g., the Benedictines and the Trappists) and **apostolic** (i.e., those communities whose members live together

but work in the world trying to address the pastoral needs of humanity, e.g., the Franciscans and the Jesuits). The first stage of religious formation (or training) is either the *postulancy* or *novitiate* (and members of this stage are referred to as either *postulants* or *novices*), and during this period a person learns the history, customs, and particular spirituality of the community. At the end of this period a person takes first vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and begins studies for ministry (e.g., ordination to the priesthood in many men's communities).

Frequently, with religious communities of men, religious priests will serve in parishes. As priests, they must have the permission of the bishop of a diocese to perform clerical duties (the process of "receiving faculties"), but they are most directly under the authority of the superiors of the community to which they belong, as are religious brothers and sisters (i.e., the vow of obedience they profess is to the community superior, not the bishop).

In addition to the distinction between monastic and apostolic communities, another significant difference between religious communities was either diocesan or pontifical status: a diocesan community generally worked within a single diocese and was subject to the authority of the diocesan bishop as the ultimate superior. A pontifical community generally worked across several dioceses, and while having to acknowledge the authority of a diocesan bishop, was subject to the pope. Practically speaking, this meant that the superior general of the community reported to the prefect of the Vatican *Congregation for Religious*. Pontifical status usually gave a religious order greater freedom and latitude to carry out its work.

In parts of the world where there aren't enough Catholics to warrant a bishop, the faithful come under the jurisdiction of the pope in his capacity as the bishop of Rome. Practically speaking, however, they are entrusted to the care of one of the Vatican's administrative departments, or *congregations* (usually headed by a prefect who was a *cardinal* or papal elector), specifically the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (formerly the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, or *Propaganda Fide* as it was known by its Latin name). Historically, Propaganda Fide would entrust a specific mission territory to a specific religious community (e.g., establishing the Zambezi mission in 1879 and entrusting it to the Jesuits). The mission superior who reported to Propaganda Fide would be a member of the religious community (usually appointed by the superior of the religious community) as would the initial missionaries. The mission superior was called a *prefect apostolic*. As a way to acknowledge the growth of the church in a mission territory as well as to take a significant step toward establishing the regular hierarchy described above, Propaganda Fide would often appoint a priest as *vicar apostolic*. A vicar apostolic was given the title of a bishop (the title taken from one of the nine hundred sees in North Africa that were lost during the Islamic expansion of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries), and the authority of a bishop within the vicariate but was still subject to Propaganda Fide. An *apostolic delegate* is an ambassador of the Vatican who reports most immediately to the Vatican secretary of state.

Some of the instances where these various lines of authority came into conflict in the history of the Catholic church in Zimbabwe surrounded the prefect of the Zambezi mission. More often than not, when Propaganda Fide appointed a mission superior from a religious community the community's superior general usually appointed a separate

superior for the members of the community as a way to distinguish the parallel lines of authority. In the case of the Zambezi mission, this did not happen until 1931 with the appointment of Aston Chichester as vicar apostolic. Thus, when the Mariannhill missionaries sought permission for anything (e.g., permission to teach African boys Latin) from the prefect apostolic of the Zambezi mission they were also *de facto* asking the regional superior of the Jesuits. This blurring of the lines of authority would result in significant animosity and jealousy between the Jesuits and the Mariannhillers.

Another instance of tension involved the seminary at Chishawasha. According to church law, the bishop had a canonical right and responsibility to visit the seminary under his jurisdiction, even if he entrusted its administration to a religious institute, such as the Jesuits in this case. In 1958, Propaganda Fide decreed Chishawasha a regional seminary. Prior to that time, the superior of the Jesuit community served as the *de facto* superior of the seminary, reporting to Chichester and later to Francis Markall as the bishop and *de jure* superior of a diocesan seminary. As a regional seminary, however, Chishawasha was to serve candidates from all of the dioceses in Southern Rhodesia. As such, the seminary became the property of the Holy See (i.e., the Vatican) and came under the responsibility of Propaganda Fide, which entrusted the administration to the Jesuits. The bishops were free to interact and direct their respective candidates, but did not have the canonical right or responsibility to visit the seminary. The change in the seminary's status resulted in confusion concerning the role and authority of the bishops in the seminary's governance and an ambiguous relationship between the seminary rector and the newly established seminary board of bishops. This ambiguity was one of the significant factors that

contributed to the rise and expression of student protests at the seminary in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is important to note that each religious congregation has its own administrative structure and way of proceeding. These structures and procedures generally mirror the hierarchical structures of the church and must conform with church law.

Within Jesuit administrative structures, the world is divided into several geographic provinces, and each province recruits and trains personnel, as well as has responsibility for apostolic work within a given region. Mission territories, or areas that did not have enough human or financial resources to support a province, were either given to a specific province or came under the direct authority of Jesuit superior general. The Zambezi Mission originally fell into the latter category and, thus, received personnel from other Jesuit provinces. Missionaries in Southern Africa came from England, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Austria, Ireland, France, Quebec, Portugal, Poland, and the Netherlands.

From 1607 to 1768, Jesuits established *reducciones*, or independent agricultural cooperatives, among Guarani Indians in Paraguay using methods of evangelization that were sensitive to Guarani culture. A key facet of the *reducciones* was the intentional segregation of Christian natives from their non-Christian confreres. The rationale was to protect the neophytes from “sliding back” into or being “contaminated” by their former “pagan” beliefs and practices.

Zambezi mission superiors apparently had a romanticized notion of the *reducciones* in mind when they established the Zambezi mission in 1879 and had dreams of recreating versions of them when they established Chishawasha mission in 1892, but

especially when Jean-Baptiste Loubière took over as superior at Kutama mission in 1914. This was one model of Jesuit mission strategy, which presumed the segregation of “native” Christian converts in separate *Christian villages* where the neophytes would not be exposed to the beliefs and practices of surrounding non-Christian indigenes.

Another mission strategy, pioneered by Jesuits in Asia (including Francis Xavier, Alessandro Valignano, and Mateo Ricci), was for the missionaries to learn the local languages and cultures and use them as the vehicles through which to present Christianity. According to this model, converts to Christianity would live among their non-Christian compatriots as leaven in bread. Obviously, this strategy presumed if not necessarily an equality of cultures at least a healthy respect for and appreciation of values in the cultures receiving the Christian message. As will be seen, Jesuits in the Zambezi mission frequently opted for the Christian village strategy because they saw VaShona culture as degenerate, and as a danger to converts.

Significantly, the relatively positive approach to non-Western cultures found in Jesuit missionaries to the Americas and Asia did not survive into the period of nineteenth century Western Christian missionary expansion: their activities resulted in significant controversies (specifically the Chinese and Malabar rites controversies) within the church and which were used as evidence to justify curtailing the authority and influence of the Jesuits in the church throughout the world. Additionally, political leaders who favored limiting the authority of the Catholic church, such as the Marquis de Pombal in Portugal, began by expelling the Jesuits from their territories. Thus, beginning in the 1750s Jesuits were systematically expelled from Portuguese, French, Spanish, and Neopolitan metropolitan and colonial territories. The coup de grace came in 1773 when Pope

Clement XIV issued the papal brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, which suppressed the Jesuits worldwide.

Catherine the Great of Russia, however, forbade the brief of suppression to be read, and thus the Jesuits continued institutionally as a religious order. In 1814, Pius VII promulgated the papal bull, *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum*, restoring the Society of Jesus beyond Russia. The restored Jesuits, however, tended to be more conservative in interpreting their constitutions, and generally followed the Vatican perspective with regard to theology and understanding of non-Western cultures, which were seen as inferior. It was primarily in the 1960s, with the election of Pedro Arrupe as superior general, that the Jesuits began to rediscover their more positive views of non-Western cultures and began to take on “the service of faith and the promotion of justice” as their mission in the modern world.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter begins with the work of historian John Thornton, who discussed the nature of religious knowledge and its foundation upon revelation of the divine/supernatural world. Within this theoretical framework, I establish theological understandings for both vernacular VaShona and Western Christian religious beliefs and practices by comparing rites of passage among ChiShona-speakers in Zimbabwe and those in the Catholic church concerning marriage and death, and trace the adaptation of Christian forms of worship to African vernacular cultural norms through the colonial period.

Chapter two introduces the various groups involved in this study, i.e., VaShona, AmaNdebele, and European missionaries, most notably the Jesuits, but also the

Mariannhill missionaries, and Bethlehem missionaries, and how and when they arrived in Zimbabwe. This chapter will also address baseline African and European attitudes: African Christians integrated vernacular African religion with mission Christianity, and there were significant splits between German and English Jesuits—the former generally taking a more positive view of Africans.

Chapter three presents a spiritual economy of Chishawasha mission from its founding in 1892 to the 1950s, focusing on issues including Jesuit finances and use of African labor, mission schools, and converts to Christianity and their motives for conversion. Despite addressing quintessentially “materialist” subjects, this chapter presents them as material manifestations of the overall spiritual mission of the church.

Chapter four examines the struggles of African women who wanted to become Catholic nuns. Beginning in 1922, Mariannhill missionaries from South Africa established two religious institutes for African women in colonial Zimbabwe. Conflicts developed between the church and the practitioners of vernacular VaShona culture over the question of whether African women had the right to enter convents. African men of the time, supported by the British colonial authorities, held that women were perpetually dependant on their fathers or guardians until they were married, and further claimed that the church interfered with African culture by denying the men their right to receive *lobola* (or bride price). Through an examination of specific case studies developed from archival and oral data, this chapter argues that the Catholic church under the leadership of Aston Ignatius Chichester, the first Vicar Apostolic and Archbishop of Salisbury, provided African women in colonial Zimbabwe another option to marriage, yet in doing so explicitly and intentionally subverted a significant facet of the vernacular African culture of the early and mid-twentieth century.

The following chapter presumes that in order for inculturation to be possible, the people who know and understand the culture(s) in question from the inside must first be in place. Accordingly, this chapter studies the founding and development of the seminary established to train African priests and brothers, including the rise and manifestation of African nationalism by seminarians that culminated in student strikes that resulted in the closure of the seminary on three occasions between 1967 and 1979.

Chapter six studies the initiatives of the African laity to develop the church and to prepare themselves for prominent leadership roles in the church, including: the African Teachers' Congress Movement of the 1930s and 1940s, the Catholic African Association (1950s-1970s), and *Moto* magazine (1958-1974), all of which were very critical of the institutional church's racism and lack of material support for the economic development of Africans. Significantly, it was the initiative of the African laity that began the process that ultimately led to the development and approbation of rites to honor the spirits of the dead within the church.

Chapter seven studies marriage and how the Catholic church tried (and failed) to reconcile African practice with Western Christian understandings. It also examines the church's response to marriage legislation passed by the Rhodesian colonial administration.

Chapters eight and nine examine the inculturation process by focusing on two controversial aspects of religious beliefs and practices: the Mwari controversy, a debate over the name of God to be used in church liturgies and publications, and the *Kurova Guva* rites controversy, which concerned the VaShona practice of honoring the spirits of the dead.

The concluding chapter assesses the effects of the relative failure of the church to inculturate itself in the Zimbabwean context and the implications of that failure for the inculturation process more broadly, and the need for the Catholic church to reconceptualize its theology of inculturation. This is followed by an argument for and the implications of taking the sacred in an African context seriously.

Notes

1. See Martinus L. Daneel, *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1991), 88-97.
2. For an excellent explanation and example of this methodology see Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983). See Appendix for a list of oral sources.
3. Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*, (New York: Times Books, 1992).
4. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Vol.2, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
5. Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988), 10-12.
6. Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988).
7. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 4, 8-9.
8. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991).
9. Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross, eds., *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: Witswatersrand University Press, 1995), 5.
10. J. F. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite* (London: Longmans, 1965); Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1952).
11. Greg Cuthbertson, "Missionary Imperialism and Colonial Warfare: London Missionary Society Attitudes to the South African War, 1899-1902," *South African Historical Journal*, 19 (1987), 93-113; "'Cave of Adullam': Missionary Reactions to Ethiopianism at Lovedale, 1898-1902," *Missionalia*, 19 (1991), 57-64; Paul S. Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995).
12. Terence O. Ranger, "Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Studies Review* 29:2 (June, 1986) 1-69.
13. See O. U. Kalu, ed., *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1980); Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1990; Thomas Blakely et al., *Religion in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994).

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14. Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*. London: C. Hurst & Co. 1983; *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. 1989.
15. See Robin Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa* 41/2 (1971) 85-108. See also Robin Horton and J.D. Y. Peel, "Conversion and Confusion: A Rejoinder on Christianity in Eastern Nigeria," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10/3 (1976) 482.
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17. See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, J. W. Swain trans., (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915) 1964 ed.
18. Humphrey J. Fisher, "Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa," *Africa* 43/1 (1972) 27-40.
19. David N. Beach, *The Shona and their Neighbours* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1994).
20. Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923* (London: Longman, 1979); Gabriel Setiloane, *The Image of God among the Sotho-Tswana* (Rotterdam: A.A. Balkema, 1976).
21. Paul S. Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*, Portsmouth: Heinemann. 1995. xvi.
22. Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
23. David Lan, *Guns and Rains: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Janice McLaughlin, *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (Harare, 1996); Carl F. Hallencreutz and Ambrose M. Moyo, ed., *Church and State in Zimbabwe (Volume 3)*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1988), Part I (pp. 29-194); Terence Ranger, "Are We Not Also Men?": *The Samkange Family & African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-1964*, (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995); Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger, ed., *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, (London: J. Currey, 1996); Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999); Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures* (Maryknoll, 1988).
24. A.J. Dachs and W.F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979); C.J.M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996).

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26. Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*.

27. *ibid.*, 4.

28. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 14-15.

29. *ibid.*, 15.

30. *ibid.*, 15.

31. *ibid.*, 17. Emphasis in original.

32. *ibid.*, 17.

33. *ibid.*, 17.

34. See <<http://web.utk.edu/~rhackett/durban.html>> for the IAHR 2000 Durban Congress Program. See <<http://www.iahr.dk/>> for the IAHR more generally.

35. See James Cox, "Identifying African Methodologies in the Study of Religions," Paper delivered at IAHR Congress, Durban, South Africa, August, 2000.

36. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), vii.

37. See, e.g., Philip Peek, ed., *African Divination: Ways of Knowing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

38. Gleason, *Keeping the Faith*, 219.

39. *ibid.*, 220.

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40. Thomas Spear, "Towards the History of African Christianity," Conference paper presented at *Africans Meeting Missionaries: Rethinking Colonial Encounters*, University of Minnesota, May, 1997, 8.
41. *ibid.*, 8.
42. *ibid.*, 17.
43. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).
44. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities*, (Rome: Acta Apostolica Sedis, 1990), [15].
45. See the annual addresses of the presidents of the American Catholic Historical Association, usually published in the April issue of the *Catholic Historical Review*, especially Eric Cochrane, "What is Catholic Historiography?," *Catholic Historical Review* 61/2 (1975), 169-90. See also Gleason, *Keeping the Faith*, and Jay P. Dolan, "New Directions in American Catholic History" in Jay P. Dolan and James P. Wind, eds., *New Dimensions in American Religious History: Essays in Honor of Martin E. Marty* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 152-74.
46. For hagiographic chronicles see, e.g., Martin J. Bane, *The Catholic Story of Liberia*, (New York: D. X. McMullen Co., 1950); William Eric Brown, *The Catholic Church in South Africa: From its Origins to the Present Day*, (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1960); and Heinz Hunke, *Church and State: The Political Context of 100 Years of Catholic Mission in Namibia* (Windhoek: John Meinert Printers, 1996). For academic religious history see, e.g., Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa: 1450-1950*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Ian Linden, *The Catholic church and the struggle for Zimbabwe*, (London: Longman, 1980).
47. See Cochrane, "What is Catholic Historiography?"; Dolan, "New Directions in American Catholic History"; Gleason, *Keeping the Faith*; and David O'Brien, *The Renewal of American Catholicism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).
- 48 See, Nicholas M. Creary, "Catholic Historiographical Methodology: A Proposal," H-Catholic Discussion Logs, April 20, 2000 <<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~catholic/>>.
49. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), [3].
50. For the idea of history as a puzzle, see the introduction to James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

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51. Philip Gleason, *Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 218.
- 52 O'Brien, *The Renewal of American Catholicism*, 28-32.
- 53 See Pedro Arrupe, "Men for Others: Training Agents of Change for the Promotion of Justice," in Jerome Aixela, ed., *Justice with Faith Today: An Anthology of Letters and Addresses*, (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Resources, 1980), 123-38.
- 54 See for example, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Trans., George E. Ganss, (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970).
- 55 See *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, [20-23; 34; 38-41].
- 56 See Richard W. Thomas, *Understanding Interracial Unity: A Study of U.S. Race Relations*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1996).
- 57 Steve Rossworm and Nick Salvatore eds., *Doing History in Catholic*, forthcoming.
58. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, [16].
59. See John Mbiti, "The Encounter of Christian Faith and African Religion," in Deane William Fernald, ed., *Third World Liberation Theologies: A Reader* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986), 199-204.
60. See Joseph Kumbirai, "Kurova Guva and Christianity," in M.F.C Bourdillon, ed., *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, Vol.2 (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), 123-30; and A.J. Dachs & W.F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979* (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979). For a comparison with Chinese Rites controversy, see Andrew C. Ross. *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).
61. See Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915); Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); Marcel Mauss, "A Category of the Human Mind: the Notion of Person; the Notion of Self," in Michael Carrithers et al., eds., *The Category of the Person* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3-23; Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).
62. Gleason, *Keeping the Faith*, 219.
63. See Timothy McAvoy, "The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1789-1834," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Columbia University, 1940; Jay P. Dolan, "New

Directions in American Catholic History,” in Jay P. Dolan & James P. Wind, eds., *New Dimensions in American Religious History*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 152-74; Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism Web site, <<http://www.nd.edu/~cushwa/>>.

64. See John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-century Urban North*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); James Carroll, “Oral History: The Voice and Spirit of the Twentieth Century,” paper presented at the Spring Meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association, Villanova University, Villanova, PA, March, 1999.

65. See Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, or Landau, *The Realm of the Word*. Although these studies do not deal with the Catholic church, they show that religious topics are accepted in the “mainstream,” and how to write history that is accepted by the “mainstream.”

66. I am most grateful to Dr. Terence Ranger for suggesting this point.

67. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. 1989; Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923* (London: Longman, 1979); Gabriel Setiloane, *The Image of God among the Sotho-Tswana* (Rotterdam: A.A. Balkema, 1976).

68. Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Janice McLaughlin, *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, (Harare: Baobab Books, 1996).

69. cf. *Gaudium et Spes* and the first part of *Ex Corde* to gain a broader sense of the context in which to place the norms that follow.

70. Catholic institutions such as the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Christendom College, Ave Maria University, and Campion College can be interpreted as moves in this direction.

71. <<http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/1940stat.htm#back3>>.

72. *ibid.*, Introduction.

73. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, [4].

74. AAUP Statement on Academic Freedom, [a] and [b].

75. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, [12]. See also, [29] and Article 2, No.4.

76. *ibid.*, [4].

77. *ibid.*

78. *ibid.*, [29].

79. Quote from *Gaudium et Spes*, [36], cited in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, [17].

80. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, [20].

81. *ibid.*, [27].

82. John Michael D'Arcy, "Achieving the goals of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: From the Heart of the Church*," Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Web Site, <<http://www.diocesefwsb.org/>>: "On the part of many major Catholic institutions of higher learning, the mandate has brought considerable anxiety, some confusion, and even resistance. What is the reason for this? I am convinced, after substantive and respectful dialogue with the administrators of Catholic colleges and universities over the past several years and conversations with bishops around the country, that. . .there is one concern which dominates. The spirit of American higher education presents difficulties for American Catholic colleges and universities—a spirit which sees the approval of such a mandate as a violation of academic freedom.

"Some bishops have concerns that go to the heart of their pastoral ministry while theologians and other academicians, many of whom are committed to strengthening the Catholic identity of their institution, respond in this fashion: we are committed to the Church and to academic freedom and the acceptance of the mandate would tend to violate this freedom, would severely weaken our Catholic presence and Catholic influence in the whole enterprise of higher education and would even endanger the orderly governance of our institutions. . . . My response to the academicians. . . is as follows. Are you making academic freedom an absolute? And, if not an absolute, then where are the parameters to this freedom? Does not every discipline have parameters and limits?"

83. <<http://www.usccb.org/bishops/mandatumguidelines.htm>>.

84. Personal communications of the author with: Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Denver, December 2, 2000; George V. Murry, S.J., Bishop of St. Thomas, December 6, 2000; Bishop Peter Rosazza, Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford, December 2, 2000; Edward Sunshine, Professor of Theology, Barry University, Miami, FL, December 3, 200; Patrick Hayes, Department of Religion and Religious Education, Catholic University of America Washington, D.C.

85. "Guidelines Concerning the Academic *Mandatum* in Catholic Universities."

86. See 1550-1551 debates between Las Casas and Sepulveda in Valladolid, as well as the following papal bulls: Alexander VI, *Inter Cetera*; Nicholas V, *Dum Diversas* and *Romanus Pontifex*; and Paul III, *Sublimis Deus*.

87. See, e.g., Francis Patrick Kenrick's *Theologia Moralia* or John England's 18 letters that distinguished between the Atlantic slave trade and domestic slavery and argued that the church supported the latter in the wake of Gregory XVI's letter "In Supremo Apostolatus." It is significant to note that the 1888 apostolic letter of Leo XIII, "In Plurimus," was not addressed to the universal church, rather only to the bishops of Brazil, and that *Gaudium et Spes*, [26] and [28] refer to "slavery" and not the "slavery of sin" or any other similar qualifier. The implication is that the Magisterium of the Catholic church did not formally and finally condemn the practice of slavery until the Second Vatican Council.

88. For examples of bishops, clergy, and religious owning slaves, see Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1991); Richard Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

89. See Mt. 6:12.

90. Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology* (New York: Crossroads, 1995), cited in D'Arcy, "Achieving the goals of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: From the Heart of the Church*."

91. See Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, "Communion between the living and the dead: Christian Response to Spirit Possession," Pastoral Study No. 1. (Harare: ZCBC Theological Commission, 1986). For an excellent example of voluntary spirit possession in an African religious context see David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (London: James Currey, 1985).

92. Black Bishops of the United States, *What We Have Seen and Heard: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization*, (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1984), [6].

93. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Jeff Marlett of the Department of Religious Studies at the College of St. Rose, Albany, NY for his comments on an earlier draft of these notes.

94. *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, [31].
<http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html>.

95. From, A. Boudinhon, "Laity," *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VIII*, Copyright © 1910 by Robert Appleton Company; Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by Kevin Knight
<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08748a.htm>>.

96. See *Lumen Gentium*, ch.3.

97. *ibid.*, [31].

98. *ibid.*, [33].

99. See 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, cc. 129, 145, 228 §1.

Chapter 1: Claiming the Common Ground: A Case for the Inculturation of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe

Religion often plays a central role in the cultural life of a human society by attempting to provide explanations of the world's origins and humanity's place therein, concepts of morality and codes of acceptable social behavior. Indigenous African peoples developed a great variety of religious systems with complex cosmologies, rituals, and traditions.¹

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European imperialists and evangelists tried to impose alien religious beliefs and practices—Western forms of Christianity—on many African peoples.² This raises the issues of the extent to which Africans were able to adapt external religious institutions, such as the Catholic church, to their own circumstances and to transform them into African forms of religious expression, that is, to inculturate Christianity; and to what extent they used these religious expressions in their struggles for liberation from European domination. Though there is literature about the politicization of the Catholic church during the liberation war in Zimbabwe,³ there appears to be no monograph that deals exclusively with the pastoral mission of the Catholic church, or more importantly, with the efforts of African Christians to shed the European influences of an imported Christianity and transform it into an African religious experience.

As such, inculturation becomes a process of social liberation *within* the church, as well as a social liberation *of* the church. The extent to which inculturation took place on the symbolic level would have significant implications for this process of ecclesiastical decolonization (and for an analysis of the broader struggle for social liberation) in

Zimbabwe, because its absence would result merely in a religious colonization of African peoples by European Christians at best, or what Jean and John Comaroff describe as a colonization of African consciousness at worst.⁴

Inculturation Theory

Catholic theologians in the last forty-five years have developed the relatively new term, “inculturation” to discuss the old problem of adapting the church universal (i.e., the beliefs, actions, and structures of the church that are applicable to humanity throughout the world ostensibly irrespective of culture) to specific local cultures. The term was first used by a French Jesuit, Joseph Masson (“*un Catholicisme inculturé*”⁵), in preparations for the opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), and was popularized by the Jesuits (the largest religious order of men in the Catholic church, and with the most extensive training), particularly by Pedro Arrupe, the superior general of the order from 1965 to 1983.⁶ The Jesuit neologism clearly had established itself in the Catholic theological lexicon by the late 1970s when it appeared in a speech by Pope John Paul II in 1979.⁷

Arrupe defined inculturation as

The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs, and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a “new creation.”⁸

British theologian Aylward Shorter defined inculturation as “the on-going dialogue between [Christian] faith and culture or cultures. More fully, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures.”⁹

Inculturation has largely supplanted other terms dealing with the adaptation of the church to local culture, such as “indigenization,” or “contextualization.” It is important to note that the Catholic theological concept of inculturation differs from the anthropological concepts of *enculturation*, or the process of learning a culture as one’s native culture, and *acculturation*, which is the process of adapting to a culture that is not a person’s native culture. Several scholars have questioned the value of using a theological term in a historical study, arguing that to do so is problematic, especially when/if history is considered in relation to the social sciences, or that doing so is a reading back of a contemporary term with its concomitant understandings to a period when it was not in use.¹⁰

The term inculturation—particularly as defined by Arrupe and Shorter above, however, is useful in a study such as this one because it refers to the process of how a multinational and multicultural entity adapts itself (or is adapted) to local cultures and contexts. This is a process that dates to the beginning of Christianity two thousand years ago, and encompasses cross-cultural practices, thus it is relevant and appropriate to the social sciences. Reading back contemporary ideas, perspectives, and terms onto prior historical periods is a common academic practice: for example, how do contemporary medieval or ancient economic or labor historians do their work without reference to “capital”? Or should African historians drop terms including “pre-capitalist period,” “African social class(es),” “African peasantry,” or “African proletariat” from their studies? Although the term “discourse” has been present in Western lexicons for centuries, the ways in which “post-modern” and “cultural studies” scholars employ it

today have a very distinctive meaning that wasn't necessarily used during the time periods that the scholars investigate, and yet "discourse analysis" is an accepted method of academic inquiry. Further, in a study that purports to take theological perspective seriously, use of the theological term inculturation—ostensibly a cross-cultural dialogue between church and culture—captures not only the collective and individual aspects of the dialogue, but presumes a mutual interaction and influencing of both sides of the dialogue, as well as establishes space for the presence of belief (or faith) in the supernatural and/or divine as very real motives for human actions. Anthropological terms such as assimilation or syncretism, while useful for discussion of the integration of two or more systems of religious thought and practice, do not take faith seriously, and more often than not, presume a unidirectional transfer, e.g., that Western Christianity influenced African culture but that African culture could not influence Western Christianity.¹¹

Additionally, even if inculturation ultimately is "impossible [because] there is no mechanism for a planet-wide dialogue between the Catholic church and local cultures, beyond some local priests incorporating local music in their services, etc."¹² it was implicit, if not explicitly stated as the ideal goal within Catholic theology and, therefore, operative in the development of church policies. To that end, inculturation as a concept is significant and valuable to measure the relative success (or failure) of African Christians and Western Jesuits in receiving and/or responding to broader church initiatives and objectives. The aforementioned reductionist characterization of inculturation aside, the concept also speaks directly to the broader issue of Western missionary-African Christian

dialogue/encounter, particularly as found in the works of the Comaroffs and Paul Landau. As such, inculturation is a useful concept to test a specifically Catholic ideology in a specifically African cultural context.

One of the underlying assumptions of inculturation is to distinguish the gospel from the cultural assumptions often embedded in the language and practice of evangelization/preaching. One missionary, Vincent Donovan, was very critical of the fact that despite over one hundred years of missionary activity in the African “missions,” the church in Africa was still largely dependent on the western world for financial support and for personnel (i.e., priests and nuns). The church’s failure to bring Christ’s message of salvation to the Maasai in Kenya (Donovan’s specific missionary experience), and to Africa in general, is the result of its failure to “peel away from the gospel the accretions of the centuries, and of Western, white, European, American culture,” and incarnate¹³ it in the culture of the people whom it evangelizes.¹⁴ The idea of inculturating the faith, or transforming it into a form of religious expression for a given people is very much rooted in the theology of the mystery of the incarnation.¹⁵

According to Donovan, so long as the church fails to inculturate itself, it denies its very existence: “The church exists only insofar as it carries Christ to the world. The church is only part of the mission, the mission of God sending his son to the world. Without this mission, there would be no church. The idea of church without mission is an absurdity.”¹⁶ Thus, he suggested a return to the missionary methods of Saint Paul, as found in the New Testament, in implementing the work of evangelization.

A concrete example of Donovan's method was his presentation of the liturgy of the Eucharist. Rather than impose the traditional Latin rite mass in its entirety, with all its structures, and symbols rooted in Roman culture (e.g., priestly vestments and incense) on the Maasai, he merely presented them with bread and wine and Christ's words of institution from the last supper, and allowed the people to develop the liturgy as they saw fit.¹⁷ While doing so resulted in a great variety in the liturgical celebrations from group to group of Maasai, it also allowed each community the freedom to incorporate local symbols which had greater meaning for them than those found in the traditional western Catholic mass.¹⁸

Donovan's critique is insightful, and incredibly challenging to "traditional" notions of missiology, or theories (theologies) of mission. He provided a new ecclesiastical model and method rooted in practical experience that would augur well for the church in Africa: such a model would effectively obviate the separation of religious expression from quotidian experience (as done in the West). This would allow Africans greater freedom to reclaim and reinvest with greater meaning symbols that the church may have coopted in its failed efforts to inculturate itself on the continent. This would ultimately result in more explicitly African expressions of Christianity.¹⁹

Eugene Hillman's *Toward an African Christianity* is applied theological study of inculturation in an African context. Hillman spent many years working among the Maasai in Kenya and Tanzania. Beginning with the mystery of the incarnation, "the idea that the divine Word [i.e., Jesus Christ] became a human being like the rest of us in everything except sin,"²⁰ Hillman argued that the church, despite statements and pronouncements to

the contrary, mired itself in European “monoculture,” and that “what passed for evangelism during the past hundred years was in reality a dissemination of the western experiences and expressions of Christian faith. These foreign religious interpretations of the faith. . .were translated literally into African cultural words,” such translations being more often than not merely “linguistic and literalistic.”²¹

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) represented a major departure rhetorically and theologically from the past by “retrieving and reaffirming the incarnational principle, [and] promis[ing] to put the Church [sic] back on its original course of authentic involvement with the whole inhabited earth.”²² According to Hillman, however, the church has not lived up to its newfound “duty” to inculturate as it has yet to free itself from “a congenital and chronic ethnocentrism at the higher levels of ecclesiastical management. . .[and] a fear of innovation at the grassroots level.”²³

Revelation and Religious Knowledge

In *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, John Thornton provided a useful model with which to consider the coalescence of different religious beliefs. He first posited that in order to appreciate the adaptations of African religious beliefs and practices with European forms of Christianity in the early modern Atlantic world it was first necessary to “understand the underlying dynamics of religious knowledge. . .and from this [i.e., religious knowledge] the mechanisms for religious change, conversion, and transformation in the presence of other systems of religious knowledge.” According to Thornton, “[the] merging of religions requires something more than simply mixing forms and ideas from one religion with those of another. It requires a

reevaluation of the basic concepts and sources of knowledge of both religions in order to find common ground.” Thus, religion “was not simply an intellectual conception, made up by people and subject to reconsideration or debate. Rather, the ideas and the images were ‘received’ or revealed from nonworldly beings in one or another form, and humans’ only role was to interpret these revelations and act accordingly.” Religious philosophy, therefore, “was not the creator of religion; revelations were. Religious philosophy simply interpreted them.” The most immediate implication of this model is that “strictly speaking, humans were not free to change religions or to question the revelations, and in the end virtually all religious change required at least reinterpretation of existing revelations, at most a new set of stronger revelations.”²⁴

Thornton then argued that although Africans and Europeans had “somewhat different systems of religious knowledge” and “a completely different set of basic revelations,” they had “a number of major ideas in common,” without which “the development of African Christianity would probably not have been possible.”²⁵

Thornton defined “the basic reality of religion” as the belief “that there was another world that could not be seen and that revelations were the essential source by which people could know of this other world,” and claimed that both African and European cultures accepted this basic reality. The “other world” was “superior” to and governed events in this world.²⁶ Despite differences concerning “the validity of many specific revelations,” Africans and Europeans agreed knowledge of the other world came through revelations, and that “the souls of the dead and those of other inhabitants of the

other world, although often omnipresent, were invisible and could not communicate with people in this world on a regular basis.”²⁷

Acknowledging that the general “inaccessibility of the other world to normal human senses” caused every society to have “unbelievers, who deny the reality of any phenomenon they cannot perceive,” Thornton argued that “[those] who did accept the existence of another world did so because they believed that some people had had direct contact with it,” i.e., religious specialists “endowed with a sixth sense that allowed them to receive messages and images from the other world. These people could then report back to their fellows on the existence, nature, and structure of the other world.”²⁸ Similarly, the other world had the ability to communicate directly or indirectly with this world and to make its will understood generally, for example, through “dreams or the ordering of events in this world in such a way as to convey messages for all to understand (augury).”²⁹

Thornton defined revelation as “a piece of information about the other world, its nature, or its intention that is perceptible to people in this world through one or another channel,” and explained its significance with regard to the development of philosophy, religion, and cosmology:

Revelations provide this world with its window on the other world. The information thus gathered is then basic data used for constructing a general understanding of the nature of the other world and its inhabitants (a philosophy), a clear perception of its desires and intentions for people to obey (a religion), and a larger picture of the workings and history of both worlds (a cosmology). It is thus through revelations that religions are formed, and it is also through them that they change.”³⁰

Western Christians adhered to a series of revelations recorded in the bible beginning with the creation stories and Mosaic law, continuing through the Hebrew

prophets, culminating in Jesus and the apostles, yet also extending to include “many post-biblical writers (‘Fathers and Doctors of the Church’).” According to Thornton, Catholics believed these latter receivers of revelations “were also inspired and their words were as much revelations from the other world as those in the Scriptures.” Further, Catholics also “accepted the idea that lesser revelations, in the form of dreams, conjunction of events, heavenly apparitions, and the like were divine messages as well as the Scriptures.”³¹

Africans also accepted “the concept of revelation,” and they “had a variety of types of revelations by which they could learn the desires of the other world or ask it to use its power over this world to assist them,” including augury, divination, dream interpretation, visions and voices, ordeal, and spirit possession of a medium or material object.³² Like Europeans, Africans used the information from revelations to develop “a comprehensive cosmology and philosophy, and the instructions, rewards, and punishments received compiled into a code of behavior and a religion.”³³ Thus, Europeans and Africans could recognize the fact of each others’ revelations.³⁴

Africans and Europeans “did not always agree” concerning “the validity of any given revelation,” because Europeans frequently believed that while “African revelations were genuine messages from the other world, they originated with the Devil and thus ought not to be followed, a point that Africans contested.” Africans, for their part, had “difficulty in accepting the validity of many of the revelations that Europeans said were received in the ancient past, for which there were no recent witnesses.”³⁵

Despite a common religious structure based on “the philosophical interpretation of revelations,” according to Thornton, African did not construct a hermeneutic

orthodoxy. This resulted from the “relative lack of power of the priesthood,” which did not have the authority to impose or enforce “a uniform cosmology” on the laity, and the general African belief in continuous revelation. This effectively put African religious specialists in a difficult position due to the need for the validation of revelation via efficacy of cures, the ability to predict future or locate guilty parties (similarly, miracles were means of validating revelation in Western Christianity).³⁶

The second barrier to [African religious] orthodoxy was an outgrowth of the first condition. Revelations came to Africans in a stream, continuously from day to day, and each one required validation. As long as the clergy were precarious they could not impose their interpretations on these revelations, nor could they control their arrival and institutionalize them.³⁷

Thornton further opined that the lack of orthodoxy on Africans’ part “facilitated conversion, and usually the relations between the two traditions were not hostile, at least as Africans saw it.”³⁸ Western Christians, however, with their revelations fixed in their sacred scriptures, view continuous revelation as diabolically inspired.³⁹

Thornton concluded that for African Christians in the early modern Atlantic world,

African Christianity was a form of Christianity in that its followers accepted as genuine a series of revelations in which various otherworldly beings, primarily saints that were recognized by Catholic Christians through their own traditions of revelations, now revealed themselves and were thus accorded status and worship by Africans. At the same time, however, African Christianity was not identical with that practiced in Europe or by most Euro-Americans, in that the resulting philosophy continued to recognize many other revelations as valid, and moreover, it never fully accepted certain points of Catholic doctrine, especially those that reinforced the power of the priesthood (the primacy of discontinuous revelation such as the Bible or Apostolic Succession and the resulting attitudes toward the Sacrament and the role of the papacy).⁴⁰

African Christianity, therefore, “was a complex examination of revelations conducted by both Africans and [European?] Christians,” and not “simply a meshing of cosmologies, nor was it an intellectual enterprise.”⁴¹

To sum up briefly the main points of Thornton’s argument:

- The foundation of religion is a belief in an invisible other world that is superior to and governs life in this world.
- Revelation, or “a piece of information about the other world, its nature, or its intention that is perceptible to people in this world through one or another channel,” is the basis of religious knowledge, and forms the “basic data” for developing philosophy (“a general understanding of the nature of the other world and its inhabitants), religion (“a clear perception of [the other world’s] desires and intentions for people to obey”), and cosmology (“a larger picture of the workings and history of both worlds”), i.e., religions are formed and changed through revelations.
- Humanity’s role in religion is to interpret the revelations and act accordingly.
- Although Africans and Europeans believed in the philosophic interpretation of divine revelation, Africans did not develop religious orthodoxies due to their belief in the primacy of continuous revelations and the necessity of religious specialists to validate new revelations with miracles. Europeans, especially Catholics, developed orthodox religious beliefs based on the interpretation of discontinuous revelations found in scriptures, and believed that the Devil inspired continuous revelations.
- The complex examination and evaluation of revelations by Africans and Christians resulted in the formation African Christianities.

Thornton’s model of revelation as the basis of religious knowledge is more useful and accurate than syncretism because it allows for an equality of dialogue partners and a possibility for mutual influence, i.e., the non-Western religious beliefs, practices, and perspectives can influence their Western counterparts at least as much as the latter can influence the former:

the merger [of European Christianity and African religion] was not simply a meshing of cosmologies, nor was it an intellectual enterprise, but rather it was a complex examination of revelations conducted by both Africans and Christians. The way in which the revelations interacted and were validated determined the nature of the resulting religion, African Christianity.⁴²

It is also more useful than the model of the colonization of consciousness in that it allows for the agency of the non-Western religious practitioners, allows that they can know their own interests and do not necessarily suffer from a Gramscian “false consciousness,” and—most importantly—not only takes seriously the existence of a given group’s religious beliefs, but also acknowledges and takes seriously the fundamental element of religious belief in the actual existence of an “other world” that is in relationship with the human world. Without an appropriate respect and understanding for such beliefs, any sociological, anthropological (cultural), or psychological study of religion misses a significant aspect of religious life.

Thornton’s model is also useful because it allows for an examination of inculturation processes as several levels, including the symbolic, the personal (or the level of individuals or groups of people), the institutional or structural, and the ideological. A brief comparison of VaShona and Catholic symbolic corpora regarding marriage and death rites will establish the bases for inculturation. The contests for inculturation at the personal, institutional, and ideological levels will be examined more fully in parts one and two below. It is significant to note that throughout the remainder of the text where reference to “African” or “Africans” is made, unless specified otherwise, these terms will refer to ChiShona-speaking (or VaShona) people; and more specifically to the people in the ChiZezuru-speaking dialect areas in and around the modern city of Harare (formerly Salisbury).

Marriage

Among the VaShona, no one specific ritual is performed to solemnize or initiate a marriage.⁴³ For the VaShona, marriage is essentially a contract between two families, characterized by the negotiation and payment of bridewealth, rather than a personal arrangement between two individuals.⁴⁴ Most of the literature discusses at great length the social relations between the two families, and the mutual rights and obligations that marriage payments incur at various stages of the marriage process.⁴⁵

Informal courting between a boy and girl becomes a private engagement with the exchange of small tokens of affection. While this exchange may be somewhat informal, if one of the parties breaks the engagement the other may sue for damages in a chief's (*ishe*) court.⁴⁶ The private engagement becomes formal and public when the (male) suitor announces his intention to marry the woman. Usually, he would send a mediator (*munyai*) with a head of cattle to the woman's parents. If they accept it, then negotiations for the payment of bridewealth begin.

Negotiations are carried out by the heads of the two families, or their representatives. Payments are composed of two parts: *rutsambo* and *roora*. The *rutsambo* payment gives a man sexual rights to a woman; *roora* gives him (and his family) rights over the children born to the woman.⁴⁷ The husband and his family pay *roora* over an extended period of time (historically in cattle but more commonly in cash in the present), and specific events in the marriage process require a payment. "The final payment of *roora* occurs only after the birth of the first child, and sometimes not until much later."⁴⁸

It is important to note that women are not purchased and sold as commodities. "The husband's family have obligations towards the wife and her family—in case of

divorce, officially she must be returned to her kin. Both families have rights and obligations with respect to the woman: the husband's family can complain to the woman's family if she fails to perform her duties, especially if she does not bear children. . .and the girl's [sic] family should defend her and protect her if she is badly treated."⁴⁹

Ostensibly, the purpose of marriage among the VaShona is the perpetuation and growth of the family group. "The importance of children to Shona marriage is illustrated by the custom that the wife got her own cooking stones, which. . .are symbolic of the marriage, only after the birth of her first child."⁵⁰ Accordingly, polygamy was permissible provided that the man had sufficient means to support his wives and children. "The more wives a man had, the more children he was likely to have, and a large group of descendants meant a large labour force to work the fields of the family head, which in turn resulted in wealth and high status."⁵¹ For this and other reasons, divorce was not in the interest of either party or family.

The Catholic church celebrates marriage in a wedding ceremony that normally occurs in the context of a mass. The heart of the Catholic marriage ritual is the exchange of vows between the man and woman: "I, N., take you, N., to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life."⁵² Immediately after pronouncing the vows, the couple exchanges rings with the following words: "Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁵³

From European medieval times to the latter half of the twentieth century, the church held a view of marriage similar to that expressed in VaShona culture (polygamy

being notably excepted).⁵⁴ The church had long held that “the primary end of marriage is the procreation and nurture of children; its secondary end is the mutual help and remedying of concupiscence.”⁵⁵ The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and the 1983 Code of Canon Law, however, removed the hierarchical distinction.⁵⁶ Marriage signifies the union between Christ and the church. “It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life.”⁵⁷ The church teaches, and expresses in its liturgy, the belief that marriage is a consensual union between two people; that it is a lifelong commitment rooted in mutual love; that it is exclusive (i.e., polygamy and polyandry are not permissible); and that the procreation and education of children is a significant element.

A recent study has found that Christian marriages are “extremely uncommon” amongst VaShona, who prefer some form of “customary” marriage.⁵⁸ Those couples that did have Christian weddings did so only after having a “traditional” marriage.⁵⁹ While this would ostensibly seem to be an impasse for the inculturation of the church (especially in light of the church’s stance with regard to polygamy), this could also be seen as a way for the church to integrate its beliefs and practices into VaShona marriage customs: the wedding ceremony as another, yet significant, stage in the marriage process. Just as the church would hope for its teachings to diffuse throughout the local culture, so too, it would have to incorporate symbols appropriate to that culture in order for the ceremony to have meaning for the people who experience it.

Death

Many cultures believe that death is not an end to human existence, rather it is a transformatory experience that changes the nature and means of existence. While the VaShona have funerary rites to dispose of the body,⁶⁰ the ritual of *kurova guva* (“to beat the grave”)⁶¹ is far more illustrative of their beliefs with regard to death and the role of spirits in the VaShona cosmology.

About six months to a year after a person dies and is buried his/her family and friends gather at his/her grave (bringing with them pots of beer), sweep it, and then pour libations of beer and leave offerings of meat while saying prayers offering the deceased to the ancestors, or *midzimu* (or *vadzimu*, singular, *mudzimu*). The people then retire to the family’s home where the remainder of the beer is consumed along with more meat (usually goat or ox) that is prepared specifically for the occasion. Festivities involving the consumption of more meat and beer, singing and dancing in honor of the deceased ensue.⁶²

What is most significant about *kurova guva* is the offering of the spirit of the deceased to the ancestors as represented in the offerings of beer and meat. The VaShona believe in active, immanent ancestral spirits who “continue to have a concern for and influence on the lives of the living.”⁶³ Death separates a person from both the living family and from the ancestral spirits: the spirit of the deceased enters a “transitional status, between that of a living member of the community and that of ‘mudzimu’ status with spiritual functions.”⁶⁴ The VaShona describe this transitional state as “wandering about the forest.”⁶⁵

Kurova guva, then is the ritual offering of the spirit of the deceased to the midzimu. It ends the spirit's transitional phase.

The living are entreating the ancestral spirits to pity the spirit that is wandering about; the ancestral spirits are ready to accept the new spirit on condition that the living have ceremonially handed it over to them. . . The kurova guva ceremony is thus a sort of reconciliatory tribunal, where peace between the ancestral spirits and the new spirit is established. Peace between the living and the spirits of the deceased is also established through this ceremony. . . A reconciliation is thus made between the new spirit, the ancestral spirits, and its living descendents, and the harmonious integrity of the family is effected.⁶⁶

Similarly, in Catholic tradition, death rituals are more instructive than the actual funerary rites. Devotional practices that honor the memory of the dead abound in the church: lighting candles and offering prayers to and for the spirit of the deceased; prayer cards; offering a mass on the deceased's behalf; observing the memorial days devoted to the saints; naming children or institutions after them, or maintaining a picture or statue of them. These are common practices in which Catholics engage to honor the dead. They all point to the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, or the belief that all Christians are united in Christ by the Holy Spirit, work for the good of each other, and that this bond transcends death.

Those on earth and those who have died mutually help one another through their love and prayer. . . Those who have died do not leave their loved ones but are even more intimately with them, giving them the uninterrupted enjoyment of their presence which they could not give them before.⁶⁷

Through prayer the living and the dead can communicate, but "those who have gone before can also pray efficaciously for the living."⁶⁸ This is the justification for the invocation of saints by the living to ask for their intercession.

The similarity between these belief systems and the practices that surround them are readily apparent. The leadership of the church in Zimbabwe recognized this fact in 1978 when it approved *kurova guva* rites “which satisfied African Catholics and attracted also non-Catholics and pagan families to request the new service for their dead. The need for *kurova guva* was being met by a new African liturgy and Christianity was taking indigenous roots in modern Africa.”⁶⁹ This, then, is a concrete example of inculturation done well, if somewhat belatedly.⁷⁰

There is sufficient symbolic common ground between African religious belief and practice, and Catholic teaching and ritual not only to warrant but to require an effective inculturation of the church in Zimbabwe (and throughout the rest of the world). The single greatest variable and obstacle to this end is the willingness on the part of the ministers of the church to do so: Dachs and Rea have shown that it has been present to a greater degree since the advent of the Second Vatican Council. Such was not the case in 1890 when the English first occupied the territory of what is now Zimbabwe, however.⁷¹

Notes

1. See Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community* (Second edition), (New York: Prentice Hall, 1999).
2. See, e.g., M.E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, (New York: Longman, 1998); Thomas Packenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, (New York: Avon Books, 1992).
3. For the best analysis, see Janice McLaughlin, *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, (Harare: Baobab Books, 1996).
4. See Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). This concept of inculturation, used by Catholic theologians, differs from the anthropological concepts of *acculturation*, which is the process of adapting to a culture that is not a person's native culture, and *enculturation*, the process of learning a culture as one's native culture.
5. Cited in Oliver Alozie Onwubiko, *Theory and Practice of Inculturation: (An African Perspective)*, (Enugu: Diocese of Ahiara, 1992), 1-2.
6. See Aylward Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988), 10-11. Onwubiko provided several examples of Jesuit usage of the term in Arrupe's speeches and letters, and in the writings of other Jesuits, including Karl Rahner, in *Theory and Practice of Inculturation*, 3-6.
7. Onwubiko, *Theory and Practice of Inculturation*, 7; Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, 10.
8. Cited in Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, 11.
9. *ibid.*, 11.
10. Most notably Robert Sullivan and R. Scott Appleby of the History department at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.
11. There is an extensive literature on religious syncretism. For excellent overviews, see K. Barber and P.F. Morães Fárias, ed., *Discourse and its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts*, (Birmingham: Centre of West African Studies, 1989), and Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant, eds., *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies*, (London and New York: Cassell Publishing, 1999).
12. Comments of John R. Hinnant, March 18, 2002.
13. The incarnation in Catholic theology refers to the belief that God became human in the person of Jesus Christ. In this context, it refers to the church continuing to bring the

message of Christ to the nations (i.e., peoples or ethnic groups) of the world in respective cultural idioms that each group will understand. See Frederick E. Chiromba, *Evangelization and Inculturation*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1989), 4.

14. Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 70.

15. See Chiromba, *Evangelization and Inculturation*; Eugene Hillman, *Towards an African Christianity*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991).

16. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 102.

17. *ibid.*, 119-21.

18. The existence of the eastern churches in communion with Rome points to the time in history when there was greater development of the local churches and, consequently, greater inculturation of the church (i.e., prior to the schism of the eleventh century). See Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), chapter 3 for a concise history of the missionary activities and stages of missiological development within the church.

19. See Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 119-120. For an interesting historical critique of Donovan and the experiences of Catholic missionaries among the Maasai, see Dorothy Hodgson, "Engendered Encounters: Men of the Church and the 'Church of Women' in Masailand. Tanzania, 1950-1993," conference paper presented at "Africans Meeting Missionaries: Rethinking Colonial Encounters," University of Minnesota, May, 2-3, 1997.

20. Hillman, *Toward an African Christianity*, 1.

21. *ibid.*, 3.

22. *ibid.*, 38. As did several subsequent declarations of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, as well as several subsequent episcopal synods.

23. *ibid.*, 41.

24. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, (2nd edition), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35-36.

25. *ibid.*, 236.

26. *ibid.*, 236.

27. *ibid.*, 237.

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28. *ibid.*, 237-38.
29. *ibid.*, 238.
30. *ibid.*, 238.
31. *ibid.*, 239.
32. *ibid.*, 239-45.
33. *ibid.*, 246.
34. *ibid.*, 239.
35. *ibid.*, 239.
36. *ibid.*, 246-47.
37. *ibid.*, 248.
38. *ibid.*, 246.
39. *ibid.*, 248.
40. *ibid.*, 254.
41. *ibid.*, 254.
42. *ibid.*, 254.
43. Michael F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 40; Michael Gelfand, *Shona Ritual*, (Wynburg: Juta & Co., 1959), 170-83.
44. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 36-40; Dominique Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora: The Marriage Practices of the Shona of Zimbabwe," *Ethnology*, vol.32, 35-37.
45. See chapter 6 below.
46. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 40; Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora," 37.
47. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 40; Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora," 38; Michael Gelfand, *African Background: The Traditional Culture of the Shona-Speaking People*, (Wynburg: Juta & Co., 1965), 82-86.
48. Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora," 38.
49. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 41.

50. *ibid.*, 46.

51. *ibid.*, 49. cf. Elizabeth A. Eldredge, "Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa c.1800-1830: The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered," *Journal of African History*, vol.33, 27-28.

52. John C. Kersten, *St. Joseph's Sunday Missal*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1986), 1452.

53. *ibid.*, 1454.

54. André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 200: "Marriage, especially in aristocratic circles, seemed to be a purely social and worldly phenomenon, whose primary goal was to ensure the preservation or extension of familial patrimonies and the continuity of lineages."

55. 1917 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1013, §1, cited in Michael Lawler, "Sacrament of Matrimony," *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 766.

56. Lawler, "Sacrament of Matrimony," 766: "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of the offspring." See 1983 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1055, §1, cited in Joseph Ratzinger et al., *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994), 4004.

57. Ratzinger et al., *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 414.

58. See Meekers. "The Noble Custom of Roora," 49-50.

59. *ibid.*, 50.

60. See Gelfand, *African Background*, 184ff. for a description of these rites.

61. Joseph Kumbirai, "Kurova Guva and Christianity," in M.F.C. Bourdillon, ed., *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), vol.2, 123.

62. See Gelfand, *African Background*, 189-91 for a more detailed discussion of the ceremony. See also Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 209-10.

63. Kumbirai, "Kurova Guva and Christianity," 123. cf. Thornton above.

64. *ibid.*, 123-24.

65. *ibid.*, 124.

66. *ibid.*, 126-27.

67. Mary Ann Fatula, "Communion of Saints," *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 188.

68. Monika Hellwig, "Saints," *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 783.

69. A.J. Dachs and W.F. Rea, *The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 226.

70. See chapter 8 below.

71. See C.J.M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996).

Chapter 2: Prelude: A Failed Mission, Contesting Colonial Rule, and Ecclesiastical Developments

The inculturation of African elements into Catholic Christianity in Zimbabwe involved a variety of actors and events. This chapter provides an overview of the Jesuits' first modern mission (1879-1889) in Southern Africa prior to the imposition of the British South Africa Company's rule in 1890; the rise of BSAC's administration, transition to settler government in 1923, and African responses to these colonial initiatives; and the development of the institutional foundations of the Catholic church in Southern Rhodesia from the 1890s to the establishment of the hierarchy in 1955.

The (Failed) Mission to the AmaNdebele, 1879-1889

The territory of modern Zimbabwe was populated primarily by two Bantu language-speaking groups, the VaShona people (or ChiShona-speakers), who entered the southern African region as early as the ninth century C.E. and established the state known as Great Zimbabwe by the thirteenth century; and the AmaNdebele people (or SiNdebele-speakers), who came to what is now western Zimbabwe during the first half of the nineteenth century in the wake of the disturbances caused by the state consolidation associated with the rise of the Zulu state.¹ Europeans first arrived in 1560, when Gonçalo da Silveira led an expedition of Jesuit missionaries from Mozambique to the court of the Munhumutapa empire in present Zimbabwe. Although Silveira baptized the ruler, the cleric was killed in 1561 as a result of court intrigues involving Muslim traders opposed to Portuguese encroachment on the lucrative trans-Indian Ocean trade.² The Great Zimbabwe state was succeeded by the Changamire and Rozvi states on the plateau between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers.³

Ngwabi Bhebe posited that AmaNdebele religion was an “amalgamation” of AmaNdebele, VaShona, BaSotho, BaTswana, and Venda religious traditions; that this “amalgamation” predated the arrival of European Christian missionaries, and that African religious leaders frequently incorporated elements of Christianity as a form of resistance against conversion to Christianity. These constantly developing religious traditions also apparently met the spiritual needs of their adherents.⁴

The rise of the Zulu state and the collapse of the Shona Rozvi state brought “people of different religious beliefs and practices” together in western Zimbabwe. In 1828, Mzilikazi broke away from the Zulu state and settled in the Transvaal region among BaSotho, BaTswana, and Venda polities. In 1837, following several military encounters with Boer trekkers from the Cape, Mzilikazi and his followers withdrew north of the Limpopo river and settled in what is now western Zimbabwe.⁵ At roughly the same time, the Rozvi state fell. The religious structures of the Mwari cult, the Rozvi religion associated with the king, remained largely intact and integrated into the AmaNdebele religious amalgam, identified with issues of national concern (e.g., rain).⁶ These structures seems to have fit the political structures and needs of the newly arrived centralized AmaNdebele state. As king Mzilikazi also functioned as chief priest. Following his death during the succession crisis of 1868 to 1870, religious leaders supported his son, Lobengula, forming the basis of his power and prestige. Any success on the part of European missionaries (who came as early as 1859) would have threatened the authority of the religious leaders, thus they combined with Lobengula “to exert their influence against the new faith.”⁷ While there has been significant debate as to the nature

and extent of the involvement of the Mwari cult's influence, particularly during the rebellion of 1896-97, it appears clear that the oracular shrine adepts of the cult did influence the activities of the AmaNdebele kings, as well as contribute to the significant opposition to the early spread of Christianity.⁸ Similarly, although there has been significant difference in perspective regarding the nature of the relations between the AmaNdebele and VaShona, it is clear that the former incorporated significant numbers of the latter into the lower (if not lowest) echelons of AmaNdebele society.⁹

According to historians A.J. Dachs and W.F. Rea, the death of David Livingstone in 1873 sparked a great interest in evangelical missionary work in Africa across Europe. Consequently, in 1874, Bishop James Ricards, the vicar apostolic of the Eastern District of the Cape Colony, began corresponding with Alfred Weld, the general assistant to the Jesuit superior general for English affairs, about the possibility of establishing a Catholic mission north of the Cape colony. The following year, several Jesuits arrived to establish a secondary school in Grahamstown, South Africa.¹⁰ Four years later, the first Jesuit missionaries went to evangelize the AmaNdebele. This first encounter between Jesuit missionaries and African in late nineteenth century pre-colonial Zimbabwe, like that of Silveira, was to be brief and have little lasting impact on Africans.

The first group of Jesuits was an international group of seven priests and four brothers from Belgium, Britain, Germany, and Italy. They left Grahamstown in April, 1879 and arrived in Lobengula's territory in September.¹¹ On September 4, the mission superior, Belgian Fr. Henri Depelchin, Fr. Augustus Law, and Br. De Sadeleer met with Lobengula and received permission to remain in his kingdom temporarily. The other

Jesuits remained at Tati, a mining station on the edge of AmaNdebele territory, where they set up an “intermediate station.” In February 1880, Fr. Charles Fuchs died of fever at Tati. This “distressed” Depelchin, but in May, seven more Jesuits arrived from the Cape, including Austrian Fr. Charles Wehl, and six Dutchmen.¹²

Thus, reinforced Depelchin began to split his forces: Law, de Sadeleer, and Br. Joseph Hedley left to accompany an embassy from Lobengula to the kraal of Umzila, a Gaza chief in what is now southern Mozambique. Depelchin, Fr. Anthony Teroerde, Br. Nigg, and three of the Dutch headed for Pandamatenga, a trading station on the edge of BaRotse territory, circa 50 miles southwest of Mosi wa Tunya (Victoria Falls). Frederick Courtney Selous advised them not to deal with the BaRotse, and so they decided to make inquiries with Mwemba, a BaTonga chief, about 100 miles downstream from Mosi wa Tunya.¹³

In August, Law and his party (minus Wehl who got lost) arrived at Umzila’s kraal. Law died of malaria in November 1880, while Brs. De Sadeleer and Hedley returned to Bulawayo. Wehl eventually arrived at Sofala on the Indian Ocean coast in May 1881 and died shortly thereafter. In Depelchin’s party, Teroerde died in September 1880, and Br. Vervenne almost died as well. Br. Nigg was sent to retrieve Depelchin and Vervenne to Pandamatenga.¹⁴

At the beginning of 1881, the superior general assigned 59 men to the Zambezi Mission. In June, Depelchin decided to try to enter BaRotse territory and spoke with Lewanika. Shortly thereafter, the Belgian returned to Mwemba. In February 1882, the superior at Tati was thrown from a horse and killed. He was replaced by Englishman

Peter Prestage. One of the newly assigned men drowned en route from the Cape, and the remaining men were distributed between Bulawayo, Pandamatenga, and Tati.¹⁵

In March 1883, Fr. Francis Berhegge (one of the Dutch who arrived in 1880) and two brothers left Pandamatenga to begin the mission among the BaRotse. One brother drowned en route and the other two members of the party, after being held captive for several weeks by Lewanika, returned in August. In April of the same year, Depelchin sent two priests and Brs. Nigg and Vervenne to Mwemba's kraal, but they had to retreat due to malarial fevers. On December 3, 1883, Alfred Weld stepped down as general assistant and had himself appointed mission superior, replacing Depelchin.¹⁶

In September 1884, Prestage was transferred from Tati to Bulawayo. By December, he received permission from Lobengula to open a school at Empandeni, which was quite distant from Bulawayo, on the fringes of the Kalahari desert. The following year two more priest died, one at Pandamatenga and the other at Bulawayo.¹⁷ Weld recalled the Jesuits in AmaNdebele territory back to South Africa in March 1886, allegedly as the mission "was to be given up."¹⁸

In October, Prestage was allowed to return to Empandeni, and the following year, Weld sent Frs. Henry Booms and Andrew Hartmann. Prestage opened a school in December 1887. Although 43 children attended the first day, attendance varied widely, ranging from four to 161. By October 1888, however, Booms wrote of the "discouraging situation" in which attendance was low and very erratic.¹⁹ In November 1889, Prestage withdrew from Empandeni and returned to the Cape due the escalating tensions surrounding the controversial Rudd concession.²⁰

While scholars agree that the mission was a failure (e.g., by 1889 when the mission was temporarily abandoned, the Jesuits had only received four converts to Christianity—none of whom were AmaNdebele), they disagree over the reasons why the Jesuits failed. Bhebe argued that “Ndebeleland [sic] was ruled by a government that was permeated through and through by a powerful traditional religion which set its face against the evangelisation of its adherents.”²¹ Similarly, Dachs and Rea contended that “traditional religion” was the primary obstacle to the Jesuits’ success.²² Anthropologist Michael Gelfand, however, believed that malaria “more than anything else contributed to the downfall of [the Jesuits’] mission.”²³ Although Gelfand notes competition between Catholic and Protestant missionaries as a contributing factor and refers to the Jesuits’ “mistakes in judgement,”²⁴ none of these scholars account for Lobengula’s political acumen or address the issue of the Jesuits’ incompetence as the ultimate causes of their failure. As Gelfand noted, the Jesuits made inadequate medical preparations for their work: eight of 22 died between 1879 and 1883. Yet in spite of extreme illness, the Jesuits carried on with their efforts to find fertile mission fields. They tried to cover too large a territory. The “mission of the upper Zambezi” included territory in the modern states of Zimbabwe, Zambia, the Congo, Mozambique, and Malawi. Consequently the first mission superior, Belgian Henri Depelchin, spread his men too thinly with little strategy apparent.

Lobengula’s experience with Protestant missionaries and European traders enabled him to develop an effective strategy that severely limited the efficacy of the Jesuits’ efforts. Firstly, he kept the Jesuits very anxious about whether or not he would

allow them to remain in his territory. There are frequent references in the Jesuits correspondence that Lobengula would only allow them to stay temporarily, or that they could stay in his territory, but would not be allowed to preach or teach. He frequently told the Jesuits that he “had had Protestant missionaries for several years and they had not converted one. His people didn’t want to learn.”²⁵ It was not until 1886 that Peter Prestage obtained permission to establish a “permanent” settlement and open a school at Empandeni.

Secondly, Lobengula kept the Jesuits at a significant physical distance from the important centers of his territory. The Jesuits established mission stations at Tati, Pandematenga, and Empandeni. Tati was a trading station c.300 miles from Bulawayo. Pandamatenga was just below Victoria Falls and c.250 miles from Bulawayo. Empandeni was on the fringes of the Kalahari desert, suffering from chronic drought, and sandy soil, and 50 miles away from Bulawayo. Although they had a station near Bulawayo, they were only allowed to settle in an area about a half mile away from Lobengula’s capital. It appears that Lobengula allowed them to remain so close because he was more interested in obtaining services from the Jesuits, and thus kept them close at hand. Jesuit correspondence indicates that the missionaries at Bulawayo painted and maintained Lobengula’s wagons, repaired several guns for him, painted several ritual dances over which Lobengula presided, and provided medical treatments for him and his people.

Most effectively, AmaNdebele religious leaders frequently accused potential converts to Christianity of being witches, which was a capital offense. This, in turn,

placed pressure on families to discourage conversion to Christianity. Consequently, early converts were generally social outcasts and either lived at the missions with the Europeans or went to South Africa.²⁶ One Jesuit missionary reports that Lobengula's subjects feared "and not without reason, that if they are instructed with the *abafundisi*, as the missionaries are called, they will come under suspicion with their inkos' (chief, king), and sooner or later be accused and convicted of witchcraft and put to death. In their opinion the chief is their visible god, he can make rain, cause draught, and do many things beyond the power of ordinary mortals."²⁷ Accordingly, the Jesuits only gained two converts: "a Hottentot" with leprosy, who lived in the Jesuits' kraal, and a "coloured man of the Cape Colony." In other words, they were foreigners.

The Jesuits' responses to this opposition indicate incompetence on the part of the mission's leadership. There also seem to be questions as to the general quality of the men assigned to the mission. Henri Depelchin spread his men far too thinly and literally wore himself down vainly searching for alternative locations for mission stations beyond Lobengula's territory. Alfred Weld, unlike Depelchin, had a vision for the mission but virtually destroyed it due to his financial mismanagement.

Weld, the general assistant for English affairs, frequently complained of Depelchin's management of the mission: Depelchin frequently left men alone at distant mission stations in areas where malaria was endemic; he failed to send accurate information to Weld (rather to his former provincial superior); and spent the vast majority of his time traveling extensively without obtaining any results.

An example of Depelchin's poor leadership occurred on the 1880 expedition to Mwemba's kraal: the African guide he hired (who didn't speak the Tonga language) was crushed under a wagon, two of the Jesuits died from malaria, and Depelchin himself came down with so severe a case of malaria that the brother who was sent to bring him back to Pandematenga didn't recognize him. Yet Depelchin said that he had "proof of the Providence that watches over us" because the African guide had converted and that they had been well received by "Moemba, king of the Batonga." The positive reception included receiving a land grant, even though the land was "too close to the river . . . [and] abounds in serpents."²⁸ In this one incident, Depelchin chose personnel that were unqualified for the work at hand, lost two missionaries, and accepted land that was unsuitable for the work of the mission, showing that Lobengula was not alone in keeping missionaries at great distances from centers of power.

Weld's assessment of Depelchin further indicates that he was not qualified to head the Zambezi mission:

I think [Depelchin] ought to be told to make no more explorations till he has got the houses he has already into a proper state for health and religious life—never again to leave one man alone, and if that place is too unhealthy for the rainy season as seems evident, at once to prepare a house in a healthier situation.

I am certain we must try no more experiments in new places till we have got our three places Gubulawayo Tati and Panda ma Tenga [sic] in proper order. It takes something very clear to make F. Depelchin take in an idea. He is full of zeal and go, and has several excellent qualities for a missionary leader, but has not a practical judgement (at least so I think) and thinks he has. His letters have grand projects for the future, but a great want of practical plans for the present.²⁹

Alfred Weld, for his part, stepped down as general assistant in 1883 and on December 3 of the same year was appointed to replace Depelchin as superior of the Zambezi Mission. Weld had a specific plan for the mission that involved establishing

Jesuit houses of formation (or training centers) for the Zambezi mission that were separate from those of other Jesuit provinces. Within Jesuit administrative structures, the world is divided into several geographic provinces, and each province recruits and trains personnel, as well as has responsibility for apostolic work within a given region. Mission territories, or areas that did not have enough human or financial resources to support a province, were either given to a specific province or came under the direct authority of Jesuit superior general. The Zambezi Mission fell into the latter category and, thus, received personnel from other Jesuit provinces. Missionaries in southern Africa came from England, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Austria, Ireland, France, Quebec, Portugal, Poland, and the Netherlands. Weld was concerned that the men that the various provinces sent were not the best men available for the mission. He was also concerned that the men in the mission see themselves as belonging to the Zambezi mission, and not as having been loaned by the provinces that sent them. Accordingly, Weld acquired the estate of Dunbrody from the Trappist monks in the Eastern Cape, and established several houses in the Cape colony and the Transvaal. While still general assistant, Weld explained his rationale in several letters. The following is one salient example:

Unless we are allowed to enroll Scholastics, the mission cannot work. On the one hand, Provincials will not give Priests after having supported them all through their studies: but they are much more willing to give Scholastics.

On the other hand, we shall never have unity in the Mission if the men are picked out and sent off after their Priesthood without any previous connection with the Mission. We have now in the higher Zambezi four Dutch men who can speak & write little or nothing but Dutch. They write to their Province but *never* to us, and we know nothing of what they are or what they are doing, and if it were a question of naming a successor to F[r]. Depelchin, I have no idea as to the fitness of one of them. All this is obviated by receiving Scholastics.³⁰

Although Weld had a well-intended plan to reorganize and consolidate the mission, his execution of the plan failed miserably. In addition to acquiring Dunbrody Weld opened several houses in the eastern Cape and the Transvaal, including a novitiate in Graaf-Reinet. In addition to incurring the expenses of transporting and supplying as many as 93 men, the Mission had to pay extensively to renovate the physical infrastructure at Dunbrody.

Weld intended for Dunbrody to be the heart of the mission, and as such its farm had to be self-sufficient, as well as generate enough income to support the other stations in the Mission. Unfortunately Weld invested significant financial resources in a scheme to raise ostriches and sell their feathers to the designers of women's fashions. Within 18 months of Weld's having been appointed superior the Zambezi Mission incurred net debts in excess of £2,600. Consequently, Weld was removed as mission superior in 1887 and reassigned as novice master until his death in 1890.

While it is possible to question the causes of Weld's financial ineptitude, the source of his plan seems fairly certain. From 1607 to 1768, Jesuits established *reducciones*, or independent agricultural cooperatives, among Guarani Indians in Paraguay using methods of evangelization that were sensitive to Guarani culture.³¹ Weld apparently had a romanticized notion of the *reducciones* in mind when he established the Zambezi mission in 1879 and had dreams of recreating a version of them when he became mission superior in 1883. In several letters he specifically referred to the examples of the *reducciones* and the work of Jesuits in North America as models to be imitated. Additionally, in several letters, he referred to establishing "reductions" for

Africans in the houses that he opened in South Africa. Unfortunately his grandiose vision and financial incompetence almost destroyed the mission.

Historians A. J. Dachs and W. F. Rea regarded the failure of the mission to Lewanika and the BaRotse in 1883 as “the end of the hopeful plans of 1878 and 1879,” and Weld’s appointment as mission superior as the beginning of “quite a new policy” involving “giving up the Zambezi mission in all but name and concentrating on the Eastern District of the Cape Colony, where conditions were much more promising.”³² While Weld did devote considerable financial and human resources to developing Jesuit apostolic works in the Cape, Dachs and Rea’s assessment seems somewhat shortsighted. Weld kept men in the field while trying to consolidate the mission and improve the quality of relations between mission personnel. Depelchin had spread the men too thinly, and Weld was concerned that the Zambezi Mission, which was directly under the Superior General and therefore reliant on other Jesuit provinces for men, was not getting men of quality. He wanted the Mission’s own novitiate and scholasticate to develop men who were devoted to the Mission, who were of good quality, whom he knew and whose talents and capacities he could assess, and thus place them where they would best be suited. In short, he exhibited the classical characteristics of a Jesuit superior.

Dachs and Rea further argued that the missionaries were predestined to fail because

Traditional religion so ran through the whole of African life. . .[that] the teaching of a few missionaries could effect [little] change. . . .The whole martial Ndebele way of life led them to reject Christianity, but that in a sense was accidental. Other African peoples were no less resistant. No change was possible until some event broke the solidarity of African society, and that only came about when it came into large-scale contact with the West. With the loss of old certainties, the lessening of tribal and family solidarity, and the

greater movement of population, individual choice became possible and missionary effort had some prospect of success. But in Zimbabwe this did not happen before 1890.³³

While in hindsight this may have been the case, their analysis is problematic because it seems to accept unquestioningly nineteenth century rhetoric and ideology concerning the degenerate nature of African societies. They did not retrospectively consider the evangelical model of the Paraguayan *reducciones*, nor the efforts of Jesuits such as Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci, in Japan and China respectively, to adapt the Catholic church to the local culture. They further dismissed Depelchin's scattering his men, arguing that "[i]t would not have profited him to have concentrated his men in any one of these places."³⁴ Why not? If he had concentrated his men in one or two places they could have eventually developed enough of a relationship with local leaders and people to begin evangelizing as Peter Prestage had done at Empandeni from 1887 to 1889. Had this been the case, then historians would have a far easier time assessing Bhebe's assertions concerning the relative strength of African religion in the face of encroaching European Christianity.

Establishing and Contesting Colonial Rule

Jesuit priests served as chaplains in 1890 and 1893 when British settlers, sponsored and financed by Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company (BSAC), invaded and conquered both Mashonaland and Matabeleland respectively. The colonizers seized the land and cattle of the local inhabitants and, with permission from the imperial government, established the company-controlled colony of Rhodesia in 1890. Jesuit superiors in South Africa received extensive land grants to establish permanent mission stations in and around Salisbury and Bulawayo.³⁵

Hoping to find a “second rand” akin to the large diamond and gold deposits in the former Boer republics in South Africa, BSAC and British settlers set about establishing large scale mining and commercial farming operations on the lands that they confiscated from the African inhabitants. As in South Africa, the financial success of both systems depended on the exploitation of cheap African migrant labor. Charles van Onselen studied the rise and consolidation of the Rhodesian mining industry and its reliance on forced African labor, and contended that the industry did not grow from expanded production, rather on the constant diminution of African wages. David Johnson showed that coerced African labor was a constant feature in the Southern Rhodesian economy beyond the 1920s and the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (1903-33), into the 1940s with the passage of the Compulsory Native Labour Act of 1942 which garnered circa 11,400 forced African laborers per year through August 1946, and which was succeeded in the same year by the Rhodesian Native Labour Supply Commission which functioned into 1970s. Robin Palmer analyzed the processes by which European settlers dispossessed Africans from their lands during the early part of the colonial period. According to Palmer, the 1931 Land Apportionment Act was the culmination of the Rhodesian settlers’ efforts to enforce racially segregated land tenure, to deny African agriculturalists the right to purchase land beyond the African reserves, and to prevent competition to settler farmers from African agriculture. Palmer’s description of the Act as the White Rhodesians’ “Magna Carta” is apt, as the patterns it established remained in effect with no significant change—save for Africans losing more territory in the wake of the 1965 Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence, specifically with the passage of the

1968 Land Tenure Act—for the remainder of the colonial period, and continue to be the dominant patterns of land tenure two and a half decades after Zimbabwean political independence. Taken together, these studies highlight processes by which European settlers established and maintained social control over Africans during the colonial period.³⁶

In 1896, both the VaShona and the AmaNdebele rebelled against British rule. Indigenous African religious leaders played a significant role in planning, organizing, and coordinating armed resistance against BSAC and its settlers. Before the rebellion, called *chimurenga* in ChiShona, was suppressed the following year, it had drastically impeded, and in many cases destroyed, the missionary efforts of the Christian churches in colonial Zimbabwe. As soon as the AmaNdebele had negotiated a settlement with the company, the company in turn forcibly subdued the VaShona, whereupon European and American missionaries began aggressive evangelization campaigns. By the 1970s there were approximately 1.4 million Christians in Zimbabwe, including Catholics, Protestants, and adherents of African independent churches.³⁷

The Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902 reconfigured Southern Africa politically and geographically with the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. European settlers in Zimbabwe declined to join the Union of South Africa, opting instead to become the British crown colony of Southern Rhodesia in 1923. Northern Rhodesia (today Zambia), which had a much smaller European population, in contrast was transferred to the British colonial office as a protectorate in 1924. Settlers in Southern Rhodesia convinced the British colonial office to establish the Federation of Rhodesia

and Nyasaland (today Malawi) in 1953, which included the colonies of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. But increasing African demands for participation in government led the colonial office to dissolve the Federation in 1963, and Zambia and Malawi became independent the following year.³⁸

Amid growing African nationalism and increasing pressure from London to allow Africans to participate in the colonial government, Rhodesian settlers (led by Prime Minister Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front party) seeking to maintain white supremacy unilaterally declared independence in 1965. But the result was that Rhodesia became a pariah state denied official recognition by other countries and subject to international economic sanctions. The following year, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) began the second *chimurenga* in rebellion against the new Rhodesian state at Sinoia (Chinhoyi), northwest of Salisbury (Harare), the capital. The war raged until 1979, and on 18 April 1980, Rhodesia became the Republic of Zimbabwe with a government chosen by the African majority.³⁹

***The Institutional Development of the Catholic church
in Southern Rhodesia: Fissures and Fault Lines***

As a result of Weld's failed financial ventures and the settling of the dispute over the border between Portuguese Mozambique and British Southern Rhodesia in 1891, the Jesuit superior general removed the Zambezi Mission from his direct oversight: the missions in the territory of Portuguese Mozambique became the mission of the Lower Zambezi and was assigned to the responsibility of the Jesuit Portuguese province. The remaining territory from the Eastern Cape in South Africa to Northern Rhodesia was assigned to the Jesuit British province. Evidently, the debts that Weld incurred were

assumed by the British province, as financial records in Lisbon indicate positive accounting balances with no payments for debt reduction from 1893 until the Jesuits were ordered expelled by the Portuguese republic in 1911.⁴⁰

Whereas the Zambezi mission while it was directly under the superior general had a culturally heterogeneous, international staff, the mission stations in colonial Zimbabwe were staffed primarily by German and British Jesuits.⁴¹ According to Dachs and Rea's model of the "dual mission,"⁴² the Germans generally worked among the Africans (predominantly rural) and the British worked among the White settler population, particularly in the towns.

There was no shortage of tensions between the British and German Jesuits: competing nationalist sentiments more than likely played into their relations.⁴³ Similarly, by the beginning of the twenty first century, all the German Jesuits who have served in Zimbabwe have volunteered to do so, whereas most of the British Jesuits were assigned to the Zambezi mission.⁴⁴

As early as 1894, the English prefect of the mission complained that the German brothers ought to spend more time speaking English. Successive mission prefects made similar complaints into the 1930s, as well as exhorted the German brothers to learn English so as to be able to "give simple orders in English" to the Africans whose industrial training they supervised. (There were concerns that Africans weren't properly trained in English and were having difficulty finding jobs.) Correspondence from Chishawasha indicates that several German Jesuits had recommended staffing the mission station entirely with their countrymen, and that several German Jesuit brothers

were “all unhappy” while English Jesuit Charles Bert was superior. The situation evidently continued for several years from 1905 to 1908 and Prefect Apostolic Ingatius Gartlan eventually removed Bert and replaced him with Francis Richartz, despite serious concerns about the effects the job would have on Richartz’s health.⁴⁵

In 1958, Archbishop of Salisbury Francis Markall entrusted the northern missions of the archdiocese to the Jesuit East German province.⁴⁶ In 1974, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (formerly Proaganda Fide) erected this territory into the prefecture apostolic of Sinoia, with Fr. Helmut Reckter, S.J. as the first prefect.⁴⁷ In the early 1970s, Pedro Arrupe, the Jesuit superior general, announced his intention to establish Southern Rhodesia as a separate independent province within the order (i.e., the north would no longer be dependent on the East German province and the Jesuits in the southern parts of the archdiocese would no longer be dependent on the British province), and asked the members of both missions how much time they would need to effect the integration into a single province.⁴⁸ The overwhelming response on all sides was to request at least five years. Arrupe gave them 18 months.⁴⁹ The first German provincial was only appointed in 1996. Tensions between German and British Jesuits continue in the twenty first century.⁵⁰

In 1879, the first Jesuit missionaries left the eastern Cape to begin the mission to the AmaNdebele. In the same year, German Trappist monks arrived in the eastern Cape at the request of Bishop Richards to work among the primarily IsiXhosa-speaking African population.⁵¹ In 1896, the Trappists’ abbot, Franz Pfanner requested and received permission from the Jesuit Prefect of the Zambezi Mission, Henry Schomberg Kerr, to

establish a mission station in Southern Rhodesia. The four monks (one priest and three brothers) who arrived to establish St. Triashill mission near Old Umtali in the eastern highlands left only several weeks later due to the rebellion of the ChiManyika-speaking VaShona population in the area. None of the missionaries were killed or died of malaria.⁵²

The Trappists returned to Southern Rhodesia in 1902, founding the mission station of Monte Cassino at Macheke, about 60 miles southeast of Salisbury. In 1908, the reoccupied Triashill. These monks were the first Catholic missionaries to establish outschools as centers for evangelization, a method that the Jesuits would later adopt while Francis Richartz was superior at Chishawasha. In 1909, as a result of conflicts with their monastic superiors in Rome, the Trappists in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia voted to separate and form a new religious order dedicated to the apostolate of evangelizing Africans. The new religious institute was called the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries, named for their headquarters in Natal, South Africa.⁵³ The following year, the Sisters of the Precious Blood, also founded by Pfanner, arrived at the Mariannhill missions in Southern Rhodesia to work particularly with African women, and as school teachers.⁵⁴

Even Dachs and Rea admitted that Monte Cassino and Triashill were among the most successful Catholic mission stations in the colony: by 1917, when the German missionaries were interned in South Africa during World War I, Monte Cassino had registered over 150 baptisms at the central station, and had established 12 outschools that had over 900 children enrolled, most of whom had received baptism into the church.

Triashill, from 1908 to 1914 registered 1,600 baptisms and over 100 Christian marriages. Of the 12 outstations its missionaries and lay African catechists had established, two—St. Barbara and St. Benedict—became stations in their own right.⁵⁵

The expulsion of the fathers and brothers in 1917 was a major setback to Mariannhill's mission work. They were allowed to return in 1920. Within a year, Fr. Adalbero Fleischer had received permission to open a boarding school at Monte Cassino that enrolled over 200 students, and evangelization work resumed at all 12 outstations. Similar progress was made at Triashill: by 1922, it had 20 outstations and over 2,700 baptized Catholics.⁵⁶

The Mariannhillers came into conflict with the Jesuits who supervised the work of the Zambezi mission, over the translation of the name of God in various publications, the establishment of religious orders for African women, and teaching African boys Latin with a view to preparing them for seminary education.⁵⁷ As early as 1924, Fleischer apparently requested that the mission stations in the east be separated from the Zambezi mission and entrusted to Mariannhill. Robert Brown, the Jesuit prefect, suggested that as the four Mariannhill missions were relatively easily accessible from Salisbury, that they be given to the Jesuits and in exchange the Mariannhillers would receive the Jesuit missions among the AmaNdebele at Empanjeni, Embakwe, and Bulawayo. Ultimately, Rome sided with the Jesuits, who in 1929 took possession of the Mariannhill mission stations at Monte Cassino, Triashill, St. Barbara, and St. Benedict. The Mariannhillers, for their part, withdrew entirely from Southern Rhodesia, and only took possession of the former Jesuit missions at Empanjeni, Embakwe, and Bulawayo the following year. In

1931, Propaganda Fide erected Salisbury as a vicariate apostolic, with Aston Chichester, S.J. as titular bishop. At the same time Matabeleland was established as a separate mission entrusted to Mariannhill. The following year, Bulawayo became the see for a new prefecture apostolic.⁵⁸

In 1937, Chichester invited members of the Swiss Foreign Mission Society of Bethlehem to staff the mission stations in the southern part of the Salisbury vicariate. By 1939, there were eight Bethlehem priests and four brothers working in Southern Rhodesia. In 1947, Propaganda Fide appointed Fr. Aloysius Haene, SMB as prefect apostolic of Fort Victoria (Masvingo), which had been entrusted to the Bethlehem missionaries. Three years later it was elevated to a vicariate apostolic, and in 1955, when the hierarchy was established, Haene became the first bishop of Gwelo.⁵⁹ Similar developments occurred in the eastern part of the Salisbury vicariate, beginning in 1946 when Irish Carmelites accepted an invitation from Chichester. In 1950, Propaganda Fide appointed Fr. Donal Lamont prefect apostolic of Umtali (Mutare), and its first bishop in 1957.⁶⁰

Although the foregoing is only a brief sketch of the establishment of the institutional foundations of the Catholic church in Southern Rhodesia, it is possible to see the outline of many fault lines come into relief: tensions among Africans: VaShona and AmaNdebele, Christian and “pagan;” tensions among Europeans: British, German, Swiss, and Irish; Jesuit and Mariannhill; tensions between Africans and Europeans: converts and missionaries; women and men; settlers and chiefs. Negotiating these fault lines would prove no mean feat, particularly for those Africans who sought admission into positions

of authority and influence within the Catholic church. As will be seen in the following chapters, small groups of soft-spoken yet resolute groups of African women seeking to become nuns, and boldly vocal young men seeking to become priests, and lay people seeking better lives for themselves and their fellows within and outside the church would radically realign the fault lines throughout the course of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. See David N. Beach, *The Shona and their Neighbours*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994); idem, *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1994); S.I.G. Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa, c.1400-1902*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988); T.O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967); Elizabeth A. Eldredge, "Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa, c.1800-1830: The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered," *Journal of African History*, 33/1 (1992), 1-35; Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815-1854*, (London and New York: Pearson Education Ltd., 2001).
2. See António da Silva, *Mentalidade Missiológica dos Jesuitas em Moçambique antes de 1759*, (Lisbon: 1967).
3. cf. Works by Beach and Mudenge in particular.
4. Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923* (London: Longman, 1979), xii.
5. *ibid.*, 1-2; see also T.O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press); David N. Beach, *The Shona and their Neighbours* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1994).
6. Bhebe, *Religion in Western Zimbabwe*, 3-4, 19-20; see also Ranger and Beach.
7. *ibid.*, 65-66.
8. For an excellent summary of the debate see Herbert Chimhundu, "Early Missionaries and the Ethnolinguistic Factor during the 'Invention of Tribalism' in Zimbabwe," *Journal of African History*, 33/1 (1992), 87-109. See also Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, David N. Beach, "Ndebele Raiders and Shona Power," *Journal of African History*, 15 (1974), 633-51; Julian Cobbing, "The Absent Priesthood: Another Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896-1897," *Journal of African History*, 18/1 (1977), 69-85.
9. cf., e.g., Ngwabi Bhebe, "Some Aspects of Ndebele Relations with the Shona in the Nineteenth Century," *Rhodesian History*, 4 (1973), 31-38, and idem, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe*, with Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People: Zimbabwe Before and After Rhodes*, (London: Heinemann, 1972), 58-72.
10. A.J. Dachs and W. F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 16; see also William Eric Brown, *The Catholic Church in South Africa: From its Origins to the Present Day*, (London: Burns & Oates, 1960), 101-2.
11. The following is taken primarily from Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 16-29. See also the introductions to Michael Gelfand, ed., *Gubulawayo and*

Beyond: Letters and Journals of the Early Jesuit Missionaries to Zambesia (1879-1887), (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), and Moira Lloyd, Trans., *Journey to Gubulawayo: Letters from Frs. H. Depelchin and C. Croonenberghs, S.J., 1879-1881*, (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1979).

12. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 19.

13. *ibid.*, 22-23.

14. *ibid.*

15. *ibid.*, 23-24.

16. *ibid.*, 24-25.

17. *ibid.*, 25-26.

18. *ibid.*, 27.

19. *ibid.*

20. *ibid.*, 27-28.

21. *ibid.*, 60.

22. A. J. Dachs and W. F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 25.

23. Michael Gelfand, ed. *Gubulawayo and Beyond: Letters and Journals of the Early Jesuit Missionaries to Zambesia (1879-1887)*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 22.

24. *ibid.*, 19-21.

25. Archivum Britannicum Societatis Iessu, London, (ABSI hereafter), Zambezi Mission Papers (ZMP hereafter), Weld letter, November 19, 1879.

26. Bhebe, *Religion in Western Zimbabwe*, 61-63.

27. *Letters and Notices* (L&N hereafter), July 1882. 150-51, de Wit to Weld, January 16, 1882.

28. L&N, January, 1882, 2-3, Depelchin to Beckx, October 5, 1880

29. ABSI, W/11, Weld letter January 6, 1882.

30. ABSI, W/11, Weld letter July 6, 1882.

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31. See William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986); Philip Caraman, *The Lost Paradise: An Account of the Jesuits in Paraguay, 1607-1768* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1975).
32. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 24.
33. *ibid.*, 25.
34. *ibid.*, 25
35. *ibid.* See also Gelfand *Gubulawayo and Beyond*.
36. See Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933*, (London: Pluto Press, 1976); Robin Palmer, *Aspects of Rhodesian Land Policy, 1890-1936*, (Salisbury: Central African Historical Association, 1968); *idem*, "War and Land in Rhodesia in the 1890s," in Bethwell A. Ogot, ed., *War and Society in Africa*, (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 1972), 85-107; *idem*, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); David Johnson, "Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1936-1946," *Journal of African History*, 33/1 (1992), 111-128; Terence Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930*, (London: Heinemann Educational, 1970); *idem*, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, (London: J. Currey; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
37. See Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia and Peasant Consciousness in Zimbabwe*; C.J.M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996); Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995).
38. J.D. Omer-Cooper, "Central Africa, c.1900-1953," and "Central Africa since 1953," in A.D. Afigbo et al., ed., *The Making of Modern Africa*, (Essex: , 1986), vol.2, 233-93.
39. Janice McLaughlin, *On the Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, (Harare: Baobab Books, 1996).
40. AN/TT data.
41. Several German Jesuits had completed their religious formation in England during the 1870s and 1880s as a result of Bismark's *kultutkampf*. Similarly, the (Catholic) German Foreign Mission Society, or Society of the Divine Word (or SVD Fathers and Brothers), founded in 1870, were headquartered in Steyl, Holland, until the superior general moved to Rome.
42. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 3-4.

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43. See M.E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, (New York: Longman, 1998); Thomas Packenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, (New York: Avon Books, 1992).
44. Conversation with Fr. Karl-Ferdinand Schmidt, S.J., JAZ, July 28, 2000.
45. JAZ, Box 109.
46. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 172-74.
47. *ibid.* In 1986, Chinoyi (formerly Sinoia) became a diocese and Recker continued to serve as bishop until his death in early 2004.
48. Conversation with Fr. Clement Freyer, S.J., St. Ignatius High School, Chishawasha, May 24, 2000.
49. *ibid.*
50. Based on several conversations with British and German Jesuits about a variety of issues, including potential candidates to succeed Fr. Conrad Lansberg, S.J. as provincial in 2002.
51. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 64.
52. *ibid.*, 65-66.
53. *ibid.*, 65.
54. *ibid.*, 70-71.
55. *ibid.*, 68-71.
56. *ibid.*, 73-74.
57. See chapters 4, 5, and 8 below.
58. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 74-77.
59. *ibid.*, 143-47.
60. *ibid.*, 181-82.

Chapter 3: Spiritual Base, Material Superstructure: A Spiritual Economy of Chishawasha Mission

In order to understand the “political economy” of the missions it is necessary to invert the classical Marxist concept of material base and social/ideological superstructure. Rather, it is more appropriate to discuss the *spiritual base* and the *material superstructure* of the Christian missions. The primary mission of all Christians, and in this specific case of the members of the Society of Jesus in Southern Africa, was to evangelize, that is, to preach the gospel message of Jesus Christ (or at least the Catholic interpretation thereof) to those who had not heard it before, and through baptism (the visible sign of incorporation into the community of Christian believers) help these neophytes to obtain the salvation of their eternal souls (that is, to be united forever with Christ in Heaven after death on earth).¹ With this spiritual foundation, the specific forms that Christian communities developed largely become the function of the interaction of missionary strategies and African world views at the ideological level, and the attempts to implement those strategies and African responses to them at the material level.

The Impact of European Colonialism on African Political Economy

Prior to the colonial occupation in 1890, VaShona practiced a mixed economy of settled agriculture and raising livestock. As Elizabeth Schmidt noted, “the peasant option,” or the ability of African families and social groups to maintain themselves without sending men to work as wage laborers for Europeans, was largely founded on the labor of African women.

People were a vital resource. The wider a man’s circle of dependents—wives, children, clients, and junior kin—the greater the protection he had against economic calamity and political strife. The more labor he controlled, the more wealth he generated, and the more wives, children,

and other dependents he could afford to support. . . .A large proportion of the agricultural work, supplemented by other productive and reproductive tasks, had historically fallen within women's domain. The opening of new markets and the imposition of taxes following European occupation served as an impetus to increased peasantization, and the burden of augmented agricultural labor fell heavily on women's shoulders. Resisting state attempts to enforce male proletarianization, peasant households, with female producers at the fore, devised new strategies for meeting urgent cash needs. . . .Intensified female labor in agricultural production and women's initiatives in the sale of beer, grain, and vegetables forced European capital to look elsewhere for a male labor force.²

Members of the Pioneer column who occupied VaShona territories for BSAC and those settlers who fought in the 1893 war against the AmaNdebele state were each granted 6000 acres from the company. By the turn of the century, settlers and commercial concessionaires had expropriated over 15 million acres of land, and the African population of the colony had been forced into "Native Reserves." In 1920, the African reserves were reduced by one million acres, and much of the best arable land in the colony was restricted for European use. The 1930 Land Apportionment Act designated approximately 49 million acres of land (c.42 percent), including all urban areas, for Europeans and approximately 29 million acres for the African reserves. It set aside a further eight million acres for purchase by individual African farmers. In 1930, there were approximately 50,000 Europeans in Southern Rhodesia versus an African population of about 1.1 million.³

Further, legislation enacted by BSAC and—from 1923—the settler government, greatly inhibited Africans' ability to exercise the peasant option. In 1893, the company imposed a Hut tax of ten shilling per hut annually.⁴ In 1901, the Hut tax was replaced by a tax on all African males 18 years or older, plus an additional ten shillings for every wife

beyond the first. In 1904, the annual tax doubled from ten shillings to £1 and the “age of taxability” was lowered to 14.⁵

As Schmidt convincingly argued, “[the] production of an agricultural surplus was the main bulwark against the breakdown of the social fabric through the out-migration of African men. The primary producers of this surplus were African women.”⁶ Consequently, “the Southern Rhodesian mining industry, later joined by settler farmers, was intent upon destroying the peasant economy, making available large and constant supplies of cheap male labor. Farmers were doubly anxious to stem competition of African peasants who challenged their position in the marketplace.”⁷ Thus, the colonial state “imposed a series of measures designed to promote European agriculture at the expense of African” agricultural production.⁸ Among others, these included:

- “Kaffir” beer laws of 1909, 1911, and 1915 that progressively outlawed the sale of peasant beer in mining compounds and urban locations.⁹
- A 1912 land bank that made loans of up to £2000 “for the purchase of farms, livestock, and agricultural equipment, as well as for farm improvements such as irrigation and fencing.” The bank further subsidized inputs such as “[fertilizers], seeds, and stock” These services were available only to Europeans.¹⁰
- The 1931 Maize Control Act, “which established a state-run board to parcel out shares of the domestic and international maize markets to African and European producers. . . . Besides skewing the market in favor of European farmers, the law forced Africans to sell their maize directly to the Maize Control Board or to European traders, who would in turn sell the maize to the government board. The

regulations were amended in 1932 to permit European farmers who did not grow their own maize to purchase maize for the consumption of their labor force directly from their African neighbors at a cut rate, rather than purchasing more expensive maize from the Maize Control Board. However, African producers could not sell their maize directly to mine owners and urban dwellers for the best price the market would bear.” The 1934 version of the act allocated 20 percent of domestic market to African producers and assured Europeans 80 percent. From 1934 to 1939, Africans received from 1s 6d to 6s 6d per bag of maize versus more than 8s per bag for European maize.¹¹

- The Cattle Levy Act of 1931 (and amended in 1934) that “subsidized the export of European-produced cattle and beef,” and financed “the enterprise from dipping fees paid by African cattle owners, as well as a slaughter levy.” Butchers who slaughtered more than five head of cattle for local consumption had to pay the levy, and in 1935, it was raised from 2s 6d to 10s per head. “In practice, these cattle were predominantly African-produced, and the burden of the levy was passed on to African peasants through the low prices butchers were willing to pay them.”¹²
- The 1936 Natives Registration Act that “prohibited Africans from trading in the European areas of Salisbury. While the sale of curios, baskets, and other craft items desired by Europeans could still occur within the town limits, vegetables, chickens, eggs, butter, and other foodstuffs could only be sold in the African locations.”¹³

Clearly, African “peasants” not only suffered the expropriation of their land and livestock by European invaders, but they also chafed under state-sponsored legalized economic competitive disadvantage that assuredly benefited the White settler minority. As David Johnson has shown, the practice of legislating European economic advantage continued into the 1970s.¹⁴

Jesuit Mission Strategies and Ownership of the Mission Lands

With regard to mission strategy, Dachs and Rea describe what one resident of Kutama mission referred to as “the enclosure”¹⁵ model in their discussion of the beginnings of Chishawasha mission. Jesuits Andrew Hartmann and Peter Prestage arrived with the Pioneers and Dominican sisters in 1890-91.

As soon as they were fairly securely settled in Mashonaland the two missionaries [Hartmann and Prestage] had to decide on the best way of influencing the Africans and of supporting themselves. The two matters were connected, for the only way to support themselves was to have land to cultivate since the expense of importing necessities from the south had already been shown to be prohibitive during the mission of 1879. Moreover this accorded with African missionary theory [sic]. *Once they had begun to improve the land and so develop its resources, Africans would be attracted. In the course of time some would be instructed and would be baptized. Christian, it was hoped, would marry Christian, and so, cut off from the danger of lapsing, a Christian society would be built up.* It was a course of action that Prestage had outlined to Schomberg Kerr, now the Zambesi Mission Superior, even before he entered Mashonaland. He now proceeded to follow it, and it came to be regarded as the chief means of Catholic evangelization for the next forty years.¹⁶

While the enclosure model was most likely the vision Alfred Weld, the founder of the Zambezi mission, had in mind when he sent the first Jesuit missionaries to South Africa in 1878, and certainly was implemented at Kutama mission under French Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Loubière from 1914 to 1930, it most definitely was not the model adopted and implemented at Chishawasha mission. At Chishawasha, there was no Christian village in

which converts to the Catholic Christian faith were segregated from adherents of VaShona religious faith. Rather, African Christians lived among them as leaven in dough with the hope that their new way of life would spread and influence all aspects of African culture on the mission farm. Evidence from the Chishawasha *Historia Domus* clearly indicates that despite the Jesuits' best efforts, Western Christianity cohabited with VaShona religion, which speaks to the issues of African reception of the message that Western missionaries preached, and Africans' selective incorporation of the Christian message into their cultural and symbolic corpora.¹⁷

Chishawasha was in many ways the archetypal Jesuit mission station. With the exception of the mission stations that the Mariannhill missionaries established (which were subsequently confiscated by the Jesuits), all the Jesuit mission stations among VaShona grew out of Chishawasha. Many of the patterns of development, relationships between and among African Christians and Jesuit missionaries, between and among African men and women, and between mission personnel and colonial government representatives that occurred at Chishawasha obtained at other Jesuit missions as well. Thus, African women from Jesuit missions who wanted to become nuns initially went to Monte Cassino mission (a Mariannhill mission until 1930) to join the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi, and later to Makumbi mission to join the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady. African men who wanted to study for the priesthood went first to the teacher training school at Kutama mission before entering the Seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More at Chishawasha. Chapters of the lay Catholic African Association spread from Chishawasha mission in 1934 to all the Jesuit missions throughout central, eastern,

and southern Mashonaland before Bishop Chichester invited other orders to take responsibility for those areas that would become separate dioceses beginning in 1955. Similarly, VaShona Christians at all Jesuit missions had to confront Rhodesian marriage legislation and the dictates of Catholic canon law, as well as determine whether to pray to Mwari (and/or) Yave, and whether or not to honor their ancestors in *kurova guva*. Although the specific developments at specific Jesuit missions throughout Southern Rhodesia may have differed from developments at Chishawasha, Chishawasha is presented here as a specific case study from which to draw general patterns of interactions between African Christians and Jesuit missionaries.

Dachs and Rea highlight a number of Chishawasha's features in their description of the "central institution" of the mission farm:

Mission farms provided the core of early missionary enterprise in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere. . . .The ownership of church land would provide sustenance and a base from which to travel to African villages nearby and later into African Reserve Land. For this reason mission farms were purchased as close as possible to populated African land. They would provide also land upon which adherents could settle or work, and shelter could be given to the Christian refugees from traditional [sic] African society. Communities of Christians could be collected and safeguarded on the mission property.

More than that, mission farms served as supply centres for the Reserve missions and outschools. Crops would be grown and herds pastured to raise grain and revenue for other stations so that the mission farms supported and sustained a network of effort beyond their own immediate boundaries. Moreover on the mission farms schooling and industrial training would be undertaken on a scale impossible elsewhere and with a security that belonged with tenure of land. An example in agricultural and industrial technology would be set which it was hoped the African peasantry would imitate and adopt. Farm missions with their expertise, their store, their school and their hospital came gradually to provide urban conditions as well as centres of western influence. . .

The Church as a community and as a people was to be gathered from the security and material base of the mission farm and was also to gather on the farm. There the main church building was to be raised, there the most advanced schooling carried on, there the leading medical facilities. The mission farm became the central mission station and the core of the Rhodesian rural missionary effort.¹⁸

With regard to ownership of the land of the mission farm at Chishawasha, Dachs and Rea claimed that the Jesuits obtained Chishawasha farm territory from BSAC, and that by September, 1891 Andrew Hartmann had marked and built a hut “as a sign of effective occupation.”¹⁹ German Jesuits led by Francis Richartz arrived with Henry Schomberg Kerr, the Zambezi Mission prefect apostolic, and established Chishawasha mission on July 31, 1892. Dachs and Rea then went to great lengths to show the land was empty and that the Jesuits established and maintained good relations with local Africans.²⁰ Early entries in the Chishawasha house diary acknowledge positive relations with various VaShona *ishe*, and that the Jesuits provided haven for Africans seeking refuge from European settlers. But there is also an implicit acknowledgment that the Jesuits were living on land that belonged to Africans, their title from the BSAC notwithstanding:

October 12, 13, 1892: Fr. Harmann also went off in search of good grass and timber. At Quasicheo Osico [sic: Usiku] he made friends with the chief [sic: ishe] and the people, who are harrassed by the Europeans and want to come to Chishawasha.

November 14, 1892: . . . Chinamora, the Chief of the Shawashi, *in whose land we live*, came to visit us and assure us of his friendship, which was signified by little gifts on both sides.²¹

Similarly, the house diary indicates that the Jesuits didn’t necessarily establish their station near African populations as much as Africans chose to live in proximity to the missionaries:

Chief Chinamora apologised for the forwardness of his people, and asked leave to build a hut near us. . . . Osico, Marranjanka, [and] Garunti came to choose suitable sites for their gardens. The matter will be settled on the 20th.²²

Lawrence Vambe captured and presented African perspectives regarding land ownership and the nature of the missionary enterprise at Chishawasha in his classic oral history, *An Ill-Fated People*:

The African victims of this expropriation were pressed and squeezed into pockets of land which the white man had not found convenient to confiscate. . . . [The people of Chishawasha, or VaShawasha], living so near the centre of white power—Fort Salisbury— were among the first Africans in the country to feel the impact of this land-grabbing process. Within a very short space of time, they saw their once extensive piece of country shrink to a tiny remnant of its original size. In fact, in the end they had no land at all. Because of its natural beauty, the fertility of the soil, its possible mineral deposits and because of the suspected bellicosity of the VaShawasha, the best part of Chishawasha was given to Father Hartmann. He was a Jesuit priest who had acted as Chaplain to the Roman Catholic members of the Pioneer Column. . . . Father Hartmann, as far as I know, received this piece of land as a reward for his services to the Pioneer Column and took the title to it in the name of the Society of Jesus to which he belonged. In this way, the once proud, independent VaShawasha were handed over to the spiritual, and in a sense to the physical possession of the Jesuits. Father Hartmann established a mission station which he called St. Ignatius of Loyola Mission, after the gallant founder of the Society. But the more popular name became, appropriately enough, the Chishawasha Mission. And henceforth it was to teach Christianity and the other mysteries of Western civilization to a people who, to European eyes, looked very much in need of salvation from the physical and spiritual barbarism of their way of life. I suppose Father Hartmann and the other good Fathers of the Society must have felt that the wrong of their participation in sharing the land of the conquered Africans was more than counterbalanced by the blessing of Christianity that they were bringing to the Africans. However, whether they thought about it or not it made little difference to the VaShawasha who, from the moment their territory was expropriated, became a landless people and were to live on what was previously their property entirely at the pleasure of the white missionary landlords.²³

In short, it would appear that the opinion of the residents of Chishawasha regarding the Jesuits' title to the mission's land was that the spiritual scions of Saint Ignatius were guilty of theft just as were the other members of the Pioneer column. Further, Vambe provided evidence of African perspective or preference taking precedence over that of the missionaries in the mission being called "the Chishawasha Mission" as opposed to "the Saint Ignatius Loyola Mission" in every day experience.

Despite the apparent difference in perspective, however, it appears that the Jesuits at Chishawasha did acquire land on VaShawasha's behalf. In 1902, Francis Richartz, the superior of the mission station, purchased territory that came to be known as Manresa farm.

The reason why I applied for this plot of ground was the fact that a kraal (Chijga Osiko [sic]) having shifted to our farm from a part of the adjacent Native Reserve, the lands, where that kraal was situated before, were not allowed any more to herd their cattle on the former ground, or were not allowed to pass over our boundaries on that new farm. This fact made me ask the Government for more ground, as I did not see why we should [not?] now provide pastures etc. for this kraal whilst the Government was enabled to sell that ground now evacuated by the Natives, as a farm. They approved of my reasons and gave us the ground now called Manresa which brings about 3 miles of our road to town, into our property.²⁴

Jesuit Finances and African Labor

There is very little in the Chishawasha house diary concerning the mission's finances. What evidence there is, however, clearly indicates that Chishawasha frequently found itself on the verge of financial ruin and relied heavily on employing cheap African labor for its financial survival.

Chishawasha mission, like all Jesuit apostolic houses, was required to be financially self-sufficient, relying on alms or revenues generated by the members of the community.²⁵ From 1890, the Zambezi Mission was dependent on the English province of the Jesuits for finances and personnel. From the beginning of the mission when it was dependent on the General in Rome, there had always been a presence of Jesuit personnel from the German provinces. Significantly, all the German Jesuits who served in colonial Zimbabwe (and even in post-colonial Zimbabwe) have volunteered to go, whereas many (if not most) British Jesuits were assigned by the provincial.

The actual references to direct sources of income are relatively few. In 1895, the community received £70 from the German provincial.²⁶ In 1896, shortly before the rebellion, Cecil Rhodes gave the community £50.²⁷ The community started producing wine on the farm in 1911.²⁸ Beginning with the 1923 school year, Chishawasha school received a composite grant from the Native Education Department for its industrial teaching, which was renewed and increased to £200 in 1926, and in 1931 received another industrial grant in the amount of £791.²⁹

Revenue generating schemes included opening a lime works in 1925 which was forced to close eighteen months later because “we cannot compete with Que Que and Sternblick in burning lime (the price is down to 5/-).” Thus, because Chishawasha “get[s] no alms and also no help from the [Zambezi] Mission,” they began raising tobacco.³⁰ Unfortunately for the fathers and brothers at Chishawasha by July, 1928, “Rhodesia [had] grown much more tobacco than can be sold.”³¹

Chishawasha seemed to be in almost perpetual debt, a fact that the Zambezi Mission superiors frequently noted:

January 16, 1905 (Ignatius Gartlan): It is desirable that the debt to Phillippi & Co.—now about £700—should be paid off as soon as possible, and that in future his account should be paid at regular intervals either of three or six months.

February, 1906 (Gartlan): 4) Every effort should be made to manage the establishment in such a way as to diminish debts.

September, 1909 (Gartlan): Now that the Convent is built every possible effort should be made to clear the debt at Phillippi’s.

1923 (Robert Browne): Every effort should be made for the Brothers not merely to exercise themselves the trades and handicrafts, but to teach the natives these trades. Much Government grant has been lost in the past owing to the Brothers not being teachers.³²

In 1931, amidst the Great Depression, “the financial position of Chishawasha [was] very critical—there remains but £200 at the bank for the rest of the year. £95 go out every month in wages and practically nothing is coming in. We have therefore cut down the number of employed to the minimum.”³³ By 1942, Chishawasha was £1,229.12.0 in debt, and after having paid £505.7.1, the Zambezi Mission superior, Philip Beisley

made the welcome [golden] Jubilee gift of £1000 plus £75 on the March loan to Fr. Cogger [the superior of Chishawasha]. The balance £525, cleared when Fr. Beisley took £400 from our April Sal balance grant to clear [the] outstanding loan made to Fr. Ferguson [the former superior of Chishawasha] in 1940. This was £500 to get him out of financial trouble; only £125 of this had been paid off by Fr. Ferguson. This Chishawasha can live again. Needless to say this gift was entirely unexpected but was, incidentally, due to the proposed electric light installations, by Fr. Beisley having failed to materialise. All here are delighted as the electric light was not particularly wanted.³⁴

Thus, it is not surprising that the Jesuits at Chishawasha were keen to use African labor in the development and efficient running of the mission.

As early as 1893, the Chishawasha *Historia Domus* notes the use of African labor, and African complaints about Jesuit supervision as well.

February 7, 1893: At present, many of us [Jesuits] have fever, but the stable, workshop and the new chapel are being speedily built.

February 20, 1893: The workmen are complaining, since they are being more closely watched since they have been guilty of fraud in the consumption of grain; Father Superior [Richartz] put the fear of God into them; one Matabele left and a lad of the same tribe who had come to join us, also wanted to leave, but we persuaded him to stay.

March 9, 1893: Solomon [a] boy from the Cape who worked for us, fled during the night with some of our property!³⁵

Given the treatment that African students and teachers received in the schools subsequently established at Chishawasha, it is more than likely that the “persuasion” used to prevent desertion was rather less than subtle. Further, the latter entry shows the

frequent practice of referring to African males, whether men who worked for the Jesuits or children who attended their schools, as “boys.” It is questionable that the diarist was referring to scions of Saint Ignatius—certainly not priest, but perhaps to lay brothers—in the following entries:

June 4, 1893: Many of us are working hard on the new road.

November 21, 22, 1893: Fr. Superior working on the new road. He starts on the stables.³⁶

Frequently in such instances, Europeans supervised African laborers who performed the actual physical tasks at hand. Even Francis Rhodes, Cecil’s brother, acknowledged the VaShawasha contribution of labor to the development Chishawasha mission in his report of a visit to the station. Chishawasha, in his estimation was

quite one of the best pieces of work that I have seen in South [sic] Africa. The Jesuit Fathers have only been carrying on operations here for two years, and bearing in mind the great difficulties they have had to contend with, it is quite extraordinary the amount of good, useful, and substantial work that they have done. The energy of the Fathers can only be properly gauged by an inspection of the extensive and substantial buildings, workshops, outhouses, farm buildings, and large tracts of ground under cultivation, all of which are the results of the personal work of the Fathers and Lay-brothers of the order, *assisted by raw native labour. . . . I feel assured that the Fathers have got thoroughly in touch with the natives, and are laying the foundation of a class of labour which will be a benefit not only to the natives themselves, but to the general community, and that the success which has attended their agricultural pursuits affords satisfactory proof that there is a great future in the development of the Company’s territories for energetic farmers.*³⁷

Early on, Jesuits had difficulties recruiting Africans to work for them. African workers at Chishawasha complained often about the low pay they received for their efforts. Another cost saving measure that the Jesuits employed was to have students at the school work around the farm and mission as part of their education or in exchange for paying fees.

November 4, 1893: . . . The boys are still cheating in the matter of flour.

March 31, 1895: We discussed the question of the school. The children are spending most of their time working in the fields.

April 15, 1895: . . .Today, all our children go to Manica [field] with Fr. Biehler.

June 30, 1925: Br. Lindner goes to Musami. He went alone because the Chishawasha bricklayers refused to work for £4 and asked £8 to £10. We later got enough bricklayers.

October 9, 1928: The Jerata boys receive no longer wages. They get shirts and trousers twice a year. They have school from 7.00 to 10.00 a.m. and learn a trade.

March 3, 1930: [Feast of St.] Philip Neri. The assistant teachers, desiring better wages, left without permission. Frs. Seed and Gits have been putting in two hours a day or more in order to ease matters a bit but the smaller boys will in future go to the convent.

April 7, 1930: . . .School boys worked all day making a new piece of road where the old bit had become impassable.

September 23, 1930: . . .More trouble with the school teachers who want higher pay.³⁸

A 1917 note on Chishawasha schools gives some insight into the teachers' complaints:

N.B. 1) A teacher is teaching or prefecting from morning till night and he is not free to go home in the evening like the working boys, but he is free to do so on Thursday afternoon and whenever the boys have a holiday.

2) Teachers' food is the same as that of the school boys.

3) A new Teacher gets 7/ monthly whilst a new working boy gets only 5/.³⁹

It further revealed that a teacher with eight years of experience at the central mission school earned 30 shillings per month, while a teacher with only four years earned "14s to 16s," and teachers at outschools with five and four years of experience earned 25 shillings and 20 shillings respectively.⁴⁰

Given the precarious financial situation at Chishawasha, it is not surprising that the Jesuits resorted to coercing resources and/or unpaid or underpaid labor from their VaShawasha residents.

January 31, 1923: Meeting of the men. They were told by Fr. Apel that they are most of them are in debt to us for cattle dipping. They must try to find that money. To begin with January 1, 1923 they must pay regularly every six weeks. The regular fee is 6d per head.

Such as give trouble will pay the full fee. Those whose children attend [school? Religious instruction?] regularly and are otherwise satisfactory pay half fee. In case anyone does not pay we shall refuse to dip his cattle and report him to the authorities.

August 10, 1932: In future every householder on Chishawasha has to pay four tins of mealies [corn meal] per annum or 5/-.

June, 1945: People getting slack at work. Asked them to come in and tidy up graves. 61 women and only 7 men came. The complaint was that those who are working in town [Salisbury] get away with it. So the old arrangement has been brought into force, that those who can't or won't come in when called will pay 1/- instead.⁴¹

Dachs and Rea noted the cordial working relationship between the Jesuits and the Southern Rhodesian colonial administrations, particularly with regard to education and the collection of taxes, which were imposed as a means to induce Africans to work for Europeans.

In their social and teaching work the Catholic missionaries were undoubtedly performing some of the tasks of the Company and settler administrations. An alliance was formed whereby the Native Commissioner encouraged school attendance and even persuaded reluctant headmen to accept outschools at their villages. . . . Church and State were involved in a common mission to educate and care for the African peoples of Zimbabwe, the Church providing much of the funds and manpower. . . . [On October 1, 1895, Fr. Hartmann visited Chief Kunzvi concerning the hut tax which] had recently been imposed on the Africans in Mashonaland as a means of forcing them to go out and earn the money [needed] to pay it, so supplying the much needed labour. It was very unpopular and the police who collected it were especially dreaded. At Chishawasha it was arranged that the tax would be paid to the indunas [sic: *ishe*], and that the missionaries would then give a receipt. This kept the police off the property to the satisfaction of the Africans.⁴²

Relations were apparently so cordial that the Jesuits ensured that their male school leavers and all males on the mission 14 years or older registered with the local district commissioner (Goromonzi) to be available to provide labor for the administration.

August 8, 1904: 100 boys all over 14 years old go to Goromonzi to be registered.

July 12, 1905: . . . 24 schoolboys have to go to Goromonzi for registration.

January, 1910: It is determined that in future all boys will leave school as soon as they have received their registration certificates, which the law obliges them to get on the

completion of their fourteenth year. On leaving school these boys will be drafted into the ranks of the Junior Working Boys, and will be taught a trade or farm work.

February 8, 1934: Boys of school go to Goromonzi to get their registration certificates.⁴³

Jesuits went so far as to recruit labor from Chishawasha for the Company administration, and even hired out female prison labor when women were interned at the mission during the rebellion.

January 18, 1901: A letter from Capt. Gilson demanded 40 men “for the government”; nothing about for how long, wages, place of work, etc. Fr. Richartz collected 34 men, with some difficulty, who left on the 20th for Capt. Gilson.

May 18 & 24, 1897: The women [prisoners] are working at Mr. Reimer’s [farm and were] allotted for work [at Mr. Topsell’s farm].⁴⁴

It is significant to note the apparent resistance on the part of the VaShawasha mission residents, as well as the evident annoyance of the house diarist at having to procure laborers for the government.

Concerning the imposition and collection of taxes, documentation from Jesuit sources clearly indicates that the missionaries mediated between the colonial administrations and the mission residents.⁴⁵ According to the Chishawasha house diarist, “Many of the local chiefs” came to complain to the Jesuits about the impending “‘house tax’ to be imposed in future” as early as May, 1894.⁴⁶ Similarly, the BSAC administration evidently asked Andrew Hartmann to go “to some villages beyond the Mazoe [river] who are said to be rioting over the new hut tax.”⁴⁷ Evidently, the arrangement that Dachs and Rea mentioned between Chishawasha and the colonial authorities required those liable to tax to bring their money to the chiefs who, in

turn, were supposed to bring them to the appropriate representative from the administration:

July 31, 1898: . . .Mr. Campbell to collect the “hut tax.” He reckoned there were 250 huts on our farm.

. . .I began to collect tax on the 14th July and have so far got in £970-0-0 without your people and the Jeta people whom I have not yet sent to. I would be glad if you will tell your people to bring their tax as soon as possible and also that the Chiefs themselves must bring it as Mr. Taberer has given me orders only to take tax from the Chiefs. He also told me that all arrears were to be deducted from this year’s tax and to explain to the Natives that I was doing so so that they will know that there is no chance of evading the tax again.⁴⁸

It is worth noting that evidently a significant number of Chishawasha residents successfully avoided paying taxes between 1895 and 1898. Further, at some point after 1899 the arrangement was modified to require residents to bring their taxes to the native commissioner’s office in Goromonzi:

August 4, 1904: Fr. Hesse and all the “tax-payers” go to Goromonzi.

October 7, 1924: Christian men pay tax. Fr. Schmitz went to NC [Goromonzi].⁴⁹

Mission Schools

As Dachs and Rea noted, the mission school was a significant element in the scheme of the mission farm, and thus central to both the enclosure and leaven strategies. Begun formally at the end of 1894, African parental opposition to having their children receive education from the missionaries was a constant theme both before and after the 1896-97 chimurenga:

November 21, 1894: We are trying to get the boys together so as to start a school, but the parents are objecting.

September 9, 1897: The boy Tafuta is being demanded back by his father.

September 8, 1901: 28 boys are admitted to the school, not without great lamentations from their mothers.⁵⁰

During and after the rebellion, particularly while Chishawasha served as a prison for African women, parents frequently claimed that the Jesuits had taken their children and enrolled them in the school against their will. Correspondence between various native commissioners and Francis Richartz, the superior of Chishawasha reveal the cordial collaboration between church and state:

Dear Father Richartz,

Here are a lot more Natives who wish for the return of their children. I have had a long talk to them trying to persuade them to leave their children at the school but it seems no good. I feel sure that they do not realise how much good the schooling does their Children, but they seem determined to get them back and I cannot force them to leave them. . . . I am willing to help you as much as I can, as I can see the advantage to the children under your system of education. There is no doubt that we can do little with the present generation but I think that a lot may be made out of the younger ones.⁵¹

The people at Fort Vuta make a great fuss about their children having been taken away against their will. . . . 6 boys have already been ordered by Mr. Taberer [the chief native commissioner] to be given back. It is funny that those people go directly to Mr. Taberer, as if I would refuse to give the children [back]. I told Besa and others that I do not wish to keep any unwilling boy here, and that I rather send them all back [than] to have them taken away day by day, which has a bad effect on the others. . . . I intend to send all the boys home and tell them that only those should come back whose parents are willing to let them go (which will certainly not be the case if the boys don't want it themselves). After the Rising it seems to me twice as difficult to make the boys work.⁵²

While this series of correspondence certainly raises questions regarding the motives of both the Jesuits for starting the school and Africans for attending it (to be discussed below), it is not clear from the documentary evidence whether Richartz followed through on his intention to send the school boys home. The evidence from the Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, however, raises questions as to Fr. Richartz's credibility as to whether or not the students were attending of their own free will:

October 2: The father of one of the boys in the school came demanding him, but he was sent away, but after two days he came back still asking for his son.

October 3: The women detainees from Umbeva [?] are freed, the boys volunteer to remain.

October 9: Once again the boys from Vuta are being asked to come home.

October 14: Fr. Richartz rode out to Camp Vuta in the matter of the boys who were abducted from here yesterday. In their place he got boys from Gondo.

October 18: Fr. Richartz rode to Ft. Vuta on account of the boys—in vain.⁵³

And yet, despite parental opposition, the school grew. In January 1895, there were about 20 boys enrolled who “reside at the Institute, and are fed and clothed at its expense.”⁵⁴ Curiously, the Jesuits contended that the only reason more boys didn’t attend the school was because of the lack of accommodations. “as they experience no difficulty in procuring pupils.”⁵⁵

Shortly before the rebellion, in January, 1896, because “the sin of sodomy among our boys is increasing. . .there was much questioning [and] whipping” by the Jesuits for several weeks resulting in “the expulsion of 15 boys with their parents from the farm.”⁵⁶ In June, those boys who weren’t withdrawn by their parents at the outbreak of the rebellion among the VaShona were sent home.⁵⁷ There are no estimates of the number of students enrolled at that time, although according to Dachs and Rea, by June, 1896, “1 boy had made his first Communion, 7 had been baptized, and there were 16 catechumens.”⁵⁸ In May, 1897, preparations were under way to reopen the school, and by the middle of the month the Jesuits at Chishawasha uncharacteristically began classes for the imprisoned women and girls.⁵⁹ In September, 1897, 25 boys were enrolled on a single

day, only to have one run away three days later.⁶⁰ In November, another 50 students enrolled in the school.⁶¹

Part of the reason for the increased enrollment was a requirement that all families living on the Chishawasha farm had to send their children to mission schools. The house diary notes that when “several big boys” refused to return to the school, “the parents were informed that they would have to leave Chishawasha unless the boys returned to school. That worked the oracle.”⁶² The increase in student enrollment at Chishawasha supports Terence Ranger’s contention that

After the suppression of the risings there had been something of a rush to the missions. . . .It is plain that the process of Christian education was slow in getting under way. In 1908 there were still only fifty recognized schools for Africans in Southern Rhodesia with a total of some 4,319 pupils. By 1913 there were 193 recognized schools with 15,723 pupils. By 1918 there were 648 schools with 41,874 pupils. But most of the increase had taken place with the so-called third-class schools. First-class schools—that is to say boarding schools under European supervision where a range of technical skills were taught—increased much less rapidly. In 1908 there were ten first-class schools with 755 pupils. In 1913 there were twenty-three such schools with 1,505 pupils. In 1918 there were only twenty-one first-class African schools in Southern Rhodesia with a total of 1,453 pupils. Meanwhile third-class schools had increased from thirty-three in 1908 to 553 in 1918, by which year they had some 35,000 pupils. This kind of educational development was not likely to produce a numerous educated élite.⁶³

<u>1st Class</u>	<u>2nd Class</u>	<u>3rd Class</u>	<u>Total # of Schools</u>		<u># of Students</u>
1908	10 (755)	7	33	50	4,319
1913	23 (1,505)	NA	NA	193	15,723
1918	21 (1,453)	74 (5,421)	553 (35,000)	648	41,874

Figure 1: Expansion of Educational Institutions in Southern Rhodesia, 1908-1918⁶⁴

In 1907, Chishawasha’s school for boys qualified for first class status while the girls’ school, under the supervision of the Dominican sisters, was third class.⁶⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Boarders</u>	<u>Day Students</u>	<u>Chishawasha School Total</u>	<u>Convent School</u>	<u>Grand Total</u>
1933	80				
1934	100				
1935	NA				
1936	146	54	200	290	490
1937	NA	NA	473	NA	473 (292 boys, 181 girls)
1938	NA	NA	222 (boys)	>300 (boys & girls)	>522
1939	NA				
1940	NA				
1941	227(150 boys) (77 girls)	291 (127 boys) (164 girls)	NA	NA	518
1942	185 (boys)	65 (boys)	250	219 (85 boarders) (134 day)	469
1943	NA				
1944	NA				
1945	235(175 boys) (60 girls)	140 (82 boys) (58 girls)	375	NA	375
1946	222(159 boys) (63 girls)	143 (93 boys) (50 girls)	365	NA	365
1947	NA				
1948	282	154	436	NA	436
1949	321(210 boys) (111 girls)	152 (82 boys) (70 girls)	473	NA	473
1953	266(175 boys) (91 girls)	141 (72 boys) (69 girls)	407	NA	407

Figure 2: Enrollment at Chishawasha Mission School and Convent School, 1933-1953

Between 1933 and 1953, the enrollment at schools of the central mission station at Chishawasha expanded and then stabilized (see Table 2). During the period enrollment increased from 80 students reported in 1933, peaked to 518 in 1941, and averaged slightly over 400 students per year (406). Boarding students dominated the enrollment, generally comprising between 60 and 68 per cent of those enrolled (see Table 3). With regard to gender, female students averaged about one third of the students enrolled, with higher proportions attending as day students (see Table 4). In 1941, females accounted for 47 per cent of the total enrollment and more than half of all day students (56%). In two of the three years for which statistics were available for the Convent school administered by the Dominican Sisters, the Convent school accounted for more than half of total enrollment (59 per cent in 1936 and 57 per cent in 1938 respectively).

In 1937, school fees for the A and B lower grades were 10/-, £1 for Standards I and II, £2 for Standards III and IV, and £3 for Standards V and VI. The diarist noted “those without fees work all holidays till the end of the school year.”⁶⁸ In 1947, although no statistics were given, the Chishawasha diarist noted that the “School [was] full.” Because there were “Too many [students] in Std. IV,” girls went to the Convent, and boys remained at Chishawasha, and girls in Standard III joined boys at Chishawasha.⁶⁹

1936	73% :: 27%
1941	44% :: 56%
1942	Chishawasha: 74% :: 25%; Convent: 38% :: 62%
1945	63% :: 37%
1946	61% :: 39%
1948	65% :: 35%
1949	68% :: 32%
1953	65% :: 35%

Figure 3: Ratio of Boarding Students vs. Day Students attending Chishawasha Central Schools⁶⁶

Year	Total	Boarders	Day
1937	38% :: 62%	NA	NA
1941	47% :: 53%	34% :: 66%	56% :: 44%
1945	31% :: 69%	26% :: 74%	41% :: 59%
1946	31% :: 69%	28% :: 72%	35% :: 65%
1949	38% :: 62%	35% :: 65%	46% :: 54%
1953	39% :: 61%	34% :: 66%	49% :: 51%

Figure 4: Ratio of Female vs. Male Students attending Chishawasha Central Schools⁶⁷

Desertion from the Jesuit's school evidently happened with some frequency.⁷⁰ The frequently harsh discipline inflicted on students and African teachers alike more than likely contributed to these documented incidents of desertion, and probably also accounts for a significant proportion of those students who dropped out. In 1915, Zambezi Mission Prefect Apostolic Richard Sykes noted in his annual visit to Chishawasha that "Some cases have occurred of disrespect on the part of school-boys. Self-restraint on the part of all who have to deal with natives will help to enforce respect."⁷¹ Similarly, in 1922, three students from Chishawasha returned from a teacher training course at the Jesuit Dreifontein mission after only three weeks because, according to superior of Dreifontein, "'they have no backbone.' Fathers in Salisbury and here. . .suspect that the discipline of the school is too rigid. At Domboshawa Mr. Keigwin has had to modify his system as regards these. . .points."⁷² Apparently African teachers were also subject to extremely strict physical punishment at the hands of the Jesuits: "Xavierio, the teacher, refused to obey, very cheeky, got a thrashing."⁷³ In yet another case, both students and teachers evidently received the same punishment:

February 12, 1933: Several boarders, aged 12! returned drunk, also two teachers. What people!

February 13, 1933: The “drunks” were well thrashed this morning.⁷⁴

These cases clearly render problematic Dachs and Rea’s assertion that “the Africans who flocked to their schools” were “particularly appreciative of the standard of discipline on Catholic missions.”⁷⁵

Converts to Christianity and the Motives for Conversion

It remains now to examine briefly the arguments that have developed concerning the first converts’ motives and to discern the motives of the first African Christians at Chishawasha. In addition to arguing for the destruction of autonomous African states for the sake of evangelization, Dachs and Rea also held a positive view of the Jesuits’ missionary efforts prior to the breaking of VaShona political and military independence.⁷⁶ In his classic study of the nineteenth century chimurenga, however, Terence Ranger noted that

in Mashonaland missionary ‘beginnings were slow and painful’; in three year’s work prior to the rising the Roman Catholic mission at Chishawasha could record only two baptisms, and their experience was common to all. ‘A closer acquaintance with the Mashona’, confessed a Jesuit missionary in 1897, ‘shows at all events that they have but little willingness to become Christians.’ He put it down to ‘their depraved habits and their low intelligence’, but it was rather a manifestation of loyalty to their own concepts of society and the divine; a steady passive resistance which was to turn 1896 into an armed attack upon the missions and their few converts as well as upon all other whites.⁷⁷

Before the suppression of the chimurenga in 1897, it had drastically impeded, and in many cases destroyed, the missionary efforts of the Christian churches in colonial Zimbabwe. After the company forcibly subdued the VaShona, European and American missionaries began aggressive evangelization campaigns. The results were impressive: Chishawasha, which recorded only 40 baptisms from its founding in 1892 to 1898,

increased its converts to 300 in 1899, 1000 in 1905, 1600 in 1910, and 3600 in 1920. Similarly, the Jesuit mission at Empandeni (about 50 miles from Bulawayo), registered 500 baptisms between 1894 and 1904, but increased to 1,000 by 1908, and 1,400 by 1910. By the 1970s there were approximately 1.4 million Christians in Zimbabwe, including Catholics, Protestants, and adherents of African independent churches.⁷⁸

<i>Chishawasha:</i>		<i>Empandeni:</i>	
Dates	# of Baptisms/Converts	Dates	# of Baptisms/Converts
1892-1898	40	1894-1904	500
1899	300	1908	1000
1905	1000	1910	1400
1910	1600		
1920	3600		

Figure 5: Number of Converts at Chishawasha and Empandeni⁷⁹

To be sure, Ranger was correct that “[after] the suppression of the risings there had been something of a rush to the missions.”⁸⁰ But why did Africans go to the missions in such large numbers? Ranger further argued that

*It is clear. . .that some of them expected spiritual gains which we cannot discuss here. It is clear. . .that many were content to serve the whites in church and state. It is plain that many linked their acceptance of Christianity with the acceptance of a whole series of social and economic attitudes, with what came to be called the ‘progressive’ position—concentration upon education and self-improvement, adoption of European standards of dress and housing, a desire to enter into European-style economic enterprise. In all these ways men of the Christian solution turned away from the values of their own societies. They had no sympathy with the whole tradition of Shona resistance; they were not content with an inward-turning concentration upon communal agriculture. But with all their commitment to the whites some of them did see themselves as men in training for the leadership of their own people.*⁸¹

Zimbabwean historian Ngwabi Bhebe made a similar argument with regard to the missionary enterprise among the AmaNdebele in western colonial Zimbabwe:

The young generation [of Africans after the rebellion] was attracted to the mission station more by literary education than by the Gospel. Nevertheless, this at least made it possible for the missionaries to use literary lessons as a bait to the children in order ultimately to convert them to Christianity. . . .The youth. . .were interested in schooling, so that if the missionary was to maintain this rate of growth he had to improve the standard of education. The fact that education remained so rudimentary during these years [1898-1923] soon frustrated many young people and caused much of the indifference to the Gospel that was reported in the latter decade.⁸²

Arguments such as these are problematic because they dismiss the sincerity of spiritual motives and strongly suggest ulterior, material motives for conversion. And yet, paradoxically, Bhebe also presented an insightful analysis of the mutual influencing of Christianity and African religion, as well as the selectivity of African Christians adapting elements of the Christian message received from Western missionaries within the context of their AmaNdebele understanding of the world:

even the youths could not cast away the fear of the abathakathi (witches) and imikhobo (ghosts). In short, the result was that first there was age selectivity in conversion to Christianity—with the youths filling the churches and the old ones refusing direct or actual acceptance of the new faith; and secondly while the old ones were imperceptibly expanding their theology through borrowing ideas from the new religion [Christianity], the young Christians were bringing indigenous beliefs to Christianity.⁸³

What light, then, do the experiences of two of the first converts at Chishawasha—Joseph Munyongani Mutoko⁸⁴ and Michael Mishi shed on the question of Africans' motives for becoming Christians in a colonial context? The following entries in the Chishawasha house diary provide a brief overview of Joseph Munyongani's career at the oldest Catholic mission in colonial Zimbabwe:

December 13, 1893: Minyongani, coming back to the house, was attacked and robbed near Mufudzi, he was set free by Mr. Campbell after Fr. Sup. Dom. [Richartz] had written to him [Campbell].

May 9, 1894: Up to now, Minyongani and Dranu have been taught separately in the evenings.

February 10, 1895: Septuagesima Sunday. Consultation. Minyongani asks to be baptised.

March 4, 1895: We give Minyongani a cow with a calf as a reward.

April 10, 1895: . . .In the last three days of Holy Week we prepared Minyongani and Tagaista for baptism.

April 13, 1895: Holy Saturday. First baptisms. Joseph [Minyongani—c.16 years old] and Gabriel [c. 6-7 years old] in the presence of all school children and some locals. Deo gratias!

September 17, 1895: Joseph (Minyongani) brings to us his mother, sister, and two other women.

November 11, 1895: The two ladies Joseph brought here have disappeared.

December 25, 1895: . . .At the third mass, Joseph (Minyongani) made his First Holy Communion.

March 19, 1898: Mary (Shogutara—17 years old) was baptized, and on the following day Joseph (Minyongani—20 years old) married her.

September 16-17, 1900: Maria, the wife of Joseph [Minyongani], is given the Last Sacraments. Maria dies in a most holy manner, offering the sacrifice of her life for the conversion of her people.

July 10, 1904: Joseph [Minyongani] Mtoko is dismissed, Victor Benura takes his place in Villa Loyola.⁸⁵

A collection of oral traditions transcribed from ChiShona provide more details, as well as

VaShona perspective of the events listed in the *Historia Domus*:

This man came to the territory of Chishawasha as a youth sent by God. He spent three days travelling and arrived at Chishawasha during the night. The following morning he asked the missionaries for food. He said: "I used up all my food for the journey these three days and nights, coming from faraway Mutoko."

The Fathers said: "Would you like to learn about God?"

Munyongani said: "That is what I have come here for. I heard rumours about it."
Munyongani said: "I can go and fetch my mother and sisters."

The Fathers gave him a shirt and enough material to make a loincloth, and a blanket, also food for the journey. He took two days and nights. He reached home and said: "Mother! Sisters! Get ready and pack your things! We are going off tonight in secret without telling our relatives. For there are good Fathers (there) who look after children and orphans. They told me all about it."

That evening they set off quietly. They slept on the way. For they (only) slept during the day in the bush, for fear of being seen by their relatives or the people. They spent a whole week on the journey.

Munyongani and his family arrived at Chishawasha with legs swollen. The Fathers were happy (to see them). They (had) though Munyongani was lying. "We give you those houses to stay in with your mother, while she looks after the orphans." Munyongani's mother was called Nyamandu. She looked after the orphans very well.

Munyongani said to the Fathers: "I shall return now, leaving you to look after my mother. I will come back. I just want to go to Shamva [mine] to look for some work." He stayed a whole year in Shamva and came back to court his girl.

The Fathers were happy with the turn of events and gave him assistance. He studied hard and was baptized, and so became the first Christian in the whole territory of Chishawasha.⁸⁶

In a second rendering of the story:

Joseph Mutoko went to Chishawasha in the year 1892 where he stayed for a few years. He then returned to his own area of Mutoko to try to get his relatives to come to Chishawasha and hear the word of God. . . .[returned to Chishawasha with elder, Chikanyambidze. Received] a blanket and a generous length of material, as well as some people to accompany him [from the Jesuits]. They were five in number. When they returned to Chishawasha, Joseph took them to the Fathers. They said: "We would like to stay here with Joseph our relative." They underwent instruction, and worked for their keep and for their clothing. In the end they were baptised and received the Sacraments. [Before returning to Mutoko], they asked if they could have Fathers at their own village. . . .They were given a bit of money and lots of clothing, blankets, and beads, as well as food for the road. They had a good journey and said their Rosary on rising and on going to sleep, just as they had been instructed. . . .When they arrived home they discovered that their relatives were already preparing to go to Chishawasha too. The five said: "It was very pleasant there with the Fathers. We were better off there than here. But the Fathers say they will come and see us here at Mutoko. Meanwhile we are to prepare for their coming by teaching others as best we can.

We were given everything: money, blankets, material for loincloths, and beads.”
At the end of the year, missionaries were sent to Mutoko to see what it was like.⁸⁷

These three accounts indicate that at some after July 31, 1892 or during 1893, Munyongani heard about the missionaries at Chishawasha, visited them, and commuted between Chishawasha and his home in Mutoko, bringing several members of his family with him, who in turn returned to Mutoko as the first African evangelists in the area. Munyongani and the other evangelists did receive food and other material goods, and these may have contributed to the early curiosity or interest in going to the mission on the part of some VaShona. But according to the oral traditions, Munyongani went to Chishawasha initially “to learn about God” because he had heard “rumours.” Further, it was only after he stated his intention to be baptized that the Jesuits “rewarded” him with the cow and calf. Even after being sacked by the Jesuits in 1904, Munyongani remained faithful to the Catholic church, living the rest of his days in Mutoko, and even being buried with the rosary beads that he received as a neophyte. Regardless of the material benefits he may have received, it appears that he also evidently drew spiritual comfort and solace from his experience with Christianity; enough to keep him in the church’s fold even after having the tangible material benefits summarily withdrawn.

Unlike the dozen entries about Joseph Munyongani Mutoko, there is only one entry in the Chishawasha *Historia Domus* concerning Michael Mishi:

December 8, 1895: On this most happy Feast (Immaculate Conception)
little Mishi was baptised with the name Michael Mary.⁸⁸

Some time after Zimbabwe received its independence in 1980, Michael Mishi told his story in an interview with *Missionary Magazine*. He said that he was born at Chishawasha, but later the family left

to go live near the famous fig plant known as Pa makuyu. It was while we were in this new land that we heard of the arrival of the white man. Some Fathers had arrived at Chishawasha, and I accompanied my mother when she went to sell them straw to cover the roofs of their houses. In exchange for my little bundle of dry grass they gave me some little pearls which were useful to decorate my head. We went twice. The third time I refused to return to my home. I wished to stay with the Fathers. My mother was very sad at the thought of leaving me with strangers whose customs we knew nothing about. She was afraid they would decide to return to their country and take me with them. The Fathers reassured her, and in the end she let me stay.

So I began to learn the white man's language together with that of the Sotho tribesmen [sic] they had brought with them from South Africa so that they could be understood (i.e., interpreters). In that year, Fr. Biehler came and founded a school. It was the year 1892. I became a Christian and in 1895 I was baptised. Others joined the school, and, when five of them had been baptised and returned home, the Chimurenga rebellion took place. I remained at the school with the other students until the end of the rebellion, though some went home for the holidays.”⁸⁹

Although Mishi apparently confused the date of the founding of the school at Chishawasha (1894-95) by Edward Biehler, both sources indicate that he was a small child when he decided to join the mission. Admittedly, he claimed that he appreciated the “little pearls” that he received from the Jesuits in exchange for his bundle of straw. He more than likely was present at the school when Joseph Munyongani first announced his desire for baptism and received his cattle as a reward for having done so, and later attended the first baptisms at Chishawasha. To the extent that a child of approximately five years of age could have material interests for converting, then Michael Mishi very well may have had them. Curiously, however, he claimed he “became a Christian” and then was baptized, a

perspective that is contrary to conventional Western understanding of the process of incorporation into the church. Perhaps, as a young child, he wanted to be the center of attention as was his peer who was baptized with Munyongani, and baptism was his means to that end. Or, perhaps, he had the strength of spirit to choose a Christian way of life for himself at a young age. To be sure, if his story can be taken at face value, Michael Mishi would have been an exceptional child just in overcoming the opposition of his bright and enterprising MuShona mother. If he had the strength of will to supercede the cultural expectations for a MuShona child then perhaps he also had a concomitant strength of spirit.

Both Michael Mishi and Joseph Munyongani Mutoko were among the first fruits of a bounteous harvest of souls cultivated at Chishawasha mission. There can be little doubt that the Jesuits were very much concerned with the quotidian details of maintaining the mission on the material plane. The entire material edifice—including the church building, the schools, the missionaries' residences, the farms—however, was firmly based on the spiritual foundation of Chishawasha's mission to spread the message of the Christian gospel (or the Catholic interpretation thereof). The purchase of farm land, the employment (exploitation?) of African labor and the social relations between the missionaries and their charges, as well as the founding of schools were all material means to a spiritual end. Cast as such, then, Munyongani and Mishi were the first goods produced by the Jesuit spiritual economy in colonial Zimbabwe.

Notes

1. Mt. 28:18-20: "Then Jesus approached and said to them, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.'"

2. Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992), 14, 43. For an extensive discussion of specific economic activities of men and women before colonization, see pp.14-42.

3. See Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

4. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 53.

5. *ibid.*, 58.

6. *ibid.*, 59.

7. *ibid.*, 43.

8. *ibid.*, 43.

9. *ibid.*, 78.

10. *ibid.*, 66.

11. *ibid.*, 74-76.

12. *ibid.*, 77.

13. *ibid.*, 78.

14. See David Johnson, "Settler Farmers and Coerced African Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1936-1946," *Journal of African History*, 33/1 (1992), 111-128.

15. Interview with Boniface Gumbo, Kutama Mission, July 28, 2000.

16. A.J. Dachs & W.F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 46. Emphasis added.

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17. See, e.g., JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus* (Typescript) entries concerning the case of Goto Mareke, March 13, 1924 and March 6, 1926, as well as the detention of chiefs resident on the mission for “dealings with a witch doctor,” January 17-February 7, 1904. See also, Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*.
18. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 44-45.
19. *ibid.*, 47.
20. *ibid.*
21. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus* (Typescript).CHD hereafter. Emphasis added.
22. *ibid.*, June 2, 1893, March 19, 1894.
23. Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People: Zimbabwe Before & After Rhodes*, (London: Heinemann, 1980), 95-96.
24. JAZ, 99/1, Francis Richartz, “Notes on the Acquisition of Manresa,” 1902.
25.
See George Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, (St. Louis: Institute for Jesuit Sources, 1970).
26. JAZ, CHD, March 26, 1895.
27. *ibid.*, April 19, 1896.
28. *ibid.*, March 2, 1911.
29. *ibid.*, December 15, 1922, February 26, 1926, March 30, 1931.
30. *ibid.*, March 21, 1927.
31. *ibid.*, July 3, 1928.
32. JAZ, Box 98, *Memoriale Visitationis* Book.
33. JAZ, CHD, May, 1931.
34. *ibid.*, July 8, 17, 22, 1942.
35. *ibid.*, February 7, 20, March 9, 1893
36. *ibid.*, June 4, November 21, 22, 1893.
37. *ibid.*, January 14, 1895, Francis Rhodes letter. Emphasis added.

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38. *ibid.*, November 4, 1893, March 31 & April 15, 1895, June 30, 1925, October 9, 1928, March 3, 1930, April 7, 1930, September 23, 1930.
39. JAZ, 100/1, "Chishawasha School 1917."
40. *ibid.*
41. JAZ, CHD, January 31, 1923, August 10, 1932, June, 1945.
42. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 45, 48.
43. JAZ, CHD, August 8, 1904, July 12, 1905, February 8, 1934; JAZ, 99/1, Chishawasha Annual Letters, January, 1910.
44. *ibid.*, May 18 & 24, 1897, January 18, 1901.
45. See, e.g., JAZ, CHD, September 26, 1894, October 2, 1894, July 31, 1898, July 6, 1903, August 4, 1904, October 7, 1924.
46. JAZ, CHD, May 20, 1894.
47. *ibid.*, June 19, 1894.
48. JAZ, CHD, July 31, 1898; JAZ, 99/8, A.D. Campbell to Francis Richartz, August 2, 1899.
49. JAZ, CHD, August 4, 1904, October 7, 1924.
50. JAZ, CHD, June 2, 1893, March 19, 1894.
51. JAZ, 99/8 Chief Native Commissioner W.S. Taberer to Richartz, October 11, 1897.
52. JAZ, Chishawasha Letter Book, p.23, Richartz to A.D. Campbell, NC Chikwakwa, October 11, 1897.
53. JAZ, CHD.
54. *ibid.*, Francis Rhodes (Acting Administrator) to Herbert Canning (BSAC London Secretary), January 14, 1895.
55. *ibid.*
56. JAZ, CHD, January 24, 1896.
57. *ibid.*, June 21, 1896.

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58. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 51.
59. JAZ, CHD, May 6 & 16, 1897.
60. *ibid.*, September 12 & 15, 1897.
61. *ibid.*, November 1, 1897.
62. *ibid.*, January 30, 1933.
63. T.O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 16.
64. Data from *ibid.*
65. JAZ, CHD, October 31, 1907.
68. JAZ, CHD, January 25, 1937.
69. *ibid.*, January 27, 1947.
66. All data from CHD, and rounded to nearest whole number.
67. All data from CHD, and rounded to nearest whole number.
70. *ibid.*, February 24, 1922; January 26, 1923; August 4, 1923; September 12, 1930; February 21, 1932; February 12-13, 1933; February 19, 1943.
71. JAZ, Box 98, *Memoriale Visitationis* Book, October, 1915, No. 6.
72. JAZ, CHD, February 24, 1922.
73. *ibid.*, August 4, 1923.
74. *ibid.*, February 12-13, 1933.
75. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 45.
76. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 51.
77. T.O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-97: A Study in African Resistance*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 25.
78. Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939* (Gweru, 1996); Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa* (Grand Rapids, 1995).

79. *ibid.*

80. T.O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 16.

81. *ibid.*, 17-18. Emphasis added.

82. Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923*, (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1979), 129, 151.

83. *ibid.*, 162.

84. Although the Chishawasha *Historia Domus* diarists render his name Minyongani, and that such a rendering does follow the grammatical rules of VaShona nomenclature, I have chosen to follow the orthography of the translated and transcribed ChiShona oral tradition, "The Man Called Joseph Munyongani."

85. JAZ, CHD.

86. JAZ, 357/2, "The Man Called Joseph Munyongani," English translation and typescript, 1.

87. *ibid.*, 4-5.

88. JAZ, CHD, December 8, 1895.

89. JAZ, Box 98, "Nearly a Century Old: The Chief who Knew 'Mr. Rhodes,'" *Missionary Magazine*, n.d.

Chapter 4: “‘The Struggle Approximated to the Heroic’: African Catholic Women Becoming Nuns in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1922-1965”¹

“The Magistrate remarked that if she wished to become a Sister she had a great deal to learn. My own thought just now after the talk I have had with her is that the Chief Native Commissioner might also marvel at the stuff out of which a Sister may be made!”² —Francis Markall, S.J.

In August 1965, the community of the Little Children of our Blessed Lady (or LCBL Sisters) at Hwedza asked Sister Rocha Mushonga to accompany Sister Ancilla, their delegate to the congregation’s first general chapter, as a secretary. “That’s how I got trapped,” Mushonga recalled. During the vote for the first mother general, she was asked to count the ballots with Sister Consolata, and

To my surprise I saw that they were writing my name! I complained to [Archbishop Markall], and he told me that “the Sisters are free to vote for whom they want.” I was very upset. We had a [run-off] with another sister, and [on the second ballot] twice the number had my name! “I am not a delegate,” I told them. They said, “We know that.” The Dominican Mother General said, “we just stay away and listen to the votes.”³

As the youngest person at the chapter, Mother Rocha thought to herself, “I can’t argue with these people.” It was then that Archbishop Markall told her, “We cannot fight with the will of God. You can refuse, but I would not advise it.” “There was no way out!” she recalled thinking.⁴

And so began the process of indigenizing the leadership of the LCBL Sisters. Founded in 1932 as the first diocesan congregation of African women in colonial Zimbabwe, the LCBL’s were in fact the third order of African nuns established by European missionaries in Southern Rhodesia, and placed under the supervision of German Dominican Sisters. Recapturing the history of the founding of religious communities for African women in the Catholic church in colonial Zimbabwe is a useful

way to analyze the changing relationships between Africans—both men and women—and Europeans, including colonial administrators and Catholic missionaries, during the early decades of the twentieth century. It is also a powerful means to examine the limitations that both African and Western cultures placed upon African women, and the options for social mobility available to them.

In an unpublished essay, Terence Ranger stated that women in colonial Zimbabwe were more the subject of political processes rather than participants in them, and that as subjects they had only “informal means of ‘political’ action” available to them, one of which was “by seeking new patrons” and becoming Catholic nuns.⁵ Unfortunately, with regard to the issue of African women becoming nuns, Ranger’s essay focused entirely on events at Triashill mission predominantly in the 1920s, and only treated the founding of one of two congregations begun by Mariannahill missionaries in the Makoni district of Southern Rhodesia.⁶

Elizabeth Schmidt and Diana Jeater briefly addressed the issue of African women defying early twentieth century VaShona cultural norms in order to become nuns and have shown that both African and Western cultures significantly circumscribed African women’s social roles.⁷ Neither, however, addressed the broader implications of that particular choice for African women, VaShona culture, or the relations between the Rhodesian colonial administration and the Catholic church. Although women choosing to become nuns may have continued as subjects of patriarchy, first African and then Western, their actions in declaring and then acting on their desire to become nuns led to protracted debates between African men, the colonial administration, and the Catholic

church on the status and rights of women in colonial VaShona and Rhodesian societies. Women effectively became the site of struggle over who could control them, but more importantly, their actions began a contest to determine whether they themselves had the right to choose the form of patronage to which they were subjected, and culminated in the colonial administration ruling that African women 21 years or older had that right. Furthermore, the experiences of African women becoming nuns are similar to those of women in Europe, North America, and Latin America, showing that their struggles were more common than exceptional in the Catholic church.

Beginning in 1922, Mariannhill missionaries from South Africa established two religious institutes for African women in colonial Zimbabwe. Although the Jesuit superiors of the Zambezi Mission strongly disliked these institutes, several superiors of local mission stations sent women as candidates for the “sisterhood.” Conflicts developed between the Church and the practitioners of VaShona culture over the question of whether African women had the right to enter convents. African men of the time, supported by the British colonial authorities, held that women were perpetually dependant on their fathers or guardians until they were married, and further claimed that the Church interfered with African culture by denying the men their right to receive *lobola* (or bride price). The issue of African nuns also caused significant tensions in the otherwise cordial relationship between the Catholic church and the Southern Rhodesian colonial administration. The Catholic church under the leadership of Aston Ignatius Chichester, the first Vicar Apostolic and Archbishop of Salisbury, provided African women in colonial Zimbabwe another option to marriage, yet in doing so explicitly and

intentionally subverted a significant facet of the African culture of the early and mid-twentieth century.

As early as 1912, Mariannhill missionaries began plans to start a religious congregation of African women when five women had asked to become nuns. The plans, however, were delayed, and during the First World War, the German Mariannhillers were interned in South Africa and were not allowed to return to Southern Rhodesia until 1920.⁸ Thus, in 1922 Mariannhill missionaries and the Sisters of the Precious Blood began receiving African women as candidates for the religious life into a congregation called the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi at Monte Cassino mission in Southern Rhodesia and at Mariannhill in Natal, South Africa.⁹ In an apparent effort to protect the candidates from the early twentieth century African belief and practice that an African woman was a perpetual minor dependent on either her father or guardian or her husband, as well as to protect the Church from having to pay the father or guardian *lobola* (or bride price), mission superiors had the fathers and guardians of female religious candidates sign declarations before colonial district commissioners that renounced all rights and claims to *lobola* payments for their daughters from the Church.¹⁰ At this time, the Precious Blood Sisters apparently were asking for consent from both a woman's father and brothers, which indicates an awareness of contemporary African cultural practice.¹¹

By this time, however, the Native department of the Southern Rhodesian colonial administration had come to support strongly African men in their efforts to maintain women as perpetual minors. (Previously, the colonial government had been at odds with African men, trying to free African women from being "pledged" in marriage to older

men while they were still children).¹² Accordingly, in 1922, the Native Commissioner of Rusape apparently told the fathers of two candidates who gave their consent for their daughters to become nuns that the women “have to marry and with that were both told to leave the office.” According to Ranger, “the determination of some girls to become nuns opened up the whole question of the legal status of women.”¹³ This caused Francis Johanny, the Jesuit Pro-Prefect Apostolic of the Zambezi Mission, to seek the legal opinion of Charles Coghlan as to whether an African woman had the right “to lead a single life” and become a nun.¹⁴

Coghlan opined that a parent or guardian (either European or African) “cannot abrogate his functions as a guardian and no agreement. . . can affect his rights of guardianship over his minor wards.”¹⁵ Accordingly, the declarations obtained by the missionaries had no “value in law” and could not “be used against the father or guardian, if afterwards he changes his mind and claims compensation in cattle or money.” According to Coghlan, the legal precedent established first in the Cape Colony and later in Rhodesia held that

in Civil cases between natives the Courts of this Territory are to be guided by native law so far as that law is not repugnant to natural justice or morality. . . [and] that in the case of both Europeans and native minors a Court has a discretion. . . of refusing to allow an unfit guardian to obtain possession of the person of his ward. . . but this discretion would not be exercised merely because the guardian happened to be a pagan, and the ward was a christian even if there had been a prior agreement entered into by the guardian.¹⁶

Coghlan wrote, however, that once a woman reached the age of 21 (i.e., the age of majority in English common law) “she becomes *sui generis* and is a free agent released in law from parental control or guardianship, natural or otherwise, and that in this respect

the status of a native girl differs in no way from a European girl.” Although he believed it “advisable” to obtain parental consent for the woman to enter the convent, such consent was not “necessary.” Coghlan’s rationale for the freedom of women 21 years or older was based on the belief that

The right to personal liberty and freedom of action is inherent in all persons native and European once they arrive at the age of Majority and even if the view I have expressed should seriously and detrimentally affect the matter of tribal life and succession under native law that circumstances [sic] can make no difference. There is no statute law in Rhodesia condemning Native women to a state of perpetual pupilage and in the absence of such a statute, a native custom having that effect is not enforceable for the reason stated.¹⁷

Citing a 1915 legal case from the Transvaal in South Africa, Coghlan argued that the perpetual minority of African women was “repugnant to natural justice and morality” because it was “contrary to civilization,” and that the principle applied equally “to a widow [and] to a spinster as well.” Coghlan concluded that

an unmarried native woman of twentyone [sic] years of age is free to do as she pleases and is not subject to the control of parents, guardians, Native Commissioners, or any one else and that she is as much at liberty to choose her own vocation as is a European woman, who has arrived at the age of majority.¹⁸

Despite Coghlan’s opinion that parental and guardian declarations held no legal value, Church superiors continued to collect them for sister candidates, and frequently did not include the woman’s age or date of birth.¹⁹ They did, however, note the significance of women’s attaining legal majority at 21 and frequently required that women be at least 21 before being admitted as candidates.²⁰

In 1923, Bishop Adalbero Fleischer of Mariannhill established a second religious community, the Children of the Most Holy Trinity, for African women at Triashill

mission in the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia.²¹ According to Dachs and Rea, “the Trinity Sisters” were “above all. . .mission helpers, not members of a canonical congregation, although they nonetheless gave valuable service to the [Triashill] mission.”²² They based this claim on the fact that the sisters “for three years worked as candidates, for another three years as postulants and then annually took private vows to the Church.” The congregation’s constitutions, however, provided that upon the completion of the second three year probation the sisters received “definite admission [to the community] and the full habit.” These constitutions received formal ecclesiastical approbation from Robert E. Brown, Prefect Apostolic of the Zambezi Mission, on September 14, 1926.²³ Dachs and Rea seemed to have ignored the existence of religious congregations for European women—such as the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul—whose members profess silent, private vows of religion (i.e., poverty, chastity, and obedience) annually. The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul were founded in France in 1633 by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Because they were one of the first non-cloistered women’s congregations they were not permitted to profess perpetual vows and were required to profess annual vows, yet they are still considered a canonical religious institute of women.²⁴

W.F. Rea, a Rhodesian Jesuit of English descent, brought his close appreciation of Rhodesian and Jesuit perspectives to *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, but in some cases did so to the neglect of important contending perspectives. This is certainly the case with their analysis of the formation of African religious women. Dachs and Rea focus on the foundation and development of the LCBL Sisters by Aston Chichester, the first Vicar

Apostolic and later Archbishop of Salisbury, who was also a Jesuit, but in doing so paid too little attention to the Daughters of St. Francis and the Children of the Holy Trinity, both of which were established by German Mariannhill and Precious Blood missionaries.

The Jesuits (with few exceptions) were less than enthusiastic about the Mariannhillers' work with the Daughters of St. Francis and the Children of the Holy Trinity. Priests at Chishawasha were disparaging of the possibilities and potential of African women to become nuns: "The education of our girls here is a signal failure. Very few of the girls out of school go to the Sacraments."²⁵ Although Robert Brown gave official ecclesiastical approbation to the Children of the Holy Trinity, he expressed personal dislike for the name of the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi, "for what do they know about him or what had he to do with Africa? If it were St. Francis Xavier or St. Peter Claver [both Jesuits] it would be another thing."²⁶

Furthermore, in 1926, Jesuit missionaries at Chishawasha mission, with the approval of the recently appointed apostolic delegate to South Africa tried to avoid sending African candidates to either of the orders established by the Mariannhill missionaries by seeking permission from Rome to establish a novitiate for what appears to have been an order of their own for African women: "[The Apostolic Delegate] told the [Dominican] Sisters that these girls should not go to *Macheke* [Monte Cassino mission, run by Mariannhill], but stay here, and. . .it will be something new, independent of the Mariannhill Congregation."²⁷ Emil Schmitz, S.J. wrote further that "[i]n order to attract more girls the Delegate told the [Dominican] Sisters to give those girls a special dress in August. but this is quite a private business, they are not yet postulants in any

official way.”²⁸ Although five women received dresses on August 4, 1926, and they were called “postulants” there are no records extant in the Jesuit archives explaining what happened to these women, e.g., whether they eventually entered one of the Mariannhill orders or the LCBL Sisters when Aston Chichester organized them in 1932.²⁹ Dachs and Rea discussed these women within the context of existing religious orders (i.e., the Dominicans and Precious Blood Sisters) accepting African candidates, some of whom were then not admitted to vows “for as long as ten years.”³⁰ Given Schmitz’s description of their reception of habits, one cannot help but wonder how serious the Jesuits at Chishawasha were about establishing “a canonical congregation” for African women in Southern Rhodesia. What is clear, however, is that the Jesuits were reacting to the efforts of the Mariannhill missionaries and the Precious Blood Sisters to erect women’s religious institutes, which themselves were a response to African women expressing the desire for such communities.

And yet, despite the existence of Chishawasha’s private, unofficial religious community for African women, superiors at Jesuit mission stations continued to send candidates to the congregations founded at the Mariannhill mission stations. Less than a year after Chishawasha’s “postulants” received their habits, three women from the Jesuit mission station at Kutama (approximately 90 kilometers west of Salisbury) were received into the Daughters of St. Francis at Monte Cassino mission.³¹ At the time, Francis Johanny noted that receiving sealed declarations from the N.C. Sinoia declaring the women “free from lobola, etc.” was “an official breach into native custom worth noting.”

As late as February, 1932, an African woman from St. Benedict's mission in the eastern highlands—by that time a Jesuit mission—chose to enter the Daughters of St. Francis.³²

The question of the legality as to whether or not an African woman could enter the convent continually vexed Church leaders in Southern Rhodesia. Around the time Aston Chichester was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Salisbury, the Jesuits referred the matter to the Chief Native Commissioner's office for a ruling. Because "an important question of policy" was involved, the C.N.C. "did not feel justified in deciding on [his] own initiative. . .[and] referred the matter to the [Southern Rhodesian] cabinet."³³ The ministers apparently found the question "a knotty problem," as they never gave the C.N.C. a reply. He did, however, suggest that the recently-appointed Chichester "take up the matter direct with the Minister of Native Affairs."³⁴

Although there is no evidence that Chichester took the matter to the Minister of Native Affairs, there is evidence that he continued to correspond with the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury. In a letter dated November 12, 1931, the C.N.C. stated that the matter of parental opposition to women entering the convent had received "the serious consideration of the government for some time," and that, contrary to the opinion of Charles Coghlan,

the Government is advised that the status of Native women is governed by Native Law and Custom, and that, therefore, unmarried Native women remain under the guardianship of their guardian by Native Law. It follows that the entry of Native women into a sisterhood must be a purely voluntary act, undertaken with the consent of the woman's guardian.³⁵

The C.N.C. suggested that the church

should go slowly in this matter, and look to the future for expansion, when it may be anticipated that complete Native families will have embraced the Roman Catholic Faith, and will be prepared to freely surrender [sic] their

daughters to the service of the Church. Any other course will merely cause dissention [sic] in the families concerned, which is bound to be reflected in tribal irritation and unrest.³⁶

Chichester expressed concern at the C.N.C.'s "very wide and general ruling," and somewhat defiantly stated that

if the effect of that ruling is that it is practicable under the laws of this Colony for a native parent or guardian to insist that a native women [sic] who has attained her majority and who has been brought up as a Christian in a Christian Institution can be compelled against her wish to leave such an institution and return to a pagan kraal under such guardianship, it must not be assumed that I acquiesce in regarding such legislation as in conformity with Christian morals or natural equity.³⁷

He showed, however, a willingness not "to raise any general question" if he could "be assured of the support of the Government and of the good offices of your Department in the actual cases which arise." Although there were "a certain number" of African women who were at least 21 years old, "who [had] been trained for adequate periods, and . . . after mature consideration [were] desirous of entering Sisterhoods," Chichester was "not prepared to administer vows, even for limited periods, until I am assured that these individual women cannot, under the laws of the Colony, be compelled to leave the Sisterhood and revert to native life under their parent or guardian."

Chichester's letter is illustrative of two significant facets of his tenure as Vicar Apostolic and (later) Archbishop. First, it shows his willingness to cooperate with the Rhodesian colonial administration regarding its policies for Africans. More importantly, it shows the ambiguity in his willingness to support and protect African women who wanted to become nuns.

Chichester's zeal to establish a religious institute for African women directly affronted the contemporary VaShona cultural practice that infantilized women in perpetuity, which had the support of the colonial administration. Although the bishop apparently held African cultures in the same low esteem that his contemporary Europeans regarded it, he felt "admiration" for these women considering that "acquaintance" with the VaShona culture

[reveals] the ordinary accepted status of the Mashona girl [sic] and that whole, vast, and complex custom and superstition which militates against anything indicative of individual choice and acts as a most powerful deterrent against any personal initiative away from the accepted and recognised. Yet into this uncongenial atmosphere has come not only Christianity, but, as its logical development too, the desire of some for a higher life. . . . [Although] the giving up "of all" by the [MuShona woman] may not appear great when assessed by this world's evaluation but it is much, very much when it is realised how opposed the call to the religious life is to every tradition, social and religious of the people. . . . Few of [the women who became nuns] have entered the noviceship without a hard struggle and, in many a case, the struggle approximated to the heroic.³⁸

Because Chichester apparently, like Coghlan, equated "natural justice" and British "civilization," he was willing to fight for an African woman's individual right to become a nun against the wishes of her parents, but consequently also believed it necessary to make their "probation"

a long one for the noviceship is preceded by three years as a candidate and one year as postulants. Only then does the noviceship commence when at its completion at the end of two years, [the women] are admitted to vows. Vows are taken for one year and on its termination each sister has to apply for permission to renew them. After several years of yearly renewals they are admitted to triennial vows.³⁹

Chichester further believed it unwise to try to "Europeanize" the sisters, as "the religious life is built on all that is best in their own lives." and that "[the] simplicity of their lives,

in externals, will always keep them as one of their own.”⁴⁰ This claim of Chichester’s seems highly suspect, especially given that the novitiate was conducted in English and Latin, and all that was “best in their own lives” apparently entailed domestic work.⁴¹

The Church leadership missed an early opportunity to adapt its practices and beliefs to those of the local culture. Among VaShona of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in the southern and western regions of colonial Zimbabwe, unmarried women served as officials, or Bonga, at shrines dedicated to Mwari, the supreme deity in the VaShona religious system.⁴² According to the tradition received and noted by a Jesuit missionary, these women were “entirely devoted to a life of prayer and intercession,” and their families received no bride price as their daughter having been chosen was considered an honor.⁴³ During the Mwari controversy of the early 1920’s, Francis Richartz, one of the founders of Chishawasha mission, noted that some of the Bonga were called Mwari (their function was to serve as “the voice of Mwari,” i.e., to speak the oracles of Mwari to those who came to consult it), and as such they were tantamount to false prophets who were not to be taken seriously.⁴⁴ Although the Church’s superiors followed Richartz’s lead, one of the first LCBL sisters recognized the parallel.⁴⁵

Shortly after his appointment as Vicar Apostolic, Chichester consulted Adalbero Fleischer, the Vicar Apostolic of Mariannhill in South Africa and founder of the Daughters of St. Francis and the Children of the Holy Trinity, about establishing a novitiate for the Daughters of St. Francis in the Salisbury vicariate, and later sent the request to the Sacred Congregation for Propagating the Faith (or Propaganda Fide) in

Rome.⁴⁶ Cardinal van Rossum, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, replied, however that rather than opening a novitiate Chichester should found a diocesan congregation for African women for the Salisbury vicariate, using Fleischer's constitutions as models.⁴⁷ Chichester, accordingly, sent the appropriate request and received approval to begin a formal postulancy.⁴⁸ Wasting no time, he then admitted four women at Chishawasha who had "been there for ages—one, I believe, 13 years." as postulants on June 3, 1932, even though a congregation as such did not yet exist.⁴⁹

On December 8, 1932, 19 women began their novitiate at Makumbi mission, approximately 40 kilometers north of Salisbury, of whom 18 professed first vows on December 8, 1934.⁵⁰ Of the 19 first LCBL novices, nine were from the areas around Mutare in the eastern highlands of colonial Zimbabwe, and at least one of whom—Sister Bernadette Garatsa—was in part inspired to become a nun by the sister of her paternal grandmother who was a Daughter of St. Francis, Sister Julia.⁵¹

Sister Bernadette recalled meeting a bonga who was also an Anglican, and asking her whether she would "have to leave if she made a mistake," to which the bonga replied in the affirmative. Later the same day, she met Sr. Julia and asked the same question, to which she responded in the negative. Bernadette "saw the link between the two and the possibility." She "confirmed in her heart not to be like bonga but like Sister [Julia]."⁵²

Bernadette had attended the school at St. Barbara's mission in Inyanga, and when her father objected to her becoming a nun, she ran away to the mission. When her father came for her she told the priest to tell him to

"take his daughter," though she knew in her heart she wanted to be a sister. So the priest said, "Take your daughter," but she refused [to go]. Eventually, she went home to be reconciled with her father.⁵³

and was then received as a candidate for the Daughters of St. Francis. She was prepared to enter their novitiate in South Africa when Bishops Chichester and Fleischer “decided to send her [and the other candidates from Manyika] to the LCBL’s.”⁵⁴

When the nine women arrived at the train station in Salisbury Chichester himself was there to meet them, and he took them to the Dominican convent by the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in town.⁵⁵ He also accompanied them to Makumbi mission, where the novitiate was to be located. When they arrived, there was no house, so the African novices and the German Dominicans not only had to build their own houses but also had to make the bricks with which to build.⁵⁶ Additionally, the novices had to clear their fields for planting and tend the crops, grind their own corn meal, tend their cattle and other animals, milk the cows, and do the laundry for all the religious except the Dominicans (i.e., their own and the Jesuits’) who did their own. “All that was done at home [by women], they continued to do in the convent.”⁵⁷

Fr. John Apel, the superior of Makumbi mission, and other Jesuits gave spiritual and doctrinal instructions to the novices. They prayed the small office from breviaries in Latin. Although some of the novices didn’t read, they learned the Latin prayers and songs.⁵⁸ Sr. Bernadette recalled liking the office because of the “strange language.” Their spiritual formation also included bible reading “but no bible sharing,” litanies, and the rosary.

When asked whether other women had encountered similar family resistance, Sister Bernadette replied that they didn’t talk about it or whether they also had to run away. She also noted that due to family opposition, the government—in an effort to

support the families—made a “ruling” forbidding them to receive veils, “but the missionaries gave them veils” anyway.⁵⁹

The vows that the first LCBL Sisters professed were temporary vows of religion that they had to renew annually. Beginning in 1940, Chichester allowed some of the sisters to renew their vows once every three years. It was not until after the final approbation of the congregation’s constitutions in 1959 that sisters began to be admitted to final vows.⁶⁰

After the novitiate, the sisters continued to perform domestic duties at the missions to which they were assigned. But they also served as catechists and teachers,⁶¹ and it was in these capacities that the LCBL Sisters began to have a significant influence on the development of the Catholic church in colonial Zimbabwe, most notably on the early education of many of the first Africans who would enter the seminary and become the first African priests.

The governance of the fledgling congregation was entrusted to the Dominicans. According to Chichester, the organization of the LCBL’s was “a muddle,” being “neither independent nor amalgamated—yet is governed by the European Sisterhood.”⁶² The Dominican Mother General served as the superior of the LCBL’s, the novice mistress was also a Dominican, as was the person in charge of the African women’s spiritual formation at respective mission stations.⁶³ Chichester noted that Propaganda Fide advised him that he “must change this and have the government under natives. They added, however, that I could then ask for a dispensation—stating that the natives were incapable of governing themselves and go on as at present.”⁶⁴ Although the dispensation was to be

temporary, it could “on application be renewed till long after [Chichester] was dead and had no further responsibility.”⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, Chichester retired as Archbishop of Salisbury in 1956 and died in 1962. The LCBL Sisters were not allowed to elect their own superior until 1965. The constitutions of the congregation, which Chichester wrote, received praise for the “exactness” with which they followed the requirements of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, however one commentator noted that they were “all code without any peculiar indication of a special spirit to indicate the sisterhood. . . [they were] a framework for any religious body without any of the individualizing notes that a special order should display.”⁶⁶ With relatively few changes, the LCBL’s constitutions received formal and definitive approbation from Propaganda Fide in 1959.⁶⁷

Shortly after the first 18 women professed their first vows, they apparently sent a letter to Pope Pius XI, as they received a letter from Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli conveying the Pope’s “constant prayer” that they “may grow up to be good and worthy Catholics and that you may by your teaching and example bring all the people of your country into the great Christian family of which he is the common Father.”⁶⁸ It is not clear whether they took the initiative to write to Pius XI or if Chichester prompted them to do so.

What is clear, however, is that the first LCBL Sisters were not afraid to bring to Chichester their concerns about what they perceived to be shortcomings in their on-going formation, their basic needs, and their status. Around the year 1937, they wrote a letter to Chichester asking for permission: to wear a scapular dedicated to Mary, to cook their own meals for themselves, to have “a *small garden* at each mission of vegetables,” and to have “a European sister as a mother who cares for Native Sisters only.”⁶⁹ The “most

important” questions, however, without answers to which they felt themselves to be “good for nothing” were

May we ask if we may be taught all the work properly and to work independently without somebody looking after us? What [initials] may we write behind our names?⁷⁰

Shortly thereafter, the Sisters began writing the initials “LCBL” in their correspondence.

Chichester was very much a man of his time, who believed in the incapacity of African religious women to govern themselves, yet also fought with the colonial administration for their right to enter the convent, and was very solicitous for their general welfare once they began the formation process as candidates. Although specific cases in which Chichester supported African women in becoming nuns against the wishes of their parents and the colonial administration follow below, it is significant to note here that he apparently appealed to individuals in the League of Nations and the Vatican in an effort to pressure the Rhodesian colonial government to change its policies regarding women’s right to become nuns.⁷¹ The cases below will show that such entreaties met with no success.

Chichester, however, was generally much more successful at providing for the women once they were able to enter candidacy and as they were gradually incorporated into the congregation. While he and the Mother General of the Dominicans frequently paid for clothing and blankets for the sisters, he imposed a levy which came to be known as the Makumbi tax on all the missions in the Salisbury vicariate to raise sufficient funds to support the sisters. Additionally, superiors of mission stations had to pay for the transport of sisters assigned to their missions or reassigned elsewhere, as well as provide

“the ordinary necessities and comforts for the native sisters,” including a standard ration of food which consisted of 14 pounds of cornmeal, one pound of fresh meat or half a pound of biltong, one to two pints of sour milk, and three pounds of ground nuts per person per week and green vegetables daily.⁷² Chichester was adamant that the sisters “should have sufficient time for their spiritual life.”⁷³ The LCBL sisters who knew Chichester remember him as visiting them regularly and frequently asking if they were receiving enough food.⁷⁴ Evidently there were instances when the sisters were not receiving enough food. Sister Catherine Mazorodze recalled that one of the “tough” things about the novitiate was that the novices “sometimes didn’t have enough food or soap.”⁷⁵ In such instances, it is not clear whether or what kind of action Chichester took to rectify the situation.

The establishment of the LCBL Sisters was a product of its time: the external government in the hands of the predominantly German Dominicans recommended by the Vatican was clearly a reflection of the general European colonial belief in the incapacity of Africans generally—and in the Church specifically—to govern themselves or know their own interests. Dachs and Rea stated that Chichester had “various choices” available to foster African vocations upon his arrival in 1931, and that

he might have tried to build on the already existing Order of the Daughters of St. Francis, or he might have approved that a European Order accept African novices and sisters. Finally, he might found an entirely new diocesan Congregation. Chichester chose the third course.⁷⁶

While it is true that Chichester ultimately chose to found the LCBL’s as a diocesan congregation, the documentary evidence of their founding clearly shows that he had originally intended “to build on the already existing Order of the Daughters of St.

Francis,” and that it was only at the recommendation of Cardinal van Rossum, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, that he chose to establish a diocesan congregation. And yet, the Dominican and Precious Blood Sisters stopped receiving African candidates for their congregations once the LCBL Sisters began receiving candidates. Although there is no documentary evidence, there is an oral tradition among the Dominicans in Harare that Chichester asked them to stop receiving African candidates,⁷⁷ and it is unclear why he would have made this request. Two possibilities immediately present themselves. First, as the bishop of a mission territory, Chichester would have seen the need for the people of his vicariate to develop indigenous vocations to the clergy and religious life in order for the Church in Rhodesia to progress to the point of establishing the regular hierarchy. Establishing a diocesan congregation of African religious, as recommended by Pope Pius XI in his 1926 encyclical letter *Rerum Ecclesiae*, would encourage local vocations and reduce the need for religious to come to Southern Rhodesia as missionaries from Europe, or to a lesser extent from Canada or the United States. Or, Chichester, being aware of—and possibly sharing—the racial attitudes of British Rhodesian settlers, chose to establish a diocesan congregation for Africans in order to maintain a significant degree of racial segregation within the Church in Southern Rhodesia.⁷⁸

Curiously, the LCBL’s broke with the contemporary Rhodesian racial policy and accepted “Coloured” or mixed-race women as well. By 1941, the community had grown to 54 sisters who had professed annual vows and 21 novices,⁷⁹ and by 1943 there were at least two “Coloured” sisters among the professed members of the congregation, one of whom wrote to Chichester that they could not help feeling that “we two Coloured Sisters

are not among our own,” and suggested that Chichester start an order for “Coloured” women:

Not that we are not satisfied with the treatment or that we are not happy. On the contrary, we are very happy and I must say that I often wish that our Lord could work a miracle and make me like [the] others. Now Dear Reverend Father, I was thinking that if there is a Congregation of the Coloured would it not be good that I join them? But I would not do anything of my own will. I do what you tell me to do. . . I cannot pray, and I think of nothing else than that. therefore, dear Reverend Father, do help me if you can. I was always looking forward that there would be vocations at St. John’s [the predominantly “Coloured” parish in Salisbury] one day and that a congregation would be started there [and] that we could join them. And don’t you think that there would be vocations alright if the girls would see one of their own there as a Sister because I always think that perhaps they don’t know where to go. Once more not as my will but as your will.”⁸⁰

Apparently, Chichester did not take any action on the “Coloured” sister’s plea.

While it will not be possible to know Chichester’s motives for establishing the LCBL Sisters as a diocesan congregation, what is clear is the ambiguous nature in which he fought to support individual African women in their active choices to become nuns in the face of heavy opposition—in some cases emotionally manipulative, in others physically violent, and in still others, both—from their families.

The question of *lobola* lay at the heart of the disputes over these women between the Church and African parents. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century VaShona culture, marriage was not merely the union of two individuals, it was the joining of two families. During this period there was no single wedding ritual as such which signaled the beginning of a marriage. Rather, marriage was a process of negotiation between the families, and a man and woman were considered married once the first part of the bride price was paid to the woman’s family.⁸¹ VaShona families of this period would have been

loathe to lose the *lobola* that they received in their daughter's marriage as they frequently used it to pay for the wives of their sons.⁸²

During the 1920's, some Catholic missionaries apparently paid *lobola* for the candidates whose parents or guardians objected to their entering a religious congregation.⁸³ A guardian's declaration from 1929 reads as follows:

I, Mashumba Chigara, RN 12074 Mtoko, hereby swear and agree that my sister [Katarina] Masodzi can be sworn as a candidate to become a "Sister." I have been given £16-0-0. In the event that Masodzi withdraws or gets expelled, I promise to return all the money received.⁸⁴

Alternatively, women had to seek employment and work to earn the money to pay *lobola* to their fathers or guardians.⁸⁵ Jerome O'Hea, the Jesuit superior of Kutama mission during the 1930's, knew of three cases in which that had happened.⁸⁶ Chichester, however, seems to have taken a position in line with Coghlan's 1923 opinion which said that once an African woman reached the age of majority at 21 she had the right to choose not to marry and to enter a convent, and choosing not to marry implied no obligation to pay *lobola*.

Upon becoming a candidate, a woman had to conform to the strict regimen of pre-Vatican II religious life, and she had the freedom to leave at any time. Accordingly, Chichester seems to have used this freedom of choice as a means to test a woman's vocation when her parents complained and sought to withdraw her. This frequently left the women exposed to emotional violence.

In July 1935, Theresa Marumbeni was admitted as an LCBL candidate at Makumbi mission. John Apel, the mission superior, reported that Theresa's family made "violent protests" and that her father, Chaitezwi, "made representations" to the Native

Commissioner's office in Bindura. Apel further stated that Theresa was 22 years old and that she "has resisted all entreaties of her parents and brothers, and she is likely to remain firm."⁸⁷ When the Assistant N.C. Bindura asked Chichester to "issue instructions" that Theresa's father "be granted facilities to request that Marumbeni may return to him,"⁸⁸ Chichester replied that

there never has been a difficulty about Chaitezwi seeing Marumbeni. However I am not prepared to force her to leave or even advise it. You know as well, in fact better than I, that the parents and guardians of these girls sometimes treat these girls cruelly and the police are in practice often quite powerless in the matter. Marumbeni must herself settle her affairs with her parent who is free to discuss matters with her at any time or place. The father has always had perfect freedom to see his daughter whenever he desires and make whatever request he chooses of her. She is free to do what she likes.⁸⁹

In a similar case, Maria, the daughter of Jacobo Mukoma and Kunzeno from Rusape, was admitted as a candidate at Chishawasha mission in June, 1940. D.C.H. Parkhurst, the N.C. in Salisbury wrote to Charles Ferguson, the superior at Chishawasha, that Maria's parents "are distressed at the thought of losing her and they wish her to return home with them. Mukoma wishes to retain parental control over his daughter and he states he is opposed to her joining the Sisterhood."⁹⁰ Ferguson, however, complained to Parkhurst that Kunzeno, Maria's mother, "has been hanging around the mission ever since Sunday morning and is causing a great deal of annoyance to all concerned. She refuses to leave under any consideration." He further noted that because she was in the later stages of a pregnancy he was "unable to use [the] necessary force" to remove her and requested that Parkhurst send some African messengers "with the necessary powers to have her removed."⁹¹

Parkhurst sent messengers “to *persuade*” Kunzeno to leave Chishawasha, and said that he had explained to Mukoma that he “believe[d]” that Theresa had “attained her majority” and that she “declines to acknowledge parental and paternal control [which] has considerably upset her parents.”⁹² He further stated that Mukoma was aware of his right to appeal to the Secretary for Native Affairs.

In the next round of correspondence Parkhurst informed Ferguson that Kunzeno intended to kill herself “unless Maria goes home with her,” and “urge[d]” him “to compromise and let Maria take her mother home to Rusapi [sic] and to remain with her until after the confinement by which time they will very probably become reconciled. I understand Maria wishes to do this.”⁹³ Ferguson replied that Maria “is very insistent that she should see you personally, so I am sending her to your office. She does not want to go back home.” Additionally, he noted that Mukoma “was talking of wanting ‘*lobola*’ for her,” and referred Parkhurst to consult with Chichester.⁹⁴

Parkhurst met with Maria, and reported that he was “sorry” that

all my powers of persuasion have been ineffective. She simply will not listen to reason and flatly refuses to go home with her parents for a limited time; nor does she seem concerned regarding the possibility (I would even say probability) of her mother Kunzeno doing away with her self. . . . Maria’s selfishness and lack of finer feelings are to be deplored, and I have told her that if Kunzeno does take her own life she will always bear an uneasy, unhappy conscience. Despite this remark Maria remains as hard and immobile as a sphinx. I beg you to exercise your influence over Maria and to compel her to accompany her parents to Rusapi. . . I feel sure she would experience no insurmountable difficulties in returning to Chishawasha later.⁹⁵

Following Ferguson’s suggestion, Parkhurst wrote to Alfred Burbridge, Chichester’s secretary, explaining the case. Parkhurst noted that Maria had attended

school at St. Benedict's mission with her parents' consent, but that when she told her parents that she wanted to become a nun, they refused and lodged a complaint with the Native Commissioner in Salisbury, claiming "that they did not want to lose parental control," and that subsequently she left her home in 1938, "when a minor," against her parents' wishes and went to Chishawasha. Following the interview with Maria, he related to Burbridge that Mukoma and Kunzeno

positively refuse to leave without some satisfaction. . . .The question of dowry has been raised by Mukoma. He argues that if his daughter is to be wedded to the Church he has some claim under Native law before renouncing parental control. I believe he will acquiesce if His Lordship [Chichester] accedes to his claim.⁹⁶

The debate over Maria's fate must have continued over the next two months, although there is no documentary evidence. In August 1940, Parkhurst held another interview with Maria and her parents, which resulted in "no change in the girl's conduct." The NC in Salisbury believed that Mukoma's rights "had to be acknowledged," and more importantly reported that

it has now been decided that Maria should leave the mission and return with her parents to Rusapi and appear before her Native Commissioner who will attempt to bring about a satisfactory relationship between the girl and her parents.⁹⁷

He then asked Ferguson to allow Maria to accompany his messenger back to Salisbury.

Ferguson, accordingly, sent Maria to Parkhurst with his messenger, even though she was "most unwilling to go to Salisbury," on the condition that she see Burbridge first.⁹⁸ He also sent two other girls to accompany her and made arrangements for them to stay at the Dominican convent in town, trusting that "if the Authorities force [Maria] to go to Rusapi proper precautions will be taken for the girl's safety."⁹⁹

Following the meeting that ensued between Maria, her parents, and the Native Commissioner, Parkhurst, “with a view to persuading [Maria] to return with them to Rusapi,” wrote to Chichester that Maria again refused to return home and that he feared Kunzeno would commit suicide.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, he thought it “advisable to refer the matter to higher quarters,” and requested that Maria remain in Salisbury “pending further developments.”¹⁰¹ Parkhurst’s appeal resulted in the decision that

it remains with the girl Maria to decide her own future and she is free to return to Chishawasha Mission. This has been explained to her and her parents.¹⁰²

Maria returned to Chishawasha the following day. It is unclear whether her mother committed suicide or not.

Maria’s case illustrates the degree to which Chichester’s *lobola* policy exposed African women candidates for the convent to emotional and psychological manipulation, as well as the degree to which the colonial administration supported African men in the controversies. More importantly, it illustrates the strength of will and character of many of the women who chose to become nuns. The cases of Theresa Marumbeni and Maria Mukoma together demonstrate the significant shift in the Church’s *lobola* policy: from 1922 to about 1930, by paying *lobola* or having women work to pay it, the Church’s superiors recognized and respected the VaShona cultural practice to some degree. Chichester’s policy, however, was directly and intentionally hostile to the VaShona culture, and caused significant tensions between the Church and African elders on the one hand and the Southern Rhodesian colonial authorities on the other.

Chichester's *lobola* policy also exposed African women who wanted to become nuns to physical violence. Chichester knew the Native department's policy of supporting parental control over African women until they were married and became the wards of their husbands. His comments to the administrator handling the Theresa Marumbeni case certainly imply that he was aware of the harsh treatment these women received. Thus, although his *lobola* policy may not have caused the violence, it was a contributing factor, as the case of Sister Catherine Mazorodze demonstrates.

According to her baptismal certificate—a document required for admission into a religious institute in the Catholic church, Catherine Mazorodze was born on April 6, 1935.¹⁰³ Sister Catherine, however, stated that she was born in 1938.¹⁰⁴ As the controversy surrounding her entrance occurred in 1955 and 1956, and given Chichester's policy that once a woman had reached the age of 21 she was free of parental control, this would indicate the more than likely probability that the Church on more than one occasion changed the birth dates on its official documents to facilitate the possibility for an African woman to become a candidate for the religious life.

Both of Catherine's parents were Methodists, and Catherine was baptized as a Methodist at the Wesleyan mission school at Sandringham, near the town of Norton, when she was about six years old. When she completed her lower primary education she asked her parents to send her to the school at St. Paul's mission in Musumi—the mission was run by the Jesuits and the school by the LCBL Sisters—where her mother's younger brother studied. At St. Paul's, Catherine completed her primary education as well as the first two years of secondary school.¹⁰⁵

In 1954, there was an influenza epidemic that affected many of the student's at St. Paul's school. Catherine was baptized as a Catholic *in periculo mortis*.¹⁰⁶ While in the hospital after her baptism, she told one of the Jesuit priests that she "wanted to be like the sisters." He advised her to "get better first," and after she left the hospital and returned to school she continued "praying about it." When she went home for school holidays, she told her father but "he didn't understand," thinking she wanted to be a nurse, so he gave his consent. When she was to become a candidate and returned home to ask for his permission, however, he refused and "as a punishment said that he wanted [the] school money back."¹⁰⁷

Catherine spoke with the superior at Musami, who advised her that it would be better for her to teach in order to earn the money to repay her father for the school fees. Accordingly, he arranged a teaching position for her at the school at St. Michael's mission in Mhondoro, where she taught for a year. In December 1955, she took £15 to her father and again asked for permission to become a nun. In the presence of her mother, and elder and younger brothers, Catherine recalled, "my father beat me, and told me never to pronounce anything like that to him again."¹⁰⁸

After staying at home for several weeks, she asked her father for permission to return to Mhondoro to "collect [her] last wages." Catherine arrived in time to join the other candidates for a three day retreat and was received as a candidate with the other women, and returned to St. Michael's. When her father came looking for her, Catherine "tried to hide." But the superior of the mission, Fr. Otto, told her that she must talk with him. Upon seeing her in the candidate's habit, Catherine's father "took off the veil and

threw it into the dining room, and pulled me away.” Fr. Otto told her to go with him, as a way of “trying to see how committed I was.”¹⁰⁹

When they returned home Catherine was “beaten and beaten.” Her father tore her “dresses,” although she was able to hide her veil among her clothes. She began to look for a chance to run away, but her father or mother was always with her. They forbade her to sing Catholic hymns or to make the sign of the cross. Catherine was “crying in her heart” because she knew she “had to leave.” One day, Catherine put on her veil and began to sing Catholic hymns. Her father asked her to stop, “but I didn’t stop that day,” she said. He beat her again, and asked the Methodist minister to pray over her because he thought she was possessed. For the next month, people in her family and neighborhood told her “to forget being Catholic and being a sister.” Her father stayed outside her door when she slept. If he thought she “was thinking of being Catholic, he asked [her], and if I said ‘yes’ I was beaten.”¹¹⁰

While attending a football match, Catherine ran away, “traveling in the dark.” She received succor from a White farmer, who took her to the railroad the next day, where she took a train to Salisbury, and eventually made her way to Makumbi where her aunt—a Catholic—had married a Catholic man and settled. Catherine’s aunt took her to the hospital “for treatment for a week,” and then took her to the mission and introduced her to Fr. Bevis Collings, the mission superior, and Sr. Mary de Mercedes, O.P., the LCBL’s novice mistress. Catherine’s uncle spoke with Fr. Collings, who was “very concerned about the situation: my parents didn’t know where I was.” Collings thus went to the N.C. Hartley, who reported her location at Makumbi.¹¹¹

It was at this point that Chichester got involved. Writing to S. E. Morris, the Chief Native Commissioner in Salisbury, Chichester explained the case and argued that

The girl is a Catholic and therefore I think it is my duty to claim that now she is over twenty one, she has a right to become a nun without her father's consent. It is, after all, one of the fundamental rights of a British subject, that after the age of twenty one, he or she is at liberty to choose any mode of life they may think themselves fitted for.¹¹²

Chichester "put the case before" Morris, and asked for his "advice on the matter." He concluded that Catherine was staying with her uncle, and that "his story is that she went to him for protection."¹¹³

Morris replied that at 21 Catherine had "no problem joining the African sisterhood," and that she didn't require her father's permission, "however, that view has never been determined in a Court of Law, and I may be wrong." He further opined that it was "not right" for the Native department to advise Catherine

one way or the other. If she joins the Sisterhood against her father's wishes, the father has the right to bring an action in the Courts. He may complain to his Native Commissioner in the first instance, in which case the correct reply to him would be that under *our* law, Catherine would be entitled to become a nun without his consent, but that if he wished to do so, and had the necessary funds, he could make an application to the Court, probably ending up in the High Court, to restrain her from carrying out her intention and the Church from contracting with her. We [wouldn't] *advise* him to adopt this course, but it would be our duty to inform him of his rights, and also to warn him that he might lose his case, and, therefore, his money as well.¹¹⁴

Morris decided to send the case to the provincial native commissioner "to see if all parties can settle amicably." He further expressed his feeling that

It seems a pity that parents should become estranged from their children through a conflict of laws. . . I am sure you will agree that it is our duty to look after, not only those who have taken over our Western Civilisation and its laws, but also those who rely on Native Law and Custom to guide them in their everyday lives.¹¹⁵

Morris closed by inviting Chichester to attend the meeting with the provincial native commissioner.

Chichester declined to attend the meeting.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, Morris sent him extracts from the minutes taken by the P.N.C., which reported that he was

unable to make any impression on either the parents or the daughter; she intends to go ahead with her plans, and they, in consequence, renounced her although the mother was distressed over the prospect of not being allowed by her husband to see her daughter. . . .The difficulty is over adjustment of marriage considerations paid in respect of Catherine's elder sister who has died and which the father hoped to do when he married the second daughter off. He wanted to know why the Roman Catholic church should not be called upon to give consideration in marriage for his daughter.¹¹⁷

Chichester replied that such a result was "in a kind of way to be expected."¹¹⁸ He further predicted that "the father will relent fairly soon and things will get better. In other cases this is what happened."

Ultimately, Chichester's prescience was borne out: Catherine was admitted as a postulant upon completing her candidacy, and was asked to reconcile with her family. Accompanied by a man from Makumbi, Catherine returned home. Her father refused to receive her in the home, but others in the homestead prevailed upon him and she stayed for three weeks. The relationship between them "wasn't good," but he confessed to her his reason for not wanting her to become a nun. He said that "It wasn't the money he wanted. He told me, 'You are my beloved daughter and I didn't want to be separated from you.'" He explained that the family was not familiar with the Catholic church and its ways, but had heard that nuns were not allowed to go home, and that "he didn't want

that” with Catherine. Consequently, he and Catherine were able “to work out an understanding.”¹¹⁹

If members of Sister Bernadette Garatsa’s cohort in 1932 were unwilling to talk about parental opposition, by the mid-1950s the situation had changed dramatically. Sister Catherine recalled that other members of her novice class also had “big problems” with their families and were beaten. She described one sister’s father as “very violent,” and referred to several instances of “parents coming to missions to take [the women] home.” Whether a woman withstood family pressure and stayed or not “depended on how you fought for yourself. You were left free to decide. Nobody would make a final decision for you.”¹²⁰ Sister Catherine, now assistant director of postulants, further noted that “even now a parent’s permission is needed [for a women] to enter, although she is free do so at 18 or 21. But culturally we want to respect parents and maintain positive family relationships.”¹²¹

While Chichester may or may not have been able to do more to protect the women who wanted to become nuns from parental violence, his willingness to do so was evident in his fight for Clara Margwisa against her father and the Rhodesian government. In this case, Chichester unambiguously subverted the efforts of the Native department to implement its pro-parental policy by helping a 19 year old girl flee from her father, and then denied any knowledge of her whereabouts until she turned 21.

On October 3, 1949 the provincial native commissioner for Northern Mashonaland wrote to Chichester that Francis Morosi¹²² had complained that his daughter Clara, a student at St. Paul’s mission school in Musami, wanted to be a nun and

that she had been sent to Monte Cassino mission, and asked that the bishop allow Clara to return home with her father.¹²³ Chichester, in writing to the chief native commissioner in Salisbury, explained that Clara was only 19 years old, and that although her father refused to allow her to become a nun and had induced the native commissioner of Goromonzi district to issue "orders" for her to return home, she was "not being kept by us from fulfilling those orders, but seems quite determined that she will not go back to her father."¹²⁴ Additionally, Clara "[wished] now to appeal to His Excellency the Governor," accordingly Chichester asked the C.N.C. to "kindly give a note forbidding the father to remove her forcibly."¹²⁵

This put the Native department in "a difficult position," because there was "no evidence that Morosi has ill-treated Clara or in any material way failed in his duty as a parent towards her."¹²⁶ The position was not so difficult, however, as to prevent A.G. Yardley, the assistant chief native commissioner from "confirming" that

Morosi has the right to forbid his daughter Clara to remain at a mission station for the purpose of becoming a nun. Clara appears to be nineteen years of age and is definitely a minor. Further, although nothing is being done to retain Clara, and she is free to leave the mission and return to her father if she wishes, I feel this is not enough, and that so long as she is allowed to remain at the mission while her father wishes to take her away, she is being assisted in her disobedience to parental authority.¹²⁷

Yardley further stated that while he understood that Clara wanted to appeal to the governor of Southern Rhodesia, in the meantime the bishop should have told her "to go back to her father."¹²⁸

The same day, Chichester went to Monte Cassino to explain to Clara that he "had bad news for her." Her appeal to the governor of the colony required her native

commissioner to make a ruling that was subsequently investigated by the chief native commissioner, whose decision Yardley had communicated. Chichester believed that “there was no chance that the Governor would reverse that decision,” and that accordingly he “could not keep her at Monte Cassino nor could [he] keep her as a candidate for the Sisters.”¹²⁹ Clara said that she understood, but asked about the possibility of remaining at Monte Cassino to “deal with her father herself.” When Chichester and Francis Markall, a Jesuit priest on the mission staff who would succeed Chichester as Archbishop of Salisbury in 1956, explained to Clara that “the Bishop was not free to hold even a white girl under the age of twenty one whose father objected,” she said that she “understood that she could not remain a candidate and was very upset.”¹³⁰ Nevertheless, Chichester wrote to Yardley that when she asked “whether she could remain at Monte Cassino as an ordinary girl and fight her own battles. . .I assented [because] I rather had the impression. . .that she had some hope her father would allow her to finish her teacher training course as an ordinary girl.”¹³¹

Shortly thereafter, around February 13, 1950, Clara went missing.¹³² Markall, in responding to a letter from Chichester described “the rumour about Clara’s whereabouts” as “news” to him, and further stated that he “was not really interested to know” where she was “until she is 21.”¹³³ Apparently Clara had told Markall that she would not go home because “her father would force her to marry.” Markall counseled her that “she could protect herself against that in any way she thought fit,” and gave her a letter authorizing her to travel as well as

a new blanket and some pocket money [because] I remembered that when [Jesuit] novices leave [the novitiate] in Europe it is usual to provide pocket

money. I had left the station before she booked her ticket and do not know where she went.¹³⁴

In addition to abetting Clara's flight, Chichester apparently gave serious consideration to bringing Clara's case before the courts in order to resolve the questions of whether or not African women were free to remain single, and whether or not they could become nuns against their parents' wishes. He gave attorney L.M.N. Hodson a copy of Coghlan's 1923 opinion and apparently asked Hodson for a reading of the legal climate.

With regard to the question of whether an African woman could "remain single," Hodson cited the 1927 Native Marriages Act which required "native marriage officers" to inquire "into [a woman's] freedom of consent, and determined that "If a girl may refuse to marry one man, obviously she can go on refusing all offers of marriage."¹³⁵ Thus, an African woman had the right to remain single.

Concerning the issue of whether an African woman could become a nun without her parent or guardian's consent, Hodson opined that it was doubtful that an African woman under 21 would be allowed to enter a religious community without the consent of her guardian; that, with all due respect to Coghlan, an African guardian "may validly contract" not to receive *lobola* for his daughter or ward if she married, "whether she be under or over the age of 21"; and that an African woman over 21 may become a nun without the permission of her "guardian-in-native-customary law."¹³⁶

Citing anthropologist Charles Bullock's, *The Mashona and the Matabele*, Hodson argued that VaShona marriage customs were experiencing changes.

Lobolo [sic] is no longer a bond between family groups; but it is almost in the nature of the purchase price of sexual rights to a quite willing girl. .

.Decorum between son-in-law and father-in-law in such a relationship is no longer observed; for more often than not most of the lobolo agreed on is owing—not paid.¹³⁷

He believed that the culture had become “so unsettled” that there was “little but a decaying tissue of custom” to prevent an African woman from deciding to become a nun, and that “there must be some age at which an African female ceases to be a child.” Hodson based his opinion on this point on three cases which collectively made “inroads upon strict native custom,” which stated that African women were free from the authority of their guardians upon marriage and that they didn’t revert to that guardianship on the dissolution of a marriage; that “in certain circumstances, a woman may hold property as a *femme sole*; and that a divorced African woman may be awarded custody of her children in her own right.¹³⁸

In discussing the “the inaccuracy of using a term of art of one legal system to describe a relationship. . .of another system,” and given the apparent changes in VaShona culture, Hodson argued that an African parent or guardian could make a valid agreement to forego receipt of *lobola*, and “such an agreement, then, would be one way of releasing a girl [sic] under the age of 21 who wished to become a nun.”¹³⁹ Although this position was not established in law, Hodson believed that the Southern Rhodesian courts were approaching it in principle, and cited legal a case that established that “a claim for return of lobolo. . .must not be used as a lever to enforce marriage, notwithstanding that the marriage which the unwilling party would be prepared to contract is one recognised by a religion without any basis in native custom.” He then further proposed “a broader principle” that the future possibility of receiving *lobola* for a woman who doesn’t wish to

marry anyone “must not be allowed to stand in the way of her entering a religious state, of which there is no counterpart in native custom,” and that the negation of this principle would be “repugnant to natural justice and morality.”¹⁴⁰

Regardless of whether Hodson’s (and Bullock’s) perspective of change in VaShona marriage practices was accurate, the perception of change in the minds of British colonial official and academic circles is significant for its effects on the indigenous African culture. By 1950, Rhodesian colonialists apparently believed that the introduction and imposition of Roman-Dutch law from the Cape Colony upon African culture had significantly altered the marriage process to the point that they could craft and implement policies based on perceived—not necessarily actual—cultural change. Additionally, Hodson seems to have been either unaware of or chose not to recognize the role of the Bonga in early twentieth century VaShona culture.

Chichester seems to have adopted a strategy of trying to discredit Francis Morosi as a fit father and thereby releasing Clara from his parental authority. As early as February 1950, Chichester had advised the Native department that the native commissioner of Goromonzi district had “already had some passage of arms with the father, Morosi. He will therefore probably know him as a wrong-headed fellow.”¹⁴¹ Chichester received a report from the mission superior at Makumbi mission that in October 1951, Morosi’s wife had come to the mission with her children because

he had refused to give them food or clothing. . .because Mary [Morosi’s wife] had not obeyed his order that neither she nor the children were to come to Sunday service. . .Her husband beat the children when they came back from Sunday service but he did not beat his wife Mary because he considered that conduct unworthy of a former teacher.¹⁴²

Chichester brought this information to the attention of Chief Native Commissioner Powys-Jones, though he was quick to point out that “Clara’s wish to become a nun has nothing to do with ill-treatment from her father,” but that he seemed to have been abusing his parental authority.¹⁴³

According to unverified information that Chichester apparently had collected, Francis Morosi had been living and teaching at Kutama mission in 1945, and left when he had to pay damages for allegedly burning the roof at an outschool. “He considered this unjust and has never forgotten it. His state of mind was further influenced” when Chichester admitted Clara as a candidate without having consulted him. Morosi said “that apart from not having been consulted he was not against his daughter trying her vocation as a Sister. [Clara], on the other hand, says before her departure from Monte Cassino [February 13, 1950] that her father wished to force her to marry.”¹⁴⁴

Francis Morosi, for his part, stated that after having received no direct answers or any satisfaction from the Church or Native department dating back to 1948 when Clara first declared her desire to become a nun, he withdrew his school-aged children from Catholic mission schools and enrolled them in Salvation Army schools because “there could be one father only in a house, and in the circumstances I could not allow my children to continue their education at a Catholic school.”¹⁴⁵ Fr. Maurice Rea, a Jesuit at Makumbi mission, allegedly told Morosi, “Francis, your Priest is the big Father in a family; what he says is the wisest thing.”¹⁴⁶ In a subsequent meeting Rea threatened Morosi with physical violence for having withdrawn the children from the Catholic school, and when Morosi went to look for his wife at the mission, Rea—despite the

intervention of two African teachers—"landed a light kick" on Morosi and told him "you will not receive your wife until you come here and submit to punishment for six months."¹⁴⁷ By January, 1952, Morosi reported to the provincial native commissioner that Clara "seemed quite lost, and I had neither news or trace of her."¹⁴⁸

In the meantime, Chichester continued to hold the Native department staff at bay concerning Clara's whereabouts and to negotiate with them about resolving the case. The secretary for native affairs deemed the problem "a complex one," and hesitated about issuing a ruling so as to avoid "repercussions." He informed Chichester that he would refer the entire question of women becoming nuns against their parents' wishes to the Native Affairs Board.¹⁴⁹ Chichester asserted that the issue was "a question of fundamental human rights," and that if the Native Affairs Board's decision was negative, he would

have no choice but to explain my position to the Minister [of Native Affairs] and have a test case. . . But as the matter has been discussed now for a long time and the girl in this particular instance is still waiting for an answer, I hope the decision will not be delayed.¹⁵⁰

On January 31, 1952, however, the secretary for native affairs advised Chichester that the Native Affairs Board had met and decided that according to African law, women were considered to be perpetual minors under either their fathers or husbands. If another African interfered with the guardian's rights, the matter would be settled in a native court, i.e., before a native commissioner. If a European were involved in the case, however, it would go before a magistrate's court and English common law would apply, not "native custom." Thus, an African woman 21 years or older was free to do whatever she wanted, against her parents' wishes. Referring to Clara Margwisa's case, the secretary for native

affairs concluded that “a native girl, upon reaching the age of 21, may defy her guardian and become a nun,” though he wasn’t sure if that precluded the guardian from bringing a lawsuit for loss of *lobola* “should he be in a position to show that the girl has been enticed from his custody.”¹⁵¹

Chichester expressed his pleasure and gratitude “that the matter has at last been decided and that the decision is in accordance with ecclesiastical law and practice.”¹⁵² Claiming that cases such as Clara Margwisa’s were infrequent, Chichester assured the secretary that “in any individual case [that did arise], the Ecclesiastical Authorities will always act as circumspectly as possible.”¹⁵³ Thus, after 30 years, the Rhodesian colonial administration issued a ruling ostensibly to settle the question of an African woman’s right to become a nun, and ruled in favor of the Church’s position: one which was in line with Coghlan’s and Hodson’s opinions.

The ruling, however, did not end Clara Margwisa’s case. Chichester informed the Native department that although Francis Morosi was “now treating his family properly,” he was not “at liberty to use my influence to persuade [Clara] to return home,” not only because he believed that she would be unwilling to go, but because

if I were to exert any pressure on her, not only she, but also most of the Sisterhood (who will of course hear all about it if they don’t know already) will certainly think I have sacrificed Clara for the sake of smoothing over a difficulty. If however you can give an assurance to Clara that no harm will happen to her and that she will be fit and able to join the Sisterhood on September 5 of this year [Clara’s twenty first birthday], then I would be prepared to have the proposition put to her that she return home until that date. [The N.C. Gormonzi] asked me to tell her, if this should come about, that her father is now allowing the family to practice their religion without molestation.¹⁵⁴

Chichester also went on at length to deny any responsibility for sending Clara anywhere or knowing where she was during the greater part of her disappearance:

Perhaps I should add that the apparent supposition of the father that I am responsible for her present whereabouts, is quite wrong. You will see from my letter to your office dated February 11, 1950 that I told her she could no longer stay at Monte Cassino nor could I continue to harbour her. When exactly she left Monte Cassino after that I do not know; nor did I for nine months [know] where she had gone to. I certainly did not send her anywhere; nor did the priest in charge at Monte Cassino. Where she went was entirely her own choice.¹⁵⁵

Chichester further recalled that Clara had wanted to appeal to the governor of Southern Rhodesia in January, 1950, but that she didn't, and that she "blamed" him for denying the appeal.¹⁵⁶

Although Francis Morosi and the officials of the Native department did not know Clara's location, contrary to Chichester and Markall's claims of ignorance, correspondence between Clara and the two Jesuits clearly place her at the convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood at Empanjeni mission southwest of Bulawayo between August, 1950 and the end of July, 1952.¹⁵⁷ According to Chichester, he only learned of Clara's whereabouts nine months after she fled, or in November, 1950. There are, however, three letters from Chichester and one from Markall to Clara between August and October 1950. If Chichester is to be believed in this highly suspect instance, then Clara's strength of will and determination become all the more formidable in that she, a single MuShona woman in mid-twentieth century colonial Zimbabwe, fled across Southern Rhodesia alone to a mission in the heart of SiNdebele-speaking territory. The dates of the correspondence aside, this would seem unlikely given her frequent entreaties either to return to Monte Cassino or to go to Salisbury.

Apparently, Clara's desire to be received as a candidate did not diminish during her exile in Matabeleland. Clara's letters also show the extreme irony of the situation into which the exchange of African patriarchy for European paternalism put these women, who had to be strong enough to stand up to African men and European bureaucrats, yet humble and servile in their dealings with Chichester and other church authorities:

O father please, I have no other hither father than you. You are really my Godfather. Please have mercy on me. Let this be unto me for the name of Jesus. When it is better let me come [to Salisbury]. If only you could allow me to enter, nothing else I would wish of you. In fact I hope that he [Morosi] will give leave. You will see that he will not do as he did before. I have never written to him since I came here. I think it is better that he does not know where I am. Did he come to trouble you because of me? But don't tell him anything about me. Perhaps when you think that its possible for me to do so, then count this time as my candidate years and let me learn my Teacher Training here at Empandeni mission.¹⁵⁸

Chichester's letters constantly told Clara that she would either have to get Morosi's written consent to enter the LCBL candidacy or wait until she was 21 years old. His insistence that she be patient seemed to have little effect, as she continued to ask to be received as a candidate.¹⁵⁹ He did, however, allow her to complete her teacher training at Empandeni.¹⁶⁰

By the end of May, 1952, with her twenty first birthday fast approaching, Clara informed Chichester that she had decided to go home to speak with her father.¹⁶¹ Prior to going home, however, Clara asked the bishop "to note clearly" the date she was to be received, where she was to go, and whether she would be received as a candidate or a postulant.¹⁶² Additionally, she inquired as to how she should dispose of £10 which she had saved while teaching at Empandeni. Chichester replied that she would be received as

a candidate at Monte Cassino on September 5, 1952, and that any money she had left after having paid for her expenses was to be left in trust with Markall.¹⁶³

Clara returned home in August, 1952.¹⁶⁴ Although this greatly pleased Chichester and the members of the Native department staff involved with the case, the effort at reconciliation was an apparent failure. According to Morosi, Clara “shut herself up in a hut,” refused to speak with him, and was “disrespectful to and about” him.¹⁶⁵ Morosi, accordingly, went to the N.C. Goromonzi’s office to report her “disobedient” manner, and “to have my case written down as my daughter says she is nearly 21 years of age, and will then be free to do as she wishes.” Additionally, he made the accusation that “all the time the Priests and the Bishop have known where Clara was, and as she had no money they must have known where she was and how she got to Bulawayo.”¹⁶⁶

After four years of disputes, Clara again became a candidate for the LCBL Sisters on September 5, 1952, at Monte Cassino mission. About a month later, she wrote to Chichester asking for permission to take the Southern Rhodesia Junior Certificate course (completion of primary school) and the advanced teacher training course before becoming a postulant.¹⁶⁷ The bishop replied that it was a bad suggestion as she was to become a postulant in December, 1952, and that she would then do the advanced teacher training over the following year before entering the novitiate. He further noted that “all good religious orders are particular about keeping their rules. . .so it will be better to do the postulum.”¹⁶⁸

Not long thereafter, Clara received a summons to appear before the native court in Goromonzi because Francis Morosi had filed charges that she

[did] wrongfully and unlawfully and maliciously burn a quantity of exercise books and textbooks, the property of Morosi [and that she had] admitted to the Police Officer that she had burnt those books [saying] “I burnt those books, because I was searching for my letters. I first looked through the books, but did not find them. My father has no right to take my letters. If he wants to read them he can ask me, and if I like I give him permission. If I don’t like, I tell him.”¹⁶⁹

Clara appeared in court, testified, and was fined £5 for the destruction of property, even though she believed that they weren’t even worth £1, being mostly school exercise books, “periodicals, and newspapers.”¹⁷⁰

Morosi had apparently taken Clara’s letters and submitted them as evidence of Chichester’s and Markall’s knowledge of her whereabouts when he made his statement to the N.C. Goromonzi. Clara believed that her father had violated her rights according to VaShona marriage practices that allowed a woman to possess gifts from a suitor—which by the 1950’s apparently had come to include letters—without a parent’s knowledge or consent.¹⁷¹ She argued that “her father has no right to keep [her letters] anymore than he had a right to take them. In Native Custom he cannot touch her property, especially her clothes and letters: she has absolute right to receive letters from anyone, just as any girl [sic] has who may wish to be courted by a boy [sic].”¹⁷²

What is most interesting is Clara’s understanding and awareness of her rights in both African and European legal traditions. On the one hand she clearly expressed a firm knowledge of the property rights accorded to her as a MuShona woman considering marriage. On the other hand she expressed those rights as applicable to her situation in a decidedly Western context, evidently using the Church’s long standing metaphor of a woman becoming a “bride of Christ” when she becomes a nun.

Not only did Morosi take Clara to court for destruction of property, he also retained legal counsel to “see that. . . Clara be returned to him as he alleges she has been put into a convent without his consent at Monte Cassino.”¹⁷³ Apparently Morosi’s younger daughter Matilda also expressed a desire to become a nun. Morosi complained that “the mission authorities” had “encouraged” the daughters “to be underhanded in the method by which they have entered their vocations,” and was “most disturbed at the treatment he has received” from Church authorities.¹⁷⁴ If, however,

his daughters return to him and properly ask his permission, as they should, and if they convince him that they do, in fact, want to put aside the things of this world, he will forthwith give his permission for them to commence the novitiate.¹⁷⁵

Chichester denied any knowledge of Clara’s sister Matilda or her possible interest in becoming a nun.¹⁷⁶ He also notified his lawyers, and gave Markall instructions “to refuse [any] request or demand. . . [to return Clara] if it is possible” because she was over 21.¹⁷⁷ There is no record of the case either having gone to court or any settlement having been reached.

The effects of Morosi’s legal actions devastated Clara. Although Chichester had apparently counted her exile in Matabeleland as part of her candidacy—she was received as a postulant three months after becoming a candidate at Monte Cassino—Markall reported that Clara was

not happy about the judgement of the Court, and her heart is very black: she has not so far given way to temptations of revenge against her father, but now she feels very strongly towards it. . . . Far from being penitent about what she did, Clara still thinks she had a perfect right to try to destroy her property in the hands of her father, therefore, she is very unhappy, cannot forgive her father, and is tempted to revenge. She wishes to take revenge, I gather, by speaking out about her father to the Chief

Native Commissioner, and then both her father and the Chief Native Commissioner will see what she can do in the way of revenge.¹⁷⁸

By May 1953, the director of postulants at Monte Cassino reported to Chichester that Clara's attitude "would seem to indicate that her character is not suited for community life."¹⁷⁹ Apparently Clara had refused to take the position as head postulant and its responsibilities, necessitating the rotation of the office among the postulants monthly. She "obeyed unwillingly for one month and then disobeyed again, refusing to perform all the little duties" associated with the job by, for example, being late for meals and other occasions "in order to avoid leading the prayers." She caused "a lot of annoyance and inconvenience among the Postulants and Candidates" by never taking "the place appointed to her in the Church and in the dining room."¹⁸⁰

Chichester apparently asked Markall to speak with Clara, but aside from conveying "her wish to become a nun," to the bishop she "said that she did not want to discuss the matter any further with me."¹⁸¹ Accordingly, Chichester "decided to send [Clara] to Musami, and [had] arranged work for you to do there."¹⁸² Clara eventually left the community, although it is not clear whether she left of her own accord or was dismissed by Chichester.¹⁸³

Clearly, the experiences of women such as Clara Margwisa and Catherine Mazorodze must have had an impact on how the LCBL Sisters dealt with African families once they began to assume the leadership of their congregation, and inherited the legacy of Chichester's *lobola* policy. The Africanization of the leadership came in August 1965 with the election of Sister Rocha Mushonga as the first Mother General.¹⁸⁴

Born in 1928 near Triashill mission in the eastern highlands, she attended the Triashill mission school for her primary education. She was inspired by the “dedication,” “sacrifice,” and “love” of the Jesuits and the Precious Blood Sisters at Triashill. Although her mother did not complain when Rocha was baptized Catholic as a student, she objected strongly when Rocha told her she wanted to become a nun. She followed Rocha to Monte Cassino and “argued” with Chichester, who surprisingly told Rocha to “go home.”¹⁸⁵ Rocha was “lucky” to have had the support of the Jesuit community at Monte Cassino, who prevailed upon Chichester to admit her as a candidate and let her stay at Monte Cassino in 1946.¹⁸⁶

Sister Rocha completed a teacher training course at Monte Cassino during her candidacy and taught for a year as a postulant. Although she told Chichester she wanted to be a nurse, he told her that she would be a teacher. In 1948, she entered the novitiate at Makumbi, and after professing vows, she taught at Monte Cassino for several years before being sent to complete secondary studies at the Jesuit school at Gokomere, after which she continued to teach, ultimately being sent to the school at Mount Saint Mary’s mission in Hwedza.¹⁸⁷

As the first African general of the LCBL Sisters, Mother Rocha set about improving the spiritual and educational formation of the sisters by sending them to colleges to complete their advanced (or A-level) exams, as well as several to school in Britain and others for studies at the University College of Rhodesia. Although she never was able to serve as a nurse, she sent several sisters for nurse’s training, and others to be

trained as formators.¹⁸⁸ Sister Catherine Marodze, for example, studied courses in bookkeeping, accounting, and hospital administration.¹⁸⁹

During the liberation war in the 1970's, Mother Rocha continued to visit all the communities of LCBL Sisters who stayed at the missions with the people, even when the priests had fled for their safety, or had been deported by the Rhodesian authorities.¹⁹⁰ She frequently met the freedom fighters en route to the communities, and they "always had details on me." When asked why she was traveling, she replied, "I can't leave the Sisters alone, so I go." On several occasions she had to advocate for sisters who had been arrested by Rhodesian forces for "helping guerrillas." According to Mother Rocha, these sisters were giving material aid to the guerrillas, specifically medicines and clothing, and she protected them when the police harassed them, even though she herself was frequently followed by the police.

During Mother Rocha's administration parental opposition to their daughters becoming nuns gradually lessened through culturally sensitive education,¹⁹¹ although "some still object even today [and] girls have to struggle." When asked what she remembered most about Mother Rocha's years as general of the order, Sister Bernadette Garatsa simply said, "She loved us."

The experiences of African women who chose to enter Catholic religious congregations in colonial Zimbabwe not only generally support Elizabeth Schmidt's argument that African women who eschewed patriarchy in the African cultures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries merely exchanged it for a western form of masculine domination, but also lend themselves readily to practice theory analysis:¹⁹² the

external forces affecting the VaShona culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the imposition of British colonial rule and the introduction of Western Christianity, which were mediated by Native department officials and missionaries respectively. Internally, African men mediated these forces by trying to maintain control over African women. VaShona women's actions in becoming nuns, however, transformed: African culture from early twentieth century VaShona culture to mid-twentieth century VaShona culture by causing a change in the practice of infantilizing women in perpetuity; Southern Rhodesian society by moving the Native department from unwavering support of African men in maintaining control over African women to allowing the women the right of choice at age 21; and the Catholic church by introducing African elements into the entirely missionary elite of the Church's hierarchical structure.

Terence Ranger, Elizabeth Schmidt, Diana Jeater, and Dachs and Rea all either implied or explicitly stated that many of the women who became nuns did so to run away from marriages arranged by their families in exchange for *lobolo*.¹⁹³ Oral and archival evidence, however, clearly shows that a significant number of the sisters spent time as students at Catholic mission schools and, during or after the course of their studies expressed a belief that they were responding to a divine vocation to live a life of service in a religious community—a motive more readily ascribed to Westerners.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, that these women had to overcome familial opposition points to the fact that this was a phenomenon that occurred in the Church in other places at other times as well.¹⁹⁵

Colonial domination within the church was certainly a factor in the founding of religious congregations for African women. The constitutions of the Daughters of Saint

Francis, the Children of the Holy Trinity, and the Little Children of our Blessed Lady all initially denied the African women who constituted the congregations any voice in their governance, and left the regular administration to either a European bishop (Fleischer or Chichester) or to European nuns (the Precious Blood Sisters or the Dominicans). Even Chichester was surprised to see that “the white Sisters are determined to keep the native Sisters down-trodden.”¹⁹⁶ That these structures of government not only had approval from Rome, but were in fact more than likely suggested by the Vatican, indicates the degree to which European colonial domination had affected the Catholic church and its leadership. Not surprisingly, the LCBL Sisters remain a diocesan congregation under the direct authority of the Archbishop of Harare, even though they have been living and working beyond the diocesan—and national—boundaries since 1955. In the Church in the rest of the world, most orders that work in more than one diocese or nation usually apply for and receive pontifical status and come under the supervision of the Vatican Congregation for Religious.

Although exchanging African patriarchy for Western paternalism affected the kinds of activities available to African women who wanted to become nuns, it did not stop them from acting in what they perceived to be in their best interests. The Children of the Holy Trinity initially only admitted widows, but the requests of younger unmarried women to enter this and the other orders forced the issue upon the Native department. Although Rocha Mushonga wanted to be a nurse and Chichester told her that she would have to be content as a teacher, when she became Mother General she sent sisters for nurse’s training. Clara Margwisa’s case certainly shows the limits that religious life

circumscribed: while she had no problems confronting her father, and even burning his books, she was always plaintive and suppliant in her communications with Chichester, even when defiant of the Precious Blood Sisters' authority.

The stories and experiences of these African nuns clearly shows them as agents taking some measure of control over their lives, and their actions had significant effects on African culture as well as on the relations between European administrators and missionaries. These were not merely passive, docile women who did what they were told to do by parents, priests, or politicians. Rather, they defied their parents and their culture. Maria Mukoma specifically requested an audience with Native Commissioner Parkhurst. Catherine Mazorodze and Theresa Marumbeni endured years of physical and emotional violence in order pursue their vocations. Clara Margwisa's attempt to appeal to the Southern Rhodesian governor, as well as her defiance and flight, not only influenced Chichester to seek a second legal opinion and to consider bringing a test case to court to settle the question of the legal status of African women and their right to become nuns, but resulted in the ruling of the Native Affairs Board which ostensibly gave African women the rights of legal majority under English common law when they turned 21. The letter of the early LCBL Sisters to Chichester requesting fulfilment of their basic needs, sound religious formation, the right to work freely from the supervision of European nuns, and initials for their religious congregation like those of all religious institutes in the Church clearly showed their cognizance of the Church's traditions as well as a demand for some degree of status recognition.

The actions of African men also contributed to the forging of a new Southern Rhodesian colonial social practice. Francis Morosi knew his rights in both VaShona and English laws. His lawsuits against his daughter for destruction of property and against the Church for improperly influencing his daughters demonstrated his fluency in the contemporary British legal practice. Similarly, his requests that his daughters ask his permission properly before entering the convent constituted a demand for recognition as a man and head of family in VaShona cultural practice, as were the actions of Chaitezwi, Jacobo Mukoma, and Joseph Mazorodze. Ultimately, the practices of both Africans and Europeans—men and women alike—resulted in new relationships between persons and the institutions of Southern Rhodesian society. The entirety of the actions of the African men concerned, of the Native department staff, and of the elders of the Church, however, were reactions and responses to the initiatives taken by African women in not only expressing but acting on the desire to become nuns.

Notes

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2. Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare (AAH hereafter), Box 545, File B (545/B hereafter), Francis Markall, S.J. to Aston Chichester, S.J., November 16, 1952.

3. Interview with Mother Rocha Mushonga, LCBL, Visitation Convent, Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000.

4. *ibid.*

5. Terence Ranger, "Women in the Politics of Makoni District, Zimbabwe, 1890-1980," 1. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Elizabeth Schmidt for proving a copy of this essay.

6. *ibid.*, 13-18.

7. Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*, (Harare: Baobab, 1992), 96-97, 136-37; Diana Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 250-51.

8. Ranger, "Women in the Politics of Makoni District," 15-16. The Sisters of the Precious Blood were allowed to return to Monte Cassino mission in 1918 to serve as nurses in the area around the mission, and the Mariannhill fathers and brothers returned in 1920. See A. J. Dachs and W. F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 73. Although Ranger refers to the Mariannhillers as "Trappists" throughout his essay, the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries separated from the Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance, or Trappists, in 1909.

9. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 139.

10. AAH hereafter, Box 545/B, C. L. Carbutt [Superintendent of Natives, Victoria], "Memorandum concerning Native Girl Agnes alias Rowsai," July 16, 1922; Sr. M. Rudolfina, CPS to Fr. Prefect [Edward Parry, S.J.], September 12, 1922.

11. AAH, Box 545/B, Sr. Rudolfina to Fr. Parry, S.J., September 12, 1922.

12. Ranger, "Women in the Politics of Makoni District," 12-13. For the issue of pledging girls in marriage, see 7-10.

13. *ibid.*, 16.

14. AAH, Box 545/B, Annexure (September 28, 1922) to Charles Coghlan, "Rights of Native girls to remain single and to enter the religious life," April 30, 1923; see also, Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe (JAZ hereafter), Box 300, File 1 (300/1 hereafter), Coghlan to Francis Johanny, S.J., April 25, 1923. There is also a copy of the full text of Coghlan's opinion in JAZ, Box 300/1. In 1923, Coghlan was elected as the first prime minister of the Southern Rhodesian settler responsible government.

15. AAH, Box 545/B, Charles Coghlan, "Rights of Native girls to remain single and to enter the religious life," 3-4.

16. *ibid.*, 2, 4-5.

17. *ibid.*, 8-9.

18. *ibid.*, 9-10.

19. See AAH, Box 545/B, F. Johanny to Reverend Mother Superior, Monte Cassino Mission, May 12, 1927; Declarations of Damiano Bamu, Dominico Chikanya, June 22, 1927; Box 546/A, Declaration of Willibald Tinargwo, April 27, 1928; Declaration of Raymond Bonga, December 20, 1928; Declaration of Karani Shoniwa, December 25, 1928; Declaration of Mashumba Chigara, April 28, 1929.

20. See, e.g., AAH, Box 545/B, Correspondence dealing with the case of Clara Margwisa.

21. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 139.

22. *ibid.*, 139.

23. AAH, Box 556/B, "Copy and Approbation of the Rules for the Congregation of the Holy Trinity."

24. See B. Randolph, "Charity—Sisters of" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, (New York: The Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1913), Vol. 3 (of 15), 605.

25. JAZ, Box 195/3, Letter of J. Apel [to Edward Parry], November 18, 1920.

26. JAZ, Box 13, Robert Brown, S.J. to Francis Johanny, S.J., February 6, 1929.

27. JAZ, Box 100/3 Emil Schmitz, S.J. to Francis Johanny, S.J., July 15, 1926.

28. *ibid.*

29. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus* (Typescript), August 4, 1926.

30. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 139

31. AAH, 545/B, Francis Johanny, S.J. to Reverend Mother Superior, Monte Cassino, Macheke, May 12, 1927: "Native Girls from Kutama Mission Who Desire to Join the Daughters of St. Francis."

32. AAH, 546/A, Declaration of Lucas Chiteka, August 15, 1931; Declaration of Veronica Chiteka, February, 1932. In 1929, the Jesuits engineered their takeover of the Mariannhill missions in the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia in exchange for the Jesuits' missions in Matabeleland in the southwest of Southern Rhodesia. See Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 74-77. Veronica Chiteka entered the Daughters of St. Francis as she had been received as a candidate at Triashill mission in 1928.

33. AAH, 545/B, Chief Native Commissioner to Fr. Collingridge, April 18, 1931.

34. AAH, 545/B, Chief Native Commissioner to Fr. Collingridge, July 3, 1931.

35. AAH, 545/B, Chief Native Commissioner to Chichester, November 12, 1931.

36. *ibid.*

37. AAH, 545/B Chichester to Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, n.d.

38. AAH, Box 545/B, Aston Chichester. "The Native Sisterhood," December, 1941.

39. *ibid.*

40. *ibid.*

41. Interview with Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000. I would like to thank Sister Illuminata Nyawata, LCBL, the superior of the Chichester convent for her assistance in arranging and translating during the interview with Sister Bernadette.

42. See M. F. C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to their Religion*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 279-281.

43. JAZ, Box 24/1, Jerome O'Hea, S.J. to F.A. Barry, April 9, 1937.

44. JAZ, Box 260/2, Undated miscellaneous notes in Richartz's hand. See Chapter 6.

45. Interview with Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.

46. AAH, Box 546/B, Adalberto Fleischer to Chichester, April 8, 1931; Chichester to Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, December 27, 1931.

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47. AAH, Box 546/B, von Rossum to Chichester, February 2, 1932.
48. AAH, Box 546/B, Chichester to von Rossum, March 15, 1932; von Rossum to Chichester, April 8, 1932.
49. AAH, Box 546/B, Chichester to Alfred Burbridge, S.J., May 26, 1932. There is no evidence in the Chishawasha records in the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe of an African woman being received as a postulant as early as 1919. It is possible, however, that such a woman may have been admitted as a candidate for the Dominican sisters. Additionally, although it is not conclusive, it is probable that the four women admitted were part of the same group admitted as "postulants" and entrusted to the care of the Dominicans in 1926. See Ferrera Weinzierl, *The Dominicans, 1891-1991: A Story of Vision, Poverty and Courage, Faith and Hope. Service with Love*, (Harare: Dominican Sisters, 1991), 24. On the Church's liturgical calendar, June 3 is the memorial feast day of Saint Charles Lwanga and the Ugandan martyrs.
50. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 140; Interview with Sister Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000; AAH, Box 546/B, "The religious habit is taken by 19 Native girls at Makumbe on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception"; "18 Natives take vows as Nuns in South [sic] Rhodesia"; "An Historic Ceremony in Southern Rhodesia."
51. Interview with Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
52. *ibid.*
53. *ibid.*
54. *ibid.*
55. *ibid.*
56. *ibid.* See also Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 140.
57. Interview with Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
58. *ibid.* Conversation with Rev. Albert Plangger, S.M.B., Mambo House, Harare, May 16, 2000.
59. Interview with Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
60. *ibid.* Ninety eight sisters professed final vows on January 6, 1960. See JAZ, Box 108, *Seminary Historia Domus*, January 6, 1960.

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61. *ibid.*
62. AAH, Box 544/A. Chichester to Bishop Francis Hennemann, n.d. but c. December 7, 1934.
63. See AAH, Box 544/A, Chichester Circular Letter to Superiors of Missions, November 11, 1934.
64. AAH, Box 544/A, Chichester to Bishop Francis Hennemann.
65. *ibid.*
66. AAH, Box 544/A, Rev. J. Brown to Chichester, December 28, 1932.
67. Cf. JAZ, Box 300/1, "Draft Constitutions & Rules for the Poor Children of our Blessed Lady, 1932" and AAH, 544/B(2), *Constitutions of the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady*, (Gwelo: Catholic Mission Press, 1959).
68. AAH, Box 546, File B, Cardinal Pacelli to LCBL Sisters, January 3, 1935.
69. AAH, Box 546/B, LCBL Sisters to Chichester, n.d. [c.1937]. Emphasis in the original.
70. *ibid.*
71. AAH, Box 545/B, V.L.P. Fowke [Secretary of the Catholic Council for International Relations] to C.C. Martindale, S.J. [addressed at the Jesuit Provincial Superior's residence in London], February 26, 1932; JAZ, Box 24/1, Jerome O'Hea, S.J. to Florence A. Barry, February 12, 1937, April 9, 1937, June 21, 1937; AAH, Box 545/B, O'Hea to Chichester, January 11, 1938; Chichester to Barry, February 25, 1938; Barry to Chichester, March 7, 1938.
72. AAH, Box 544/A, Chichester Circular Letter to Superiors of Missions, November 11, 1934.
73. *ibid.*
74. Interview with Sister Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000; Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000; Interview with Mother Rocha Mushonga, LCBL, Visitation Convent, Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000.
75. Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
76. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 140.

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77. Interview with Sr. Hyacinth Gerbecks, O.P., Africa Synod House, Harare, May 15, 2000.
78. For more on *Rerum Ecclesiae*, see Chapter 5 below.
79. AAH, Box 546/B, Aston Chichester, "The Native Sisterhood," December, 1941.
80. AAH, Box 546/B, Anonymous letter to Chichester, n.d. [c.1943]; See also, Sister M. Immaculata, LCBL to Chichester, October 10, 1946.
81. Michael F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 36-49. See also Dominique Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora: The Marriage Practices of the Shona of Zimbabwe," *Ethnology*, vol.32, 35-38.
82. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 36-37.
83. See Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 97.
84. AAH, Box 544 (LCBL Sisters), File A, Declaration of Mashumba Chigara, April 28, 1929. I am grateful to Dr. Isabel Mukonyora for assistance in translating this document.
85. JAZ, Box 24/1, O'Hea to Florence Barry, April 9, 1937; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 97; Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 141.
86. JAZ, Box 24/1, O'Hea to F. A. Barry, April 9, 1937.
87. AAH, Box 545/B, J. Apel to Chichester, August 10, 1935.
88. AAH, Box 545/B, Assistant Native Commissioner Bindura to Chichester, September 13, 1935.
89. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to A. Yardely [Assistant Native Commissioner Bindura], September, 19, 1935.
90. AAH, Box 545/B, D.C.H. Parkhurst to Superior, Chishawasha Mission, June 7, 1940.
91. AAH, Box 545/B, Ferguson to Parkhurst, June 12, 1940.
92. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Ferguson, June 12, 1940. Emphasis in the original.
93. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Ferguson, June 14, 1940.
94. AAH, Box 545/B, Ferguson to Parkhurst, June 15, 1940.
95. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Ferguson, June 15, 1940.
96. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Fr. Burbridge, June 17, 1940.

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97. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Ferguson, August 16, 1940.
98. AAH, Box 545/B, Ferguson to Burbridge, August 17, 1940.
99. *ibid.*
100. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Chichester, August 19, 1940.
101. *ibid.*
102. AAH, Box 545/B, Parkhurst to Chichester, August 26, 1940. Additionally, there is a note in Burbridge's hand: "Fr. Ferguson notified & girl Maria sent to Chishawasha 27.8.40."
103. AAH, Box 545/B, Baptismal Certificate of Catherine Mazorodze, No. 6477.
104. Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
105. *ibid.*
106. According to the archival documentation, Catherine was baptized on May 28, 1953. Sister Catherine recalled that she was baptized in 1954. Given the suspect nature of the documentation, I follow Sister Catherine's chronology. See AAH, Box 545/B, Baptismal Certificate of Catherine Mazorodze, No. 6477; Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
107. Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
108. *ibid.*
109. *ibid.*
110. *ibid.*
111. *ibid.*; AAH, Box 545/B, Bevis Collings to Chichester, July 15, 1956.
112. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to S.E. Morris, July 25, 1956.
113. *ibid.*
114. AAH, Box 545/B, Morris to Chichester, July 30, 1956. Emphasis in original.
115. *ibid.*
116. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Morris, August 5, 1956.

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117. AAH, Box 545/B, Morris to Chichester, September 7, 1956.
118. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Morris, September 10, 1956.
119. Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
120. *ibid.*
121. *ibid.*
122. Documents throughout this case file vary the spelling of Clara's father's ChiShona name. Accordingly, it is spelled here and throughout as Morosi, as that is the most frequent rendering.
123. AAH, Box 545/B, Provincial Native Commissioner, Northern Mashonaland to Chichester, October 3, 1949.
124. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Chief Native Commissioner, January 7, 1950.
125. *ibid.*
126. AAH, Box 545/B, Secretary of Native Affairs to Chichester, February 6, 1950.
127. AAH, Box 545/B, Assistant Chief Native Commissioner A.G. Yardley to Chichester, February 11, 1950.
128. *ibid.*
129. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester Memorandum to File, February 11, 1950.
130. *ibid.*
131. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Yardley, February 15, 1950.
132. AAH, Box 545/B, "Statement by African Francis Morisi [sic]," n.d., 5.
133. AAH, Box 545/B, Francis Markall to Chichester, February 28, 1950.
134. *ibid.*
135. AAH, Box 545/B, L.M.N. Hodson, "Opinion: In Re the Vicariate Apostolic of Salisbury," July 8, 1950, 2.
136. *ibid.*

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137. *ibid.*, 2-3. For an analysis of the different payments involved in the VaShona marriage process, see Dominique Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora: The Marriage Practices of the Shona of Zimbabwe," *Ethnology*, vol.32, 35 ff.
138. Hodson, "Opinion," 3. 7. Emphasis in original.
139. *ibid.*, 4-5.
140. *ibid.*, 5-6.
141. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to A.G. Yardley, February 15, 1950.
142. AAH, Box 545/B, Notes from Maurice Rea. S.J., Superior of Makumbi mission, n.d.
143. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Chief Native Commissioner Powys-Jones, December 4, 1951.
144. AAH, Box 545/B, Anonymous notes concerning Francis Morosi.
145. AAH, Box 545/B, "Statement by African Francis Morisi [sic]," 6.
146. *ibid.*
147. *ibid.*, 7.
148. *ibid.*, 8.
149. AAH, Box 545/B, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chichester, December 13, 1951.
150. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to C.N.C. Powys-Jones, February 1, 1952.
151. AAH, Box 545/B, Secretary for Native Affairs to Chichester, January 31, 1952.
152. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Secretary for Native Affairs, February 2, 1952.
153. *ibid.*
154. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Mr. Kerr, May 16, 1952.
155. *ibid.*
156. *ibid.*
157. AAH, Box 545/B, Clara Margwisa to Chichester, September 24, 1950; October 15, 1950, April 1, 1951; Chichester to Clara Margwisa, April 4, 1951. From appendix to "Statement by African Francis Morisi [sic]," Chichester to Clara, August 22, 1950;

September 9, 1950; October 4, 1950; April 8, 1951; October 3, 1951; February 23, 1952; June 29, 1952; July 31, 1952; Markall to Clara, September 13, 1950; May 26, 1952.

158. AAH, Box 545/B, Clara Margwisa to Chichester, September 24, 1950.

159. AAH, Box 545/B, Clara Margwisa to Chichester, September 30, 1951; October 10, 1951; October 26, 1951.

160. From appendix to "Statement by African Francis Morisi [sic]," AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Clara Margwisa, October 4, 1950.

161. AAH, Box 545/B, Clara Margwisa to Chichester, May 30, 1952.

162. AAH, Box 545/B, Clara Margwisa to Chichester, June 22, 1952.

163. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Clara Margwisa, June 29, 1952.

164. Reports of the exact date conflict. Francis Morosi's statement said that she arrived home on August 19 (p.8); the N.C. Goromonzi claimed that she arrived home on August 13 (AAH, Box 545/B, N.C. Goromonzi to Chichester, September 4, 1952); and Chichester approximated that she returned home around August 21, 1952 (AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to N.C. Goromonzi, August 28, 1952.).

165. AAH, Box 545/B, N.C. Goromonzi to Chichester, September 4, 1952; "Statement by African Francis Morisi [sic]," 8-9.

166. AAH, Box 545/B, "Statement by African Francis Morisi [sic]," 9.

167. AAH, Box 545/B, Clara Margwisa to Chichester, October 8, 1952.

168. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Clara Margwisa, October 8, 1952. The normal course of formation for the LCBL Sisters at the time was to spend three years as a candidate, one year as a postulant, and then two years in the novitiate before being admitted to first vows.

169. AAH, Box 545/B, J. Friedrich, S.J. to Chichester, October 20, 1952.

170. AAH, Box 545/B, Markall to Chichester, November 16, 1952.

171. See Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora: The Marriage Practices of the Shona of Zimbabwe," and Bourdillon, *The Shona People*.

172. AAH, Box 545/B, Markall to Chichester, November 16, 1952.

173. AAH, Box 545/B, R.D. Lynch to Chichester, February 26, 1953.

174. *ibid*.

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175. *ibid.*
176. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Lynch, March 1, 1953.
177. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Markall, March 1, 1953.
178. AAH, Box 545/B, Markall to Chichester, November 16, 1952.
179. AAH, Box 545/B, Sr. Mary Aquinatia, C.P.S. to Chichester, May 14, 1953.
180. *ibid.*
181. AAH, Box 545/B, Markall to Chichester, May 23, 1953.
182. AAH, Box 545/B, Chichester to Clara Margwisa, June 4, 1953.
183. Interview with Mother Rocha Mushonga, Visitation Convent, Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000.
184. AAH, Box 412, File C, Archbishop Francis Markall to T. Mudeke, June 11, 1965; see also *Moto* [article title, publication data].
185. Interview with Mother Rocha Mushonga, LCBL, Visitation Convent, Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000.
186. *ibid.*
187. *ibid.*
188. *ibid.*
189. Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
190. Interview with Mother Rocha Mushonga, LCBL, Visitation Convent, Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000; Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000.
191. Mother Rocha did not elaborate on the specifics of what “culturally sensitive education” entailed.
192. For more on practice theory, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and *The Logic of Practice*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). See also, Sherry B. Ortner, “Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties,” in Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds., *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 372-411; and particularly Sherry B. Ortner, *High Religion: A*

Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 8-17.

193. See Ranger, "Women in the Politics of Makoni District," 17-18; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 94-97; Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 250; and Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 140-41.

194. Interview with Sister Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000; Interview with Sister Catherine Mazorodze, LCBL, Chichester Convent, Chishawasha Mission, May 23, 2000; Interview with Mother Rocha Mushonga, LCBL, Visitation Convent, Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000. See also AAH, Box 545/B, "Negotiations: Parental Opposition to Girls Wishing to be Nuns, 1923-1956," passim.

195. See, for example, the experiences of women like Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz in *La Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* translated as *The Answer/La Respuesta* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1994) by Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell; Several American Catholic women in Carol K. Coburn and Martha Smith, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); several European women such as St. Clare of Assisi and St. Glodesind in Jo Ann McNamara et al., ed., *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*, (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 1992); and the members of The Sisters of Mary, a congregation of Maori nuns in New Zealand from 1937 to 1952, in Cynthia Piper, "Title," Ph.D. dissertation forthcoming, institution.

196. Cited in Ranger, "Women in the Politics of Makoni District," 18.

Chapter 5: “‘The Most Important Work on the Mission’: The Seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More, 1919-1979”¹

There is one final, and very important, point for anyone who has charge of a mission. He must make it his special concern to secure and train local candidates for the sacred ministry. In this policy lies the greatest hope of the new churches. For the local priest, one with his people by birth, by nature, by his sympathies and his aspirations, is remarkably effective in appealing to their mentality and thus attracting them to the Faith. Far better than anyone else he knows the kind of argument they will listen to, and as a result, he often has easy access to places where a foreign priest would not be tolerated.— Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*²

“Their Lordships the Bishops regret that due to the recent events they are obliged to order the temporary closure of the Regional Major Seminary.” [This] marked the end of a process which commenced on Monday, [the] 30th September 1974, when the entire student body with the exception of four students boycotted lectures and retired to the football pitch. . . . The reason given why the students had not attended lectures was the withdrawal of one student. This particular student whose ordination had been deferred had been accepted back on the understanding that he would behave himself. It was, however, found necessary to ask him to leave on Saturday, 28th September 1974.—Secretary General of the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops’ Conference³

Although the report of the Secretary General of the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops’ Conference cited above specified the dismissal of a deacon, Ernest Mukuwapasi, as the reason for the strike, several members of the seminary staff and the commission that subsequently investigated the causes of the students’ actions expressed the opinion that Mukuwapasi’s expulsion was merely the spark that ignited “a strong feeling of dissatisfaction amongst the seminarians [which had caused] much tension between the [Jesuit] staff and [African] students.”⁴

The 1974 strike was the third significant disturbance at the seminary since 1965 in which there were calls for independent investigations of the Jesuit administration, and the second time in seven years that the seminary was closed as a result of student protests. In

1965 and 1967, the Jesuits succeeded in preventing investigations. In 1974, however, they not only failed to prevent an external investigation, but also the Rhodesian bishops effectively relieved them of their responsibility for running the seminary. Thus, these events represent a significant disjuncture between a discourse on the part of the Vatican and Jesuit missionary superiors that claimed the seminary education of local priests as the most important part of the church's mission work and a practice on the part of the same Jesuit superiors and seminary staff that was diametrically opposed to the Vatican's rhetoric.

The 1974 strike was the culmination of increasing manifestations of African nationalism in the seminary that were contemporaneous with the rise of African political parties and modern African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia during the late 1950's and 1960's. African seminarians were conscious of the turbulent political situation and pushed the constraints of the regular seminary order, which was characterized by strict discipline and the increasing isolation of the Jesuits resulting from their being out of touch with the seminarians' concerns, interests, and aspirations. In effect, the Jesuits had inculturated themselves into the dominant White Rhodesian culture. Accordingly, the failed effort to integrate the seminary racially in 1965 served as a catalyst to the nationalist impulse, and was not the cause of African discontent, as the seminary rector alleged.

The disturbances at the seminary were more than merely demands for the symbols of privilege, such as morning and afternoon tea. They were manifestations of increasing African self-consciousness and expressions of African nationalism within a Christian

context. Basil Davidson asserted that African nationalism “had less to do with any national cause than with demands of a social nature and context,” and that “the promise that the coming of the nation-state would strike away the chains of foreign rule and all that these had meant in social and moral deprivation” inspired African nationalists to action.⁵ Accordingly, it is possible to characterize the actions of the seminarians at Chishawasha during the 1960s and 1970s as an effort to effect the social liberation of the Catholic church from Rhodesian imperialism and racism in general, as well as Jesuit paternalism in particular.

Richard W. Thomas has argued that the history of interracial cooperation in the United States was characterized by a dynamic in which Whites who either worked with or on behalf of Blacks effectively constrained progress by trying to maintain aspects of the racial status quo, and that it was only in response to the “constant prodding” of “the rising tide” of “legitimate [B]lack expectations and demands” that steps toward racial equality were taken.⁶ This is an apt model to describe the relations between White Jesuits and African seminarians in Rhodesia during the 1960s and 1970s, as the former only grudgingly made concessions following extraordinary student protests.

There has been no scholarly examination of expressions of African nationalism at the Catholic seminary in colonial Zimbabwe, although developments in Zimbabwe seem to have followed a pattern similar to that in Catholic seminaries in South Africa.⁷ The only reference to such events in the literature is in Dach’s and Rea’s *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, in which they refer only to the 1974 strike, and wrongly assert that

[in] August 1974 the seminary students refused further studies unless more African priests were immediately appointed to the seminary staff. The Catholic hierarchy was already willing to do this and in 1976 Fr. Tobias Chiginya was appointed Rector, Fr. Alexio Muchabaiwa was appointed Spiritual Director, and Fr. Isidore Chikore became his Assistant.⁸

Not only did Dachs and Rea greatly misrepresent the African students' concerns, but they also significantly overstated the eagerness of the Rhodesian bishops to Africanize the seminary staff as they stood squarely behind the Jesuit administration until the 1974 strike.

The previous chapter showed how African women, in expressing and acting upon their desires to become Catholic nuns, affected the relationships and interactions between themselves and African and European men, as well as the relationship between the church's hierarchy and the colonial administration, and that between the church and African men. This chapter will examine the changing relations between European Jesuit missionaries and African seminarians from the early 1930s to 1975. The influence of African nationalism on the seminarians and the reactionary isolation of the Jesuits culminated in the student rebellions that resulted in the indigenization of the seminary staff that began in 1975. After analyzing various views from the Vatican and Jesuits working in Southern Rhodesia regarding the formation of an indigenous clergy, this chapter will explore the development of the seminary from its beginnings in the early 1930s and its changing social relations before, during, and after the student strikes of the 1960s and 1970s.

Vatican and Jesuit Perspectives on the Formation of a "Native Clergy"

The deportation and internment of missionary priests and nuns during the First World War motivated the Catholic church to encourage the development of indigenous clergies in its mission territories. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV issued an apostolic letter to the bishops and mission superiors concerning the spread of the Catholic faith throughout the world. The purpose of *Maximum Illud* was to encourage evangelization in mission territories and to suggest methods to improve evangelization efforts. Benedict encouraged each mission superior to “expand and fully develop his mission” by establishing more mission stations “as soon as it is practicable to do so.”⁹ He commended vicars apostolic and bishops who invited members of Catholic religious institutes different from their own to work in their territories when their own orders weren’t supplying enough personnel to staff the needs of the mission. Similarly, he condemned those vicars and bishops who treated their territories “as a piece of private property, a domain not to be touched by the hands of an outsider,” and refused to work with other orders.¹⁰

Pope Benedict particularly emphasized the need to encourage local vocations and develop an indigenous clergy, and that these men should receive

the same kind of education for the priesthood that a European would receive. For the local clergy is not to be trained merely to perform the humbler duties of the ministry, acting as the assistants of foreign priests. On the contrary, they must take up God’s work as equals, so that some day they will be able to enter upon the spiritual leadership of their people.¹¹

The pontiff also “deplored” the inferior training and quality of local clergies in several parts of the world despite papal insistence to the contrary, and described the system of training “future missionaries” as “feeble and faulty.” Consequently, he “ordered” Propaganda Fide “to apply remedies adapted to the various regions of the world, and to

see to the founding of seminaries for both individual regions and groups of dioceses,” and charged the Congregation with “particular care” for “the supervision of the growth and development of the local clergy” in the missions.¹² Further, the pope considered it “tragic” for missionaries “to busy themselves with the interests of their terrestrial homelands” instead of their spiritual duties. Such expressions of nationalism, in Benedict’s opinion, would be obvious to the local populations to whom they were sent:

For no matter how wild and barbarous a people may be, they are well aware of what the missionary is doing in their country and of what he wants for them. They will subject him in their own way to a very searching investigation, and if he has any object in view other than their spiritual good, they will find out about it. . . . Such a situation could easily give rise to the conviction that the Christian religion is the national religion of some foreign people and that anyone converted to it is abandoning his loyalty to his own people and submitting to the pretensions and domination of a foreign power.¹³

The Jesuit Prefect of the Zambezi mission, Richard Sykes, largely ignored the papal exhortation and took no steps to encourage local vocations, and instead recommended the “formation of good [African] catechists.”¹⁴

In the following year, contrary to the pope’s recommendations, Sykes’ successor as prefect apostolic, Edward Parry, and the Jesuits at Chishawasha mission forbade German Mariannhill missionaries at Triashill mission from teaching Latin to African boys in their schools so that “they could later on become priests.”¹⁵ Although the Mariannhillers did not intend “to bring them so far that they could start at once Philosophy and Theology,” Jesuit John Apel thought it “premature to teach even a few of them Latin, in view of eventual training for the priesthood,” because the Africans at Chishawasha were “steeped in superstition. . . immorality and drunkenness.”¹⁶ He

believed that “to teach Latin and to give hopes of the priesthood would be to put the cart before the horse,” and that they “should first aim at having good, well behaved teachers. Perhaps their children may be fit for something higher.”¹⁷ Similarly, Jesuit James O’Neill opined that “first generation Christians in South Africa hardly ever, if ever, have the backbone for the priesthood.”¹⁸ In an apparent criticism of the Mariannhillers’ work at Triashill, O’Neill wrote that the Jesuit in charge of Saint Peter’s parish in the Mbare township of Salisbury had told him that “the Triashill gang men who come to Salisbury for work are very unsatisfactory.” Furthermore, O’Neill thought that because “there is a real desire for learning among the Manicaland natives [sic],” it was questionable whether they wanted to learn Latin for the sake of learning it or were really interested in the priesthood.¹⁹

In 1926, Pope Pius XI (Benedict’s successor) issued his encyclical letter, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, which reiterated *Maximum Illud*’s call for the establishment of indigenous clergy in mission territories within the Church throughout the world:

Before everything else, We call your attention to the importance of building up a native clergy. If you do not work with all your might to attain this purpose, We assert that not only will your apostolate be crippled, but it will become an obstacle and an impediment to the establishment and organization of the Church in those countries. . . . How can the Church among the heathens be developed today unless it be built of those very elements out of which our own churches were built; that is to say, unless it be made up of people, clergy, and religious orders of men and women recruited from the native populations of the several regions? Why should the native clergy be forbidden to cultivate their own portion of the Lord’s vineyard, be forbidden to govern their own people? . . . [Would] it not be of great assistance if you would entrust to the native clergy the people already converted so that they could minister to them and preserve their faith?²⁰

Furthermore, Pius demanded a seminary formation for priests from mission territories equal to that given to Europeans, not only because these were priests “who will be destined one day to govern parishes and dioceses,” but because there was a fundamental equality between the races:

Anyone who looks upon these natives as members of an inferior race or as men of low mentality makes a grievous mistake. Experience over a long period of time has proven that the inhabitants of those remote regions of the East and South frequently are not inferior to us at all, and are capable of holding their own with us, even in mental ability. . . . Certainly you should not allow the native clergy to be looked upon as if they were a lower grade of priests, to be employed only in the most humble offices of the ministry. These priests have been admitted to the same priesthood that the missionaries possess, they are members of the selfsame apostolate. On the contrary, you should prefer the native priests to all others, for it is they who will one day govern the churches and Catholic communities founded by your sweat and labor. Therefore, there should exist no discrimination of any kind between priests. . . . there must be no line of demarcation marking one off from the other.²¹

In response to the encyclical, the superior of the Zambezi mission, Robert Brown, S.J. surveyed his missionaries, asking for their thoughts on the possibility of establishing an African clergy in Southern Rhodesia, specifically, whether African Christians were intellectually and morally “fit” for the priesthood; whether any Africans had expressed interest in the priesthood, and if not, why not; how long before there would be “appreciable numbers” of “suitable candidates for the priesthood”; whether the missionaries had presented the priesthood as a possibility for African men to parents and children, and if not, why not; and what would be the best means to establish “a thoroughly Christian home atmosphere” in which to develop vocations to the priesthood.²²

Of the 17 extant replies, the overwhelming majority were “broadly pessimistic.”²³ Only two Jesuits, Emil Schmitz and Henry Quin, unreservedly thought that there were Africans with the requisite intellectual and moral capacity to become priests.²⁴ Most of the Jesuit and Mariannhill missionaries believed that Africans lacked the necessary intellectual and moral “fitness” to become priests. Of these, five indicated a belief in the innate intellectual and moral incapacity of Africans for the priesthood,²⁵ while five of the seven who believed that there were Africans capable of becoming priests attributed their lack of fitness to the poor education that they had received.²⁶

Ten respondents had heard at least 17 African men or boys express an interest in the priesthood.²⁷ Jesuit John Apel “[came] across one boy at Gwelo who expressed the desire to study for the priesthood,” and even went so far as to “[apply] for him at Mariannhill” but was told that “the boy” at 28 years of age was “too old.”²⁸ Andrew Hartmann, a Jesuit based at Empandeni mission among AmaNdebele, encountered two men who were interested and met with them “sympathetically.” He explained the required studies, but they eventually became teachers in outschools and married. Francis Richartz, the long-time superior of Chishawasha mission, referred to “one northern boy, Dominico Raposo,” who had received instruction and baptism at Chishawasha. According to Richartz, Raposo entered the White Fathers’ seminary in colonial Malawi in 1920 and was “studying Latin to become a priest,” and that as of June, 1923 there were 41 seminarians.²⁹

Only three of the respondents said they had seen signs of impending priestly vocations. Thomas Gardiner noted that “the question of celibacy is being discussed

among [African Christians].”³⁰ Henry Quin and Emil Schmitz noticed more classically Catholic spiritual developments such as “a personal devotion to our Lord, a spirit of prayer, humility and self sacrifice, a desire to imitate the saints and to instruct their fellow natives in the faith.”³¹ Jean-Baptiste Loubière and Francis Richartz, however, suggested potential signs but had not as yet seen them in the Christians under their care.³²

While most of the respondents agreed that the “pagan atmosphere” in which African Christians lived was the primary cause for the dearth of the aforementioned “signs” of vocations, there was significant disagreement as to the nature of that atmosphere: eight either stated or implied that it was inherent in Africans³³ and four believed that it was merely a question of changing the culture in which they lived.³⁴ Significantly, five believed that African boys and men weren’t expressing interest in the priesthood because the European missionaries had “purposely withheld [the possibility] from our Christians.”³⁵

There was a sharp division as to when there would be an “appreciable number” of “suitable candidates.” Although the majority (nine) believed that it would be “many years” or “several generations” before there was a significant number of African vocations, they were divided as to the reasons. Edward Biehler stated that only 20 years before, “all these natives were barbarians of the lowest type, mere animals intellectually and morally. A change can only be orchestrated by many generations.”³⁶ While Jean-Baptiste Loubière thought it necessary to establish a “truly Christian atmosphere” in order to foster vocations, John Apel believed that Christian girls should be raised by “sensible nuns.”³⁷ Andrew Hartmann and Francis Richartz both believed that there would

be no progress in vocations until the contemporary generation of adults—the guardians of the indigenous culture—died. Hartmann stated that “at least the present generation will have to pass away before any candidates for the priesthood will come forward in any appreciable number, if even then.”³⁸ Similarly, Richartz wrote, “as long as the grandparents and parents of our Christians are alive with their old superstitions and heathen customs and the latter remain more or less dependent [on] and connected with their people, it will be difficult for would-be candidates to follow their vocations.”³⁹

Significantly, there was also a variety of minority views on this question that broadly ascribed responsibility for the absence of African vocations to the failure of the European missionaries to present the priesthood as an option for Africans, or to the inferior education offered to Africans by the Church and/or the Rhodesian colonial administration. Emil Schmitz believed that “as there are good signs for vocations, suitable candidates will come forward if we start awakening and encouraging vocations.”⁴⁰ One Jesuit responded that an increase in vocations “entirely [depended] on the means of education and character of education which will be available for native christians [sic], and when it will be available.”⁴¹ Another thought that an increase in vocations depended on divine grace and “a good deal on our treatment of the native Christians.”⁴² Henry Quin went so far as to suggest starting a minor seminary immediately:

I think that if we had a little seminary for small boys from 10 to 14 years old, we would begin to find vocations now, especially amongst the children of Christian parents. But as long as we follow our custom and leave our Christians and their children to live and grow up amongst heathen surroundings in heathen kraals no vocations are likely to be developed.⁴³

Similarly, Jesuit Thomas Gardiner somewhat presciently believed that

The boys of 12, 13, and 14 are the boys that, from today, will bring the movement forward. Their sisters will be in the vanguard [and] the next decade ought to see many native nuns amongst us. These boys will have to be trained during many years. The Holy Father has just spoken and his words will be listened to as *Vox Dei*.⁴⁴

Although the Jesuit superiors of the Zambezi Mission did not take the pope's words as *vox dei*, Gardiner was correct in his prediction of the growth of women's vocations to religious communities.

Eleven respondents said that they had presented the idea of the priesthood to African Christian parents, yet only ten reported having done so with African "boys."⁴⁵ Those missionaries who chose not to discuss the priesthood gave reasons such as children of Christian parents being too young,⁴⁶ or African Christians themselves being too immature to consider it a realistic possibility.⁴⁷

When asked how best to establish "a thoroughly Christian home atmosphere"⁴⁸ in which to develop priestly vocations, ten of the seventeen respondents recommended establishing Christian villages similar to the one Jean-Baptiste Loubière had set up at Kutama mission approximately 90 kilometers west of Salisbury, or some form of isolation from African culture such as a boarding school. Some Jesuits suggested that such villages should be exclusively for the "best" Christians.⁴⁹ Thomas Gardiner suggested isolating African Christians because women were the key to establishing Christian family life:

The home atmosphere cannot improve so long as the stench of heathenism is free to come in by the door. Good pious Christian mothers are of more importance perhaps than good pious Christian men. You must begin with the parents—hence boarding schools for boys and girls are imperatively necessary. The girls should stay there till they are married to boys who

have been brought up in *similar* schools. Only those who have passed their time cum laude 90% should be drafted into newly formed Christian villages—these villages must be firmly isolated if possible. The practical way of ensuring such isolation would be to form Christian districts—large groups of Christian villages where pagans may not enter so that heathenism may not be introduced and practised on the sly.

This does not hint at the extinction of the kraal school. But [it] must be lifted to a far higher plane, by means of far better catechists. The pick of the kraal schools, the very best, should be sent to the boarding schools. The pick of the boys boarding schools after four years of intense learning and piety should be drafted to the seminary.⁵⁰

Although they did not provide such detailed plans, three other respondents expressed similar beliefs in the importance of women in developing a Christian home environment.⁵¹

Not all of the respondents favored establishing Christian villages, however. Edward Biehler stated that “we have many Christian villages; but there is little difference between their children and children of pagans.”⁵² Although Jesuit Henry Seed thought Christian villages the best means to prevent African Christian men from going to search for work in mines and towns, in his view it was “impossible until the missions are able to give them employment and pay them well.”⁵³ Francis Richartz emphasized the issue of “difficulties which are on [the Jesuit] side”:

Want of *unity, uniformity, continuity* in dealing with our natives. The change of superiors often causes (or rather gives an *opportunity*) of changing more or less the system of teaching the Natives (Religion esp.), their order of the day, way of employment, *language*, etc. . . . [Changes] should not be introduced so suddenly, without consideration, and consultation, and—when in any way important, not without consent of the Sup[er]ior of the Miss[ion]. The change of superiors (local) has to take place according to our institute and for certain reasons, sooner or later, it should be arranged, that those who remain, be able and help by their advice, to make *continuity* of dealing with the natives of the station and their outschools at least, possible. . . . I consider it of greatest importance to continue to aim at this unity and continuity etc. in our missionwork, which was in other Missions so effective.⁵⁴

In a singular reply, Emil Schmitz gave a response that by the standards of then-contemporary Catholic mission theology was about 40 years ahead of its time, yet in keeping with the dictates of *Rerum Ecclesiae*:

Candidates for the priesthood should be boarders and for the first years under the supervision of a good *Native* teacher; the less European influence the better for the young candidates. Housing, food should be as at their home—books strictly forbidden—all the studies, also Philosophy and Theology, should be made in Rhodesia. In general: let us teach those boys as little as possible of our European views and customs, then there is all probability that they become good priests for their people.⁵⁵

It is important to note that Terence Ranger identified perspectives and attitudes regarding the possibilities of establishing an African clergy similar to those expressed by the Jesuits in the Anglican and Methodist churches, thus such attitudes were not exclusive to the Jesuits or the Catholic church. Ranger endeavored “to show how the providence of God had established a vigorous Zimbabwean Christianity more or less in spite of the missionaries.”⁵⁶ Given the widespread nature of the missionaries’ belief in Africans’ ill-preparedness for the priesthood, Schmitz’s recommendations seem all the more striking, especially considering that his views antedated the Catholic church’s espousal of such training by at least four decades.

In their analysis of the survey results, Dachs and Rea posited a split between the older and younger Jesuits:

Importantly it was the older Fathers who were the more pessimistic, men like Hartmann, Richartz and Biehler, who had worked on the mission before any Christian influence had been sowed and who had seen the African Risings of 1896. They remained cautious and they saw progress as only very slow. But those who had come up to Rhodesia [from South Africa] under the more settled conditions of the twentieth century, were more optimistic. They saw successes already achieved and looked for more and greater accomplishments in the near future.⁵⁷

Such a view, however, is overly simplistic. The seventeen replies to the survey show a sharply divided clergy: many believed in the inherent degeneracy of Africans, dismissing their religions as "superstition" and their cultures as "heathenism." Others believed that they themselves (i.e., European missionaries) bore responsibility for not providing African Christians the necessary opportunities to develop vocations (i.e., the adequate and effective education for and preaching of the possibility of becoming priests). The divisions do not break cleanly along lines of age, national origin (British or German), religious order (Jesuit or Mariannhill), or groups of African people with whom they worked (VaShona or AmaNdebele). Emil Schmitz and Thomas Gardiner—two ostensibly younger Jesuits—held radically different views on the prospects for African vocations. Similarly, Francis Richartz and Andrew Hartmann—both older and German Jesuits—differed in their perspectives concerning the intellectual and moral capacity of Africans to become priests: Richartz saw intellectual capacity and difficulty (yet possibility) in maintaining celibacy, whereas Hartmann saw hope on neither front.⁵⁸ As will be seen in Chapter 6, the divisions over the Mwari controversy further undermine Dachs and Rea's assertion.

The net result of the 1926 clergy survey was the founding and encouraging of the Kutama Teacher Training School to better train African men as catechists on the part of Robert Brown and the Jesuit leadership of the Zambezi mission.⁵⁹ While Brown and his Jesuit confreres did not ignore the exhortations of a papal encyclical as did his predecessor Richard Sykes, they certainly did nothing to implement them. The Mariannhill missionaries—who sought and were denied permission to teach African boys

Latin in the year following *Maximum Illud*'s proclamation—in the wake of *Rerum Ecclesiae* admitted three Manyika men from their missions in the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia to their seminary in Mariannhill, South Africa, one of whom—Kilian Samakande—was ordained as a member of the order in 1939.⁶⁰

Seminary Beginnings, 1931-1958

And yet, “against the warnings and forebodings of the experienced missionaries,”⁶¹ Aston Chichester began preparations to establish a seminary shortly after his installation as vicar apostolic in 1931. Apparently Jesuit Father Jerome O’Hea (who succeeded Jean-Baptiste Loubière as superior of Kutama mission) suggested that Chichester accept candidates for minor seminary training and send them to the teacher training school at Kutama mission.⁶² Three candidates arrived and began their formation. They were joined by a fourth student in 1932, and as they had completed Standard VII, they spent that year teaching at Kutama mission.⁶³

Seminary training in the Catholic church across Africa was still in its relative infancy in the 1930s. The Holy Ghost Fathers ordained their first African priests, trained at a seminary in Senegal in 1864, and the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) began seminaries in Uganda in 1893 and Malawi in 1912.⁶⁴ In South Africa, a minor seminary for African candidates from the Union, Lesotho, and Botswana was established at Mariannhill in 1924, at the urging of the recently appointed apostolic delegate.⁶⁵ A major seminary was added in 1929, and the first priest was ordained in 1936.⁶⁶ Despite the desire of the apostolic delegate to have one central seminary for the region, the vicar

apostolic of Maseru also opened a seminary for African candidates at Roma, and received his first ordinand in 1931.⁶⁷

Chichester apparently visited seminaries in Uganda and Tanganyika before formally opening a seminary and seems to have patterned his formation program after the models he witnessed in East Africa.⁶⁸ There is also evidence that almost a year before Chichester's installation as vicar apostolic one of the Jesuits in the Zambezi mission inquired about the experiences of missionaries in the Belgian Congo and Uganda in training African seminarians, as well as the experiences of the African priests.⁶⁹

Chichester opened a preparatory seminary at Chishawasha mission in January 1934. He transferred the original candidates from Kutama who were then joined by seven other candidates.⁷⁰ According to Chichester's vision candidates who had not completed Standard V were to go to Chishawasha to complete their primary education and then to Kutama to study for their teaching certificates, after which they returned to Chishawasha to enter the minor seminary program, which included the study of Latin.⁷¹ Accordingly, he believed that "the training will take twenty or more years."⁷² Both "aspirants" to the priesthood as well as mission "helpers" (i.e., brother candidates) were required "to join a confraternity which will be erected exclusively for them."⁷³ Preliminary drafts of the rules of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart declared its purpose was "to train religiously-inclined boys in the apostolic spirit," with "mission helpers" to receive vocational training "as carpenters, gardeners, printers, bricklayers, etc."⁷⁴ Candidates for the priesthood had to be "sufficiently young to reach Standard VI by the age of 18," and brother candidates had to be "under 30 years of age."⁷⁵ Members of the confraternity

were to have separate dormitory, lavatory, and refectory facilities, and were required to speak English “for the first five minutes of dinner every day” and “to have a shower or its equivalent daily.”⁷⁶

About this time, Francis Ketterer, the superior at Chishawasha, expressed concerns about the costs to Chishawasha for supporting the candidates. Although Ketterer considered “it an honour that [Chichester] had chosen Chishawasha for a start on the road to the priesthood.” it cost the oldest Catholic mission established in colonial Zimbabwe £3/4/10 to feed and clothe each candidate per year, and Chishawasha did not receive any assistance from the Native Development Department, whereas Kutama—where candidates were sent to study for their teacher training certificates—received a £5/10 subsidy per student from the N.D.D. While Ketterer was “only too glad to help on the good work,” he wished “to point out to Your Lordship that we are not making money on it, but rather the contrary.”⁷⁷

In 1935, ten students “bound themselves by promise to study for the priesthood, provided they found they had a vocation.”⁷⁸ Additionally, construction on the seminary’s physical plant began and was completed under Emil Schmitz’s direction at a cost of £1000.⁷⁹

The seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More officially opened at Chishawasha mission on January 1, 1936, with eight candidates for the priesthood and four candidates for the diocesan brotherhood of Saint Peter Claver. Conditions were “primitive.”⁸⁰ The first buildings were made of thatch and mud, and permanent structures were built between 1942 and 1945, largely with the labor of Italian prisoners of war.⁸¹

According to Fr. Bernard Ndlovu—the first SiNdebele-speaking priest ordained in colonial Zimbabwe—who entered the seminary in 1949, conditions at the seminary were “awful.”⁸² Seminarians had to sleep on the floors and

Lice was everywhere. [When students had to collect firewood in a scotch cart.] we were the donkeys. We [the students] did all the work [around the seminary] ourselves. We served the priests in white uniforms. We were trained to wait on them. Some were sent to clean their bedrooms. Others [were sent] to classrooms and the chapel. . . . [Collecting firewood] was feared by everyone. There was no borehole. We [drew] water from the stream and carried it back in a wheelbarrow.⁸³

There were constant complaints about the food. For meals the students received *sadza* and *usavi*⁸⁴ three times per day, but the *sadza* for breakfast “was cooked the night before,” and the *usavi* was frequently made from the outer leaves of cabbage. For lunch on Sundays only, the seminarians received meat. “If you got three pieces you were lucky,” recalled Fr. Ndlovu.⁸⁵ This situation with poor food apparently continued into the 1960s:

Relish [usavi] is often spinach, which very many do not like to eat. Variety is essential. . . . The mealie meal at present is bad, smells, and has weavils’ [sic] corpses in it. I’m thanking God that there are potatoes at present. . . . It would be good if the choice of relish could be left to an African.”⁸⁶

Fr. Christopher Gardiner, who entered the seminary at Chishawasha in 1965, recalled that “the quantities of food were so small—that was the first time ever I was hungry,” and that

breakfast was the killer: slimy *sadza*, a little bit of milk, some bread which was pretty stale and you could see right through it, [and] butter the size of your thumbnail.⁸⁷

Given the state of education available to Africans at the time, it is notable that the four candidates sent from Kutama to Chishawasha in 1934 had completed Standard VII (the highest level available to Africans at the time) and were certified teachers. The

students who joined them, however, had not completed Standards III and IV, thus the seminary staff, including Bishop Chichester, had to begin training at the primary school level.⁸⁸ According to Chichester, in 1936 six of 11 candidates had passed Standard II, three had passed Standard III, and two had passed Standard IV.⁸⁹ By 1955, no one was admitted without having completed Standard VI, and upon entrance into the minor seminary candidates began studying for the University College of Rhodesia junior certificate (J.C.). In 1956, seminarians began studying for the Cambridge exams.⁹⁰ Chichester noted that generally “boys at the top of their classes in the missions do not come to the seminary,” with most coming from “the top middle.” The bishop refused anyone from the bottom third of his class.⁹¹

Chichester’s evaluation of the seminarians’ academic performance was that they were “poor” at arithmetic, “fair” at algebra, and “hopeless” at geometry.⁹² Their studies of Latin declensions and verb conjugations were “excellent,” and of English “quite fair.” The students were “rather poor” at Roman history.

By 1940, the first seminarians began their studies in Philosophy, and the seminary officially became a major seminary and then a theologate in 1944.⁹³ Despite the gradual increase in academic standards, the Jesuit staff geared the course of studies at Chishawasha to what they perceived as the low educational level of the students and focused on preparing the seminarians to be mission or parish priests. As was the custom in the pre-Vatican II church, philosophy and theology courses were taught in Latin, despite the fact that English was the second (and in some cases the third) language of the seminarians. Courses for the major seminarians focused mainly on “theoretical scholastic

(Thomistic) philosophy and theology. . .defending theses with three examiners. Looking back, one is astonished by one's own stupidity," recalled Jesuit Father Patrick Moloney.⁹⁴

In 1949, Chichester applied to the director of the Native Education Department to have the Rhodesian colonial administration recognize the seminary's academic formation as equivalent to the standards it established for its schools.⁹⁵ The N.E.D. obliged the bishop by recognizing philosophy students who completed the teacher training course at Kutama "as holding the equivalent of the University Junior Certificate [J.C.]," and theology students who completed the four year course "as holding the equivalent of the Matriculation Certificate."⁹⁶ Curiously, Chichester claimed that the three year course in Philosophy was "a course embracing the same subjects as at the seminaries in England, but not entered into so deeply."⁹⁷ Evidently, the bishop must have forgotten the dictates of the papal encyclicals, *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae*, that called for equal education for Western and mission seminarians.

By 1953, the formation program at the seminary had taken shape:

Boys are accepted after passing Standard V, generally at one of the Mission Central Schools, so that the first year at the Seminary is spent in working for the Native Education Department Standard VI exam. . . .After Std. VI, there follows a three year course for the Union of South Africa Junior Certificate exam but with the opening of a University in Salisbury, there will probably be a change in the near future, and Seminarians will sit for the exam offered by Salisbury. After the Junior Certificate comes a two year course, either Elementary Teacher Training or National Primary Higher [P.T.H.], and for this our Seminarians go either to Gokomere (Bethlehem Fathers), or to Kutama (Marist Brothers) or to Chikuni, Northern Rhodesia (S.J.). Then follows one year of Probation Teaching. All this time, the Seminarians are classed as minors. On their return to the Seminary for three years [of] Philosophy, they become Majors. Philosophy is followed by the four-year course of Theology and Ordination, and then the newly-ordained Priest has still one further year at the Seminary—that is, the Seminary is still his "home", but he [is] often

away in the Mission fields doing supply-work, giving retreats, catechism classes etc.⁹⁸

Despite this, however, in 1958, the N.E.D. rescinded the seminary's junior certificate equivalency and required the more advanced P.T.H. certificate on order to teach the upper primary standards.⁹⁹

Discipline was typically strict for that period as well, including the use of corporal punishment: "They [the seminarians] understood they would be smacked if disobedient. In the first two years about ten were smacked each year; now [1955] about two or three."¹⁰⁰ Chichester also imposed a regimen that strictly regulated the seminarians' daily lives. Typically, the students would be awakened at 5:45 in the morning (6:15 on Sundays and during holidays):

All must rise quickly when the calling bell is rung, and must wash before entering the church. All must take a shower bath or wash all the body every day except in very cold weather. At mass all should answer the priest with the servers and join in the prayers which are recited. The Minor seminarians cook the food. When young boys (under 15) are cooking, two will be appointed. No one may take hot water from the Fathers' kitchen without leave. The Philosophers may take hot water to wash their dishes. . . . Seminarians must not talk to the [St. Peter Claver] novices. English must always be spoken at meals and at works on school days. . . . On Thursday afternoons, those who do not want to play football must work.¹⁰¹

Similar rules required the students to remain at the seminary during vacations, mandated silence for extensive periods each day—particularly "from the end of night prayer until after mass the next morning," regulated their clothing, and where (and how many) seminarians could go on the seminary grounds.¹⁰² Seminarians had "general leave" to send two letters per month. "The letters must be handed in to Fr. Superior. [The seminarians] are not expected to write many letters. Four a month is considered

sufficient.”¹⁰³ Lights out was at nine o’clock at night,¹⁰⁴ although the seminary superior could give permission to students for private study after night prayers until 9:30.¹⁰⁵ Seminarians could be dismissed if they failed Kutama’s entrance exam or failed to earn their teaching certificate.

Spiritual duties—including prayers in Latin, English, and ChiZezuru—included

a quarter hour’s meditation daily, before mass [for Major seminarians]. Morning prayers are to be said in common before mass. All must hear Mass daily, unless they be sick. They should answer the prayers with the server, and join in all prayers which are recited. When prayers are not recited publicly they ought to use a prayer-book. Servers at Mass are to observe the directions contained in the leaflets issued on this subject for the Vicariate. Five minutes examination of conscience is to be made in Chapel before the mid-day meal. Rosary is to be said in common in Chapel every day. Night prayers are said together before retiring.¹⁰⁶

As with candidates for the LCBL Sisters, Chichester seems to have been ambivalent regarding the quality of the seminarians and their education. In an essay apparently written to mission donors, Chichester was overflowing in his optimism and confidence about the formation of the African clergy:

. . .they have been given quite a comprehensive education, more liberal than that of many millionaires, in fact, they have surpassed them as the reading of Caesar and Livy in the original is quite above many millionaires’ accomplishments. As the venture is new and as the native population has first to be educated up to the idea of the priesthood, it is natural that some should not stay the long course; but in spite of defections, the number remains constant, about twenty five. . . .[The students receive instruction in Latin] which is obviously essential for a future priest [but they also receive training in other subjects including] other useful subjects like First Aid and for the proper maintenance of their small wardrobe, sewing and laundry work. They are good at languages, weaker in algebra and geometry than in other subjects, and they positively hate sewing as being the work of girls. . . .They dress in shirts and shorts and their diet is ordinary native fare, but cleanliness is always insisted on, shower-baths and a liberal ration of soap being provided.¹⁰⁷

Yet, when communicating with his brother bishops, Chichester seems to have been far more patronizing and paternalistic in his view of African seminarians:

As one would expect, they enter without any real idea of a vocation—willing to give it a try. Various defects of the African are manifested in their children's lack of background, no knowledge or appreciation of love or the meaning of love, little sense of gratitude, a great economy of the "whole truth". . . .When they leave, I fancy they seldom give the true reason—that they find the life hard and do not fit in or find it too humiliating to be unsuccessful at their studies.¹⁰⁸

Regardless of the quality of education, the seminary seems to have had a very high attrition rate. According to Chichester, from 1936 when the seminary opened to the establishment of the hierarchy in 1955, approximately 260 students had begun studies for the priesthood, of whom about half had been from the Bulawayo vicariate or Northern Rhodesia.¹⁰⁹ By 1955, twelve priest had been ordained, four men were studying theology, 13 were studying philosophy, 47 were in the minor seminary, and 184 had left the seminary. Of those who had departed, two were dismissed "for something nasty," five for "gross disobedience," one for "general slackness," and two for lack of brain power."¹¹⁰ Thus, during the seminary's first two decades two thirds (67 per cent) of the candidates apparently left of their own accord.

Jesuit Father W. F. Rea wrote that from 1934 to 1974 "300 [students] passed through the minor seminary and survived at least one term. Of these 91 entered the Major seminary and of these 39 were ordained priests."¹¹¹ Thus, according to Rea's numbers only 13 per cent of those students who entered the minor seminary successfully completed the full course of studies and were ordained priests. The lists of ordinands appended to Fr. Constantine Mashonganyika's brief history of the seminary, however,

shows that from 1947 to 1974 there were 70 men ordained to the priesthood.¹¹² While Fr. Mashonganyika did not include the number of minor seminarians who were eventually ordained, he reported a total of 413 men who entered the major seminary between 1940 and 1983, of whom 113 became priests, or 27 per cent.¹¹³ Although it is not possible to account for Rea's significant underreporting of the number of ordinands, it is clear that if Mashonganyika had included the number of students who had entered a minor seminary and completed their studies through ordination, his attrition rate would have been significantly higher.

Although the reasons for leaving seminary formation are varied and very personal, there was apparently concern on the part of some members of Chichester's staff that many students were leaving during the period of study for the teacher training certificate at Kutama between the minor and major seminary courses. After two years on the seminary staff at Chishawasha, Jesuit Father Francis Barr—upon hearing that “an outstanding” candidate at Kutama had left—wrote to Chichester that “something is radically wrong at Kutama. . . .Apparently the Seminarians there are not merely tested but broken.”¹¹⁴ He complained that the Jesuit chaplain had been grossly lax in the spiritual care of the seminary candidates, and that the other students frequently assaulted the seminarians with a “mass of mis-representations” that, without some measure of support from the chaplain, “discourages them so that they cannot bear it any longer and give up.” The “mis-representations” that “are said several times a week to each one” included

a) Candidates are unable to pay school fees, so they pretend that they wish to be priests, get their education free and then leave the Seminary.

b) They want to get free clothes.

c) Candidates have been castrated. They want to be priests because they cannot have children.

d) Some of the candidates are courting girls at Kutama, so it is clear that they do not really mean to be priests.

e) Why do the candidates say, after the Consecration, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, give us priests from our own nation"? They ought to say, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, *make us* priests of our own nation". It proves that they don't want to be priests themselves.

f) *All* candidates will go to hell for they are robbing His Lordship.¹¹⁵

Further, Barr reported that the seminarians felt that the Marist brothers who ran the school were also discouraging of their vocations:

Some of the Brothers say the following things to the Candidates:

a) Those boys who do not pay fees are the ones who complain the most and give most trouble.

b) The Candidates must be caned from time to time.

c) Once candidates get their E.T.C. [Teacher's Certificate] their heads begin to swell and they think themselves "somebody", and give up. That is stealing. It would be better for them not to receive any certificate when they finish the course.¹¹⁶

Barr concluded that two years of such treatment so early in their formation was "asking too much from the Seminarians," and that "few European boys would carry on in the face of such opposition."¹¹⁷ Such a situation casts serious doubt on Dachs and Rea's assertion that "indeed Kutama proved a seed bed for vocations."¹¹⁸ Although not with the same frequency or virulence as sister candidates, several priests mentioned familial opposition to their entering the seminary and foregoing the cultural norms of having children.¹¹⁹

The first seminarians from the Chishawasha seminary to become priests, Simon Tsuro and Isidore Chikore, were ordained in 1947, and were required to spend an additional pastoral year at the seminary.¹²⁰ By 1955, five others had joined them.¹²¹ The bishop housed and fed them "as any other priest and [they] live with them on the

missions,” and paid a stipend of £6 per month. The new priests were allowed to keep any “stipends and honoraria for sermons and retreats.”¹²² They were required to turn over any government teaching salaries to the bishop, which Chichester saved in respective accounts for them. The new priests were not allowed to buy cattle, houses, or land and had to request the permission of the mission superior where they resided to spend over £5.¹²³ Chichester also required the *ordinandi* to refrain from drinking alcohol for a year after their ordination, and “after a year I tell them they are no longer bound by any promise but it I think it would be wise for them to keep it up.”¹²⁴ The priests were assigned to St. Peter’s parish in Mbare and other missions, and according to Chichester, “they all give ‘missions’ and retreats and are in fairly constant demand. They seem to be much respected by their own people and do much good.”¹²⁵ Chichester’s positive estimation is borne out by the number of younger priests who said that they were inspired to enter the seminary by the examples of these pioneer African priests.¹²⁶

Of the four “helpers” who entered the seminary in 1936, only one—Boniface Gondo—professed and renewed annual promises to serve the Zambezi mission.¹²⁷ In 1939, the “helpers” built and moved into their own house on the seminary grounds, and the following year four were received into their novitiate.¹²⁸ On February 2, 1942, Boniface Gondo, Stephen Chiwanza, and Andrew Pashane professed vows as the first Brothers of St. Peter Claver.¹²⁹ Like the LCBL Sisters, the Brothers of St. Peter Claver were a diocesan congregation with Chichester as their superior, a German Jesuit as their novice master, and whose members had to renew their vows annually until 1954 when they were allowed to renew them every three years.¹³⁰ Unlike the LCBL’s, however, the

Brothers of St. Peter Claver apparently never received a constitution, only a set of common rules governing their quotidian lives.¹³¹ Furthermore, “it was decided that there was no future for them,” and the congregation was disbanded in the 1960s, and its members were incorporated into the Jesuits.¹³² The seminary house diarist noted the death of Boniface Gondo, but neglected to record the deaths, departures, or transfers of Stephen Chiwanza, and Andrew Pashane.¹³³ They were all remembered as “holy,” “prayerful,” and “spiritual” men.¹³⁴

The brief history of the Brothers of St. Peter Claver once again raises the question of Chichester’s motivations with regard to his choices for the formation of African religious. One possible explanation is that as with the LCBL’s and the diocesan clergy Chichester was trying to implement Pius XI’s directives from *Rerum Ecclesiae*. To this end, it would have been logical that men’s orders such as the Jesuits did not receive African candidates as brothers until 1959 or priests until 1962. Two pieces of evidence would support this point. Chichester wrote the first prior to 1942 in which he gave a description of the nascent brotherhood:

The Seminary also houses the noviceship for the Brothers. There are already Native Sisters in the Vicariate, but as yet none of the Brothers have vowed to follow the life of the counsels [i.e., poverty chastity, and obedience]. But a beginning has been made and soon we hope to have men, living under vows and working on the mission stations.¹³⁵

The second is an oral tradition among the Jesuits in Harare similar to that among the Dominican sisters that the new bishop asked his confreres not to admit African candidates, but rather send them to the fledgling diocesan seminary.¹³⁶

The agreement between Chichester and the Marist brothers whom he invited to take over the supervision of the Kutama Teacher Training School in 1939, however, complicates the possibility of this option. The agreement stipulated that

the brothers shall contribute 2% [of] the money received from the government. This contribution is common to all the schools in the Vicariate, but it will cease for Kutama if ever the Brothers undertake the training of native subjects for brotherhood. . . . Though negotiations are already on foot to begin a congregation for natives, the Vicar Apostolic will put no difficulties [in] the way of any native wishing to join the Institute of the Marist Brothers.¹³⁷

Obviously, the agreement violated the spirit of *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae*, if not their letter.

Another possibility is that given the preponderant views of the respondents of the 1926 survey about the lack of intellectual and moral “fitness” of African candidates for the clergy, the Jesuits would have been loathe to admit Africans. It is a commonly held view of the members of the Jesuits’ Zimbabwe province that the first African candidates they admitted were brother candidates who were not in a position to follow the course of studies that led to ordination. Furthermore, the first two Zimbabwean African Jesuit priests—Gilbert Modikayi and Raymond Kapito—were ordained as priests for the Archdiocese of Salisbury in 1956, and of the other two ordained before independence, one—Patrick Makaka—had completed philosophy studies at the regional seminary at Chishawasha.¹³⁸ In other words, in the Jesuits’ first century in Zimbabwe they only admitted one African candidate—Ignatius Zvarevashe—to the full course of studies for ordination to the priesthood.

The Regional Major Seminary and Student Protests, 1958-1979

In 1955, the Vatican announced the establishment of the hierarchy in Southern Rhodesia. Salisbury became a metropolitan see and suffragan sees were established in Bulawayo, Gwelo (Gweru), Umtali (Mutare), and Wankie (Hwange).¹³⁹ Chichester was installed as archbishop and metropolitan in April, 1955.¹⁴⁰ The following year, Francis Markall, S.J. was appointed *coadjutor cum iure successionis*, and succeeded Chichester as archbishop of Salisbury.¹⁴¹

The erection of the hierarchy had a significant impact on the seminary. In 1957, Jesuit Father Donald Johnson was appointed as the first rector of the seminary, and due to illness was succeeded by Francis McKeown in 1958.¹⁴² Also in 1958, Propaganda Fide decreed Chishawasha a regional seminary.¹⁴³ Prior to that time, the superior of the Jesuit community served as the de facto superior of the seminary, reporting to Chichester and later to Markall as the bishop and de jure superior of a diocesan seminary. As such, the bishop had a canonical right and responsibility to visit the seminary under his jurisdiction, even if he entrusted its administration to a religious institute, such as the Jesuits in this case. As a regional seminary, however, Chishawasha was to serve candidates from all of the dioceses in Southern Rhodesia. As such, the seminary became the property of the Holy See (i.e., the Vatican) and came under the responsibility of Propaganda Fide, which entrusted the administration to the Jesuits. The bishops were free to interact and direct their respective candidates, but did not have the canonical right or responsibility to visit the seminary. Rather, they were required “to meet each year to receive and discuss the report of the Rector on the moral and economic state of the Seminary,” and “any observations they may wish to make to the Rector will generally be

communicated to him by the local ordinary [of the diocese where the seminary is located].”¹⁴⁴

The change in the seminary’s status resulted in confusion concerning the role and authority of the bishops in the seminary’s governance and an ambiguous relationship between the seminary rector and the newly established seminary board of bishops.¹⁴⁵ This ambiguity was one of the significant factors that contributed to the rise and expression of student protests at the seminary in the 1960s and 1970s.

The drive to make Chishawasha exclusively a major seminary was another significant contributing factor to the rise of seminarian radicalism. Prior to 1958 there had never been more than seven staff members teaching at the seminary at any time and, after 1940, they were required to teach both minor and major seminarians.¹⁴⁶ By the 1950s, the number of seminarians had increased to the point that Chichester had to solicit funding to expand the seminary physical plant and seek additional money for their support.¹⁴⁷ In 1953, there were two fifth year priests, 17 major seminarians (four theologians and 13 philosophers), and 38 minor seminarians reported at Chishawasha.¹⁴⁸ In 1955, the number of major seminarians remained the same, but the minor seminarians had increased to 47.¹⁴⁹ The following year, there were four theologians, three major seminarians teaching during their probationary year and three others studying advanced teacher training at Kutama, 17 philosophers, 31 minor seminarians at Chishawasha, and an additional 18 in the regular teacher training course at Kutama, or a total of 76 students.¹⁵⁰ Given the number of prospective applicants for 1957, the number of seminarians would

soar up and it is a matter of some anxiety where to house all those who wish to come. The twelve new rooms provided by the recently finished extensions are not going to be sufficient and, as a temporary measure, will

have to be shared: not at all a satisfactory arrangement as they are scarcely large enough for two. To sleep, yes; to study, no. But unless we pitch tents, there would seem to be no other immediate solution.¹⁵¹

As early as 1956 there was a "rumour. . .that the minors are to go to [the secondary school at St. Paul's Mission.] Musami to leave this establishment for Majors only."¹⁵² On becoming rector in 1958, Francis McKeown pursued the separation of the minor seminarians vigorously, hoping to ease an increasingly acute staffing problem resulting from the shortage of Jesuits in the Zambezi mission, the growing number of minor seminarians, and the disparity in ages between incoming minor seminarians and older major seminarians.¹⁵³ Beginning with the 1963 academic year, the Seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More at Chishawasha became a regional major seminary.¹⁵⁴ Candidates for the priesthood were then sent to minor seminaries at Chikwingwizha near Gwelo or Melsetter (Chimanimani) in the Umtali diocese.¹⁵⁵

As a result of this decision, African candidates for the priesthood were exposed to perspectives on the Church and African culture different from those of the Jesuits, and the effects of that exposure cannot be underestimated. The minor seminary at Chikwingwizha was run by the Swiss Bethlehem Mission Fathers, whom Chichester had invited to take charge of the southern part of the Salisbury vicariate in 1938. In 1947, the Vatican erected the prefecture apostolic of Fort Victoria (Masvingo) under their direction, and the following year Bishop Aloysius Haene, SMB founded a minor seminary, which he expanded and moved to Chikwingwizha in 1962.¹⁵⁶ Unlike the Jesuits, the Bethlehem missionaries took a very positive view of African culture, and greatly encouraged the

incorporation of African cultural symbols and vocabulary into the corpus of the Church's practice.¹⁵⁷ By and throughout the 1970s,

there were more students from the Gwelo Diocese at Chishawasha Major Seminary than from any other diocese, and in 1977 more than from the two old dioceses of Salisbury and Bulawayo together. Between 1973 and 1976, 9 African priests were ordained for the Gwelo Diocese, compared with 6 for Bulawayo, 4 for Umtali, and 2 each for Wankie and Salisbury.¹⁵⁸

The relatively intellectually open environment in the minor seminaries under the Bethlehem missionaries and the Carmelites (who took charge of the eastern districts of Southern Rhodesia beginning in 1946¹⁵⁹) combined with increasing sentiments of African nationalism on the part of the seminarians, and an increasingly aging and reactionary Jesuit community set the stage for the rebellions that would shake the seminary in the 1960s and 1970s.

By the 1950s, African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia was on the rise with the renaissance of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICWU), and the founding of the National Democratic Party in 1959, and African nationalism began to manifest itself in the seminary during this period as well.¹⁶⁰ Jesuit documents make frequent references to "less visible respect for authority," "challenges to authority," and "lack of respect," including a seminarian proclaiming to a staff member that Rhodesia needed a "Mau Mau," and another incident in which an African deacon struck a Jesuit priest on staff.¹⁶¹ The rector, Fr. Francis McKeown, reported that "the seminarians seem to be far too conscious of their own status and dignity, and too ready to feel slighted and offended."¹⁶² There are frequent references to the seminarians' awareness of the political situation, and that this was causing the problems. African priests who spent their fifth

year at Chishawasha were not only becoming less willing to be treated in the same manner as seminarians, but “apparently did not consider themselves as seminarians, as was shown by the fact that they tended to ignore notices addressed to seminarians,” and that the seminarians were “slack” in “raising their hats to priests” and on “a number of similar points.”¹⁶³ Francis McKeown noted that “the fifth year has difficulties of its own, the chief being the mental or psychological adjustment necessary to live as a priest and yet one in statu pupillari.” Apparently, according to the rector, bishops should have withheld fifth year priests’ faculties and delayed their attendance at annual diocesan clergy conferences “to help remind them that they are still student priests.”¹⁶⁴ Another Jesuit priest on staff expressed concern that a fifth year African priest reported that the African workmen at the seminary “were complaining of their wages,” and considered it “dangerous if the Seminarians went around enquiring into such matters and sympathising with the workmen.”¹⁶⁵ This attitude is indicative of what can only be described as the Jesuits’ enduring paternalism, and reflective of their growing isolation from the seminarians’ concerns.

It was only in 1959, and partially in response to student demands, that the seminary staff began to invite speakers from outside the seminary to present guest lectures to the students on topics such as African culture and urban life, Rhodesian and South African racial policies, and Shona history and religion.¹⁶⁶ It is “indicative” of the “closed[minded]ness” of the majority of the staff that the staff member who invited Dr. Michael Gelfand to give a lecture on Shona ancestral spirits and religious practitioners had “to bribe” the rector by taking on several different assignments.¹⁶⁷

During his annual visitation to the seminary in 1961, Salisbury Mission superior T. E. Corrigan thought it "incredible" that the seminarians would "talk politics" and found it necessary to suggest means "of controlling this."¹⁶⁸ In the following year, Corrigan noted that the staff was "worried" about "the general discipline," "the contact and knowledge of the staff with regard to the seminarians," and "the corresponding personal confidence [that] individual seminarians have in the staff." Urging the staff to make "a very positive effort. . .to know and be at the disposal of the students," Corrigan observed that it seemed "that the [Jesuit] community is dangerously isolated from the seminarians, and consequently confidence and discipline are endangered. There is also a very great danger that accurate knowledge of individual seminarians is lacking."¹⁶⁹ By 1963, although Corrigan commended the staff for having decided to take two meals per day with the students, he also scolded them for not having done anything to improve the lines of communication with the seminarians. In fact, the staff had revised the seminary constitutions and custom book in order "to [impose] a stricter regime." Corrigan urged the cooperation of all "to make it reasonable."¹⁷⁰ According to Jesuit Father Patrick Moloney, the staff had established "a little Jesuit enclave at the seminary."¹⁷¹ As late as 1974, it was common for Jesuit professors to tell African seminarians who asked in-depth philosophical questions in class not to "bother with it" as they were being trained to be "simple parish priests."¹⁷²

The idyllic enclave, however, came to an abrupt end. In 1964, the rector, Francis McKeown, proposed to and received approval from the bishops to enroll two White students at the seminary for the 1965 academic year.¹⁷³ Apparently he did so without

either having consulted the other members of the staff, or having notified them that he would be stepping down as rector and leaving for sabbatical in 1965.¹⁷⁴ Four students arrived from the segregated seminary of St. John Vianney in Pretoria. Less than a week after the term began, John Diamond, McKeown's successor, noted that the Whites had expressed "great dissatisfaction" with the food, accommodations, timetable, and general living conditions. "They have allied themselves quickly with the professional malcontents."¹⁷⁵ They adamantly opposed manual labor, especially laundry.¹⁷⁶ Although two of them—Geoffrey Goodwin and Peter Saunders—left the seminary less than three weeks after the term began, alleging "that they were grossly misled by Fr. McKeown as to conditions here,"¹⁷⁷ their grievances resonated with the African seminarians, who sent an anonymous letter of complaint to the Southern Rhodesian bishops from "the Seminary Group," despite the institution of daily afternoon tea for all the seminarians at the end of February.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, one of the two remaining Whites, Anthony Turner, sent a lengthy memorandum on how the seminary should be run to Francis Markall, the Archbishop of Salisbury and Chairman of the Seminary Board of Bishops, after he (Turner) left the seminary in April.¹⁷⁹

According to Christopher Gardiner, the fourth of the seminarians from St. John Vianney and the only one to stay past the first term of the 1965 academic year, Saunders, Turner, and Goodwin had approached Markall, their bishop, about transferring to Chishawasha from Pretoria, and shortly before Christmas, 1964 asked Gardiner, who was from Bulawayo, "What are you gonna do?"¹⁸⁰ Gardiner, the only one of the four born in Rhodesia, decided that he had to "give an honest evaluation," and spoke with Adolph

Schmitt, the bishop of Bulawayo. Whereas Markall had some reservations about admitting the Whites to Chishawasha, Schmitt was “opposed because the seminary was not ready [for integration]. It would cause problems for the staff and students.” One of the Jesuits on staff at Chishawasha gave them a tour of the grounds and physical plant. “The old philosophers’ wing was dilapidated,” but the new theologians’ wing “gave the impression they were looking forward to our coming.” Against the opposition of his family and the displeasure of his bishop, Gardiner decided to go to Chishawasha for his theology studies: “The good Lord touched my heart. This is what I have to do.”¹⁸¹

Conditions on arrival in January 1965 were “primitive”: “There was no light in the rooms: there were high ceilings in a brick building with maybe a 40 watt bulb.” When the four met their African confreres, Gardiner recalled, “they were very welcoming. They were just terrific.” Despite the warm welcome, however, “problems arose very quickly” with regard to the schedule (“Lights out was at nine o’clock.”), food (“Lunch and supper were okay because the faculty ate with us but the quantities of food were so small—that was the first time ever I was hungry. . . and that breakfast was the killer: slimy *sadza*, a little bit of milk, some bread which was pretty stale and you could see right through it, [and] butter the size of your thumbnail.”), classes (“Studies were really poor. Except for one or two lecturers they were ex-high school teachers from St. George’s¹⁸²: they were shipped out when they were worn out there. . . .Texts were in Latin. The standard was pathetic compared to St. John’s. There was no time for study.”), and manual labor (“As students we were used as servants for the complex. Most of it was really unnecessary. . . .We had to wash our own clothes [by hand] and use coal irons.”).¹⁸³

The students were treated “as second class citizens compared to the Jesuits,” recalled Father Gardiner. “We began talking with the other students about St. John’s, and their eyes opened up: The Jesuits told them this is how it was at other seminaries. We told them that they [the Jesuits] were using and abusing you.” Father Constantine Mashonganyika confirmed this, noting that

some Africans reacted when they [the four Whites] criticised things. The [seminary] authorities reacted. The Jesuits were not happy to have them at that point. We were worried that [the Jesuits] were sending them away because they were showing us things we had a right to. A number of students worked every day. They said they can’t work every day. The food was very different for them: *sadza* and *miriwo*, and the *sadza* was not properly cooked. . . . Lectures [left] something to be desired. Studies were in Latin. [They asked] Why not use English books? [The four] objected to these things.¹⁸⁴

The four “decided to rebel” by not going to manual labor. “We stayed in our rooms and read,” said Fr. Gardiner, “There was conflict from the beginning.” When they weren’t punished for their disobedience, many of the African students questioned what they perceived to be differential treatment on the part of the Jesuits,¹⁸⁵ a charge which John Diamond would deny vehemently in the ensuing imbroglio with the bishops.¹⁸⁶ According to Gardiner, the African students were “disappointed” when Saunders, Goodwin, and Turner left.¹⁸⁷

The letter from the Seminary Group written at the end of February and received by the bishops in mid March,¹⁸⁸ alleged that the students had been complaining to the seminary authorities for year, yet “nobody hears us.” They complained that the books in the library were at least 25 years old, all written by Jesuits, and contained no modern philosophy. The timetable was too rigid, not allowing enough time for study, and that

they were “merely studying for examinations.” As they wanted more time “to read widely,” accordingly, they proposed a new timetable. They were adamant against having to do manual labor, especially laundry. The students also wanted more vacation time and to be allowed to spend vacations away from the seminary. With the money that not being at the seminary during vacations would save, they requested that it be used to provide morning and afternoon tea. The Seminary Group also asked that ordinations be moved from December to August-September due to the rains limiting access to the event, and that their relatives be allowed to visit, as they “are becoming secular priests and not an order or the like.”¹⁸⁹

In addition to criticizing every aspect of life at the seminary, Turner also accused the Jesuits of being “too paternal” and looking “down on the African clergy and students as second-rate.” Consequently, Turner believed, there was an anti-Jesuit feeling among the Africans of Southern Rhodesia. Significantly, while Turner vociferously critiqued the Jesuits’ alleged racism, he expressed equally unenlightened views.¹⁹⁰

Despite the tensions that the four Whites’ presence caused, Christopher Gardiner believed that the Jesuits wanted the experiment to work:

[On Sundays] Breakfast was prepared around five o’clock in the morning, and those of us who served the mass at Chishawasha [mission] didn’t eat until after ten o’clock. [One Sunday in 1966] there were weevils in the porridge [which] had a hard crust on top. I complained to the refectorian, who said he couldn’t do anything about it and to complain to Fr. Moloney. I was in my second year, so I picked up porridge and went to show it to Diamond. The other students were afraid of what was going to happen. There was a staff meeting in the rector’s office, and I put it on Diamond’s desk and said, “Would you eat this?!” Moloney grabbed me, and yelled, “Down to my office!” He read me the riot act. He told me I was “taking advantage of [my] white skin.” He told me to tell everyone to be in the refectory in a half an hour. We went back in a half an hour, and at Moloney’s order there were eggs and bacon, toast and tea. Diamond then

called a meeting and said there would be changes: better food and afternoon tea. And there were. Things radically changed.¹⁹¹

This is confirmed by the minutes of the numerous seminary consultants' meetings dealing with the issue of how to keep Christopher Gardiner at Chishawasha.¹⁹²

The Jesuits frequently complained of the poor educational abilities of the African seminarians:¹⁹³

Equipped on entry with only three or four years of secondary education (little more than grade-school education) of mediocre quality, our average Seminarian finds the ideas and language of his studies and of the liturgy unfamiliar, subtle and hard to make his own. He must besides learn through the medium of English, which he understands only imperfectly, because his own native tongue is too local and too inadequate for philosophy and theology. As for Latin, he seems to find its accuracy and conciseness peculiarly frustrating and unmanageable. It is only to be expected that he finds the going steep, industrious though he is.¹⁹⁴

Yet by the 1960s, they were becoming aware of the problem of the poor quality of the men that were teaching at the seminary.¹⁹⁵ McKeown iterated the "need for men of the highest calibre."

It is a fatal mistake for people in England to think that we are dealing with simple "savages" and simple problems and that therefore anybody at all is good enough for Mission work. We want first-rate men, spiritually, intellectually, and with imaginative sympathy to get outside a Western skin and inside a Bantu one. . . . There is mental staleness and spiritual staleness also to be taken into account. Missionaries are so overworked that they do little or no reading or thinking. They get into a rut. . . . Old and broken Missionaries, middle aged and stale missionaries back on leave after 17 or 20 years are not the best advert. Many who are wavering would be influenced by the knowledge that there is regular leave. Everyone else seems to practise it except ourselves.¹⁹⁶

Both African and European students wanted more time to study for O-level exams by correspondence. Despite Jesuit opposition to the seminarians' taking external courses, older seminarians frequently encouraged incoming students to study for their O-levels.¹⁹⁷

Diamond did not take the criticisms of either the Seminary Group or Anthony Turner seriously. He thought Turner's memorandum was "really only a heavy joke," and he characterized the anonymous letter as "not typical. . . .[however] It is a typical example of a certain type of African opportunism and meanness."¹⁹⁸ Diamond's response may have been due at least in part to the apparent inaction of the bishops, to say nothing of his view of African culture.

Because Turner apparently sent a revised copy of his memorandum to Francis Markall at some point after he left the seminary on April 12, 1965, on May 5, the board of bishops met and decided to ask Propaganda Fide to approve of an external investigation of the seminary by "someone experienced in Seminary administration in countries similar to Rhodesia in background," and commissioned Markall as chairman to draft and send the letter of request to Rome.¹⁹⁹

The bishops' action sparked an immediate and furious response from Diamond and the Jesuit superior of the Salisbury mission, Edward Ennis. In a flurry of correspondence between Diamond, Markall, and Jesuit superiors in London and Rome, Ennis pressed hard to prevent Markall from sending the letter to Propaganda Fide, and by June had succeeded in making the bishops back down. Ennis and Diamond's basic argument was that in 1958 when Chishawasha became a regional seminary it came under the control of Propaganda Fide, who entrusted its administration to the Jesuits. Prior to the Rhodesian bishops' decision of May 5, 1965 there had been no criticism of the Jesuits' running of the seminary by either the bishops or Propaganda Fide. Thus, calling for an external investigation of the seminary without having previously notified either

Diamond or Ennis was not only a gross discourtesy, but an unwarranted drastic measure that: would signal a vote of no confidence by the bishops in the seminary administration, the rector in particular; would undermine the authority of the seminary administration and compromise discipline among the students; and would signal to the seminarians that such behavior could achieve results and reward malcontents for inappropriate behavior. This latter reason was particularly unpalatable to the Jesuits given their view that the failed effort at integration had caused such difficulties through no fault of their own, but because the four Whites from Pretoria were not the right students with whom to try such an experiment.²⁰⁰ Evidently Diamond effectively kept all information of the conflict between the bishops and himself and Ennis not only from the students, but from the seminary staff as well.²⁰¹

Although Diamond had not taken the seminarians' letters seriously, and had intended to let matters at the seminary cool off by themselves, the events of May, 1965 were not lost on him. On June 22, he held a seminary staff meeting and asked his fellow Jesuits to "consider whether any modifications of existing rules and arrangements are desirable."²⁰²

This is an opportune time. Suggestions and criticisms have been made, and we should, I think, look at the substance of them, prescinding from the accidental circumstances which surround the making of them. It is possible that some changes of arrangements or emphasis would be wise.²⁰³

Resulting from this failed integration experiment, Christopher Gardiner and the African seminarians were allowed to go home for the vacation between the second and third terms, the daily order was changed to include more time for study and less time at manual labor, ordinations were held in August, and washing machines were installed.²⁰⁴

Although the seminary was peaceful in 1966, Christopher Gardiner left Chishawasha to return to St. John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria.²⁰⁵ The students and staff were “very supportive,” and “surprised” that he stayed as long as he did. The decision to leave “was a very hard decision” on Gardiner’s part, but he felt he had to do so because “the academics [at Chishawasha] were so poor I wouldn’t be academically prepared [for the priesthood] if I stayed.” Of his time at Chishawasha seminary, Fr. Gardiner recalled that

they were good years. There was lots of frustration. . . . There was lots of injustice in the place. It was a place of servitude. They were unprepared, but wanted it [integration] to work. The Jesuits knew about the injustice and the servitude, and they got away with it.²⁰⁶

The year 1967 brought another crisis to the seminary. According to Diamond, discipline declined throughout the year, including “representations to RPR for increased study time and abolition of manual works, culminating in an ultimatum delivered by the beadle, Constantine [Mashonganyika].”²⁰⁷ Although Diamond noted that study time had been almost doubled to four hours per day since 1965, he decided to close the seminary on October 10, 1967, and send the students home “for further reflection.” On November 1, when all the seminarians except Mashonganyika were allowed to return, they were required to sign an “understanding to abide by seminary rules, manual work, etc.”²⁰⁸

Given that, unlike the integration episode of 1965, the seminary was closed in 1967, there is relatively little documentation of the incident. On October 12, Diamond sent a letter to the bishops and to Edward Ennis explaining his rationale for closing the seminary: the Whites in 1965 “had succeeded in conveying to our seminarians the impression that they were receiving treatment inferior to that of seminarians elsewhere

just because they were Africans.” Mashonganyika had been away from the seminary on pastoral probation in 1966, and upon returning brought demands for more study time and morning tea, and an end to manual works, culminating in the petition signed by 15 seminarians. According to Diamond, subsequent investigation revealed that Mashonganyika coerced younger seminarians to sign the petition, and the decision to close the seminary was an effort to prevent irreparable damage to the vocations of the younger seminarians as well as to “facilitate getting rid of the unhealthy elements who were at the root of the troubles.”²⁰⁹ Mashonganyika, however, claimed that he was merely bringing the concerns of the majority to the seminary administration in his capacity as prefect, and that “there wasn’t any defiance of authority.” The petition came from the “majority of students,” and there were four or five who “didn’t want anything to do with it,” of whom three were asked to remain behind to answer staff questions, alleging coercion.²¹⁰

As in 1965, the bishops apparently wanted “to call in an external commission to make a visitation of [the] seminary.”²¹¹ As in 1965, Diamond responded with virtually the same argument against an external investigation. Unlike 1965, however, there is only one letter from Diamond extant, which appears to be the only evidence of Jesuit resistance to episcopal interference in the running of the seminary. Unlike 1965 as well, there was no process of self-reflection on the part of the seminary staff or any effort to consider student demands.

There was, however, a confidential two-page summary of comments on seminary training by five recently ordained African priests, which indicated a perception of a

condescending, paternalistic attitude on the part of the Jesuits; a narrow focus on scholastic philosophy and “no knowledge of African life” on the part of the staff; an overemphasis on the seminary constitution and custom book, “too much manual work,” and priests having to observe the same rules as seminarians (“[the Jesuits] did not regard you as a priest.”) The young priests concluded that

there was no contact, let alone dialogue, between staff and students. It was a master-servant attitude. . . . The trouble in October was not a matter which came suddenly, nor was it instigated by one seminarian, it could and should have come 3 years earlier. It was brewing all the time. Fr. Diamond tried to improve things but was too hesitant and did not have the cooperation of the other staff members.²¹²

Additionally, a letter from the Jesuit General Assistant for Africa to Bishop Haene of Gwelo stated that he and Ennis had discussed removing Diamond as rector of the seminary by the middle of 1968.²¹³ Diamond, however, remained as rector through 1969, and Constantine Mashonganyika was readmitted to the seminary in 1970 and ordained in 1973.

During the 1960s, although the seminary staffing crisis became more acute, Diamond and his confreres at the seminary flatly refused a suggestion that the Carmelites and Bethlehem missionaries be invited to assist in staffing the seminary.²¹⁴ Clearly, the seminary rector was either unfamiliar with or had forgotten Benedict XV’s exhortation to invite other religious institutes to share the work of a mission when the institute given charge of the mission was not providing an adequate supply of workers. In 1970, Edward Ennis advised the bishops that staffing at the seminary was “minimal” and that the majority of the staff was “of an advanced age.” He believed it was “a matter of great urgency” that an African priest be appointed to the staff, and that “thought should be

given to preparing selected seminarians for future teaching in the Seminary.”²¹⁵ Although the bishops “agreed” with Ennis’ points and sent two African priests for higher studies,²¹⁶ they made no effort to appoint an African priest or a priest of a different religious order to the seminary staff until 1975.

By 1974, African seminarians were no longer willing to endure feeling like they were “being trained to be second class priests.”²¹⁷ Private studies for O- and A-levels were rampant, and lectures, according to Fr. Walter Nyatsanza, “challenged us to want to be liberated not just politically but intellectually, socially, and spiritually. . .we wanted to have the totality of liberation.”²¹⁸

The 1974 strike began on Saturday, September 28 when Deacon Ernest Mukuwapasi was dismissed by the seminary rector, John Berrell, S.J. for extended improper conduct.²¹⁹ The following day, the theologians met on the football pitch to determine a course of action, and drafted a letter to Berrell in support of Mukuwapasi signed by six recent ordinands.²²⁰ The student priests requested an explanation for the deacon’s dismissal and his return to the seminary. If their demands were not met they rescinded responsibility “for what might follow.” They acknowledged that “all [Mukuwapasi] had done was to challenge [Berrell’s] disturbing actions at the Table of the Lord,” and that although “it did disturb the whole community at worship,” it was “not without reason,” and “in itself is not sufficient reason to terminate a man’s long response to God’s call.” The students were “very disturbed” by the manner in which Berrell tried to remove Mukuwapasi “secretly.”²²¹ They feared that “what has happened to Ernest may be going to happen to many more and, therefore we feel in conscience that things be put

right for the good of the Church of God,” and asked to meet with the rector following night prayers.²²² The two sides met after afternoon tea, and Berrell refused to discuss the reasons for Mukuwapasi’s dismissal. The priests informed their fellow students that “the meeting had been a complete failure.”

One can say that it was here on Sunday evening that the students decided to speak a language that was going to make Fr. Rector see that he was badly understanding the students and that he was underestimating their deep feelings. This language, sorry to say, took the form of a protest.²²³

On Monday, September 30, the strike began in earnest with the boycotting of classes until Ernest Mukuwapasi returned to the seminary. All but four of the students, including two priests, withdrew to the football pitch, except for meals and spiritual duties.²²⁴ During meals the strikers maintained “a rigid silence.” Berrell notified the bishops’ secretary general who in turn notified Archbishop Markall. The rector and the seminary consultants decided that they could not meet the students demands.²²⁵ The following day, the priest-organizers tried to meet with Patrick McNamara, the Jesuit superior, and with Archbishop Markall and Bishop Patrick Chakaipa, all to no avail.

Tensions began to escalate on Wednesday, October 2.²²⁶ At mass that morning, one of the non-striking priests was the principle celebrant. All the strikers “declined to make the sign of the cross at the beginning of Mass, declined to answer the responses (except those to the Reader) and when [the celebrant] and a deacon were distributing Communion only twelve or 15 [sic] came to receive the Sacrament.”²²⁷ At meals, those students who were working in the kitchen “were outrageously rude to the Sisters in the kitchen.”²²⁸ Berrell and some of the consultants met with the student-priests (strikers and non-strikers) in an effort “to save the seminary from moral and physical ruin and

destruction. . .if a way could be found.” The priests claimed that Mukuwapasi’s dismissal was the only issue when Berrell asked if there were “deeper issues,” and they asked for “a Kissenger [to] be brought in as a facilitator to take the heat out of the situation: His Grace [Markall] or Bishop Chakaipa was suggested.”²²⁹ Neither, however, were available to mediate. Later that night anonymous threatening letters were placed under the doors of several staff members.²³⁰ At benediction, the strikers chose the hymn “Whatsoever you do to the least of my bretheren, that you do unto me,” and sang *Ishe Komborera Afrika* [God save Africa] “with gusto.”²³¹ On Thursday, October 3, efforts to secure a mediator failed again, and the incidents of “rude” and “insulting” behavior on the part of the strikers toward the non-strikers and staff increased.

Friday, October 4, the students’ efforts to contact Bishop Chakaipa failed again. The bishops’ secretary general, Fr. Kevin Kinnane, informed the other bishops of the strike, and efforts at negotiation between the seminary staff and the strike leaders also failed. In the afternoon, a reporter from the *Rhodesia Herald* came out to the seminary, and Markall finally arrived to meet with Berrell and the seminary consultants. Markall told the staff that the seminary would have to be closed, and left the details to Berrell.²³²

On the morning of Saturday, October 5, Berrell gave Fr. Ignatius Mhonda, one of the leaders of the strike, a letter announcing the closure of the seminary. Mhonda read the letter to his fellow strikers, and they all withdrew again to the football pitch. Mhonda and two other priests

returned from the football pitch with the notice of closure saying the Rector’s signature was not sufficient. They needed a document from Fr. Kinnane to prove that the Bishops really did endorse the closure of the seminary. . . .Fr. Kinnane kindly consented to come at once and brought the necessary documents from the Archbishop and the Secretariat, going

with these to the football pitch and eventually convincing the strikers that they must pack and go.²³³

The seminarians were now satisfied that the Bishops had decided to close the Seminary. They put some requests to Fr. Kinnane at the football pitch which they asked to be conveyed to their bishops, principally that no one should be dismissed on account of the protest and that representatives of the seminarians should be invited to put forward their point of view when this matter was being discussed.²³⁴

The strikers also asked if they could stay until the morning of Monday, October 7, as transportation to their home dioceses would be easier than on Saturday or Sunday. Berrell agreed on the condition that the strikers behave themselves.²³⁵ According to Berrell, “silence and surliness and worse rudeness to the Staff continued. . . .Some spent Saturday night annoying and attempting to terrorise members of Staff on the internal telephone system, which had to be disconnected. The same rudeness and surliness continued through Sunday.”²³⁶

On the morning of Monday, October 7, the seminarians attended mass at 5:30, ate breakfast at six o’clock, and then loaded the bus that would take them to Salisbury. “The Seminarians then ascended the terrace steps, formed a group and sang *Ishe komborera Afrika* and a folk hymn about going home after all these wasted years, whilst the Rector and Staff members stood by. The whole group of Seminarians were then solemnly blessed by Fr. Mhonda, entered the bus in silence and departed.”²³⁷

In the wake of the 1974 strike, against Jesuit objections the bishops appointed an external commission to investigate the causes of the strike and to make recommendations for the long-term restructuring of the seminary. The commission concluded that the situation in the seminary had been tense for some time and Ernest Mukuwapasi’s

dismissal served as the necessary spark to set it off, and recommended that: the seminarians not be punished collectively, rather that each bishop deal with each seminarian individually; the seminary be reopened for the first term of February, 1975 with Berrell as rector through the end of the year and an African priest as vice rector with right of succession in 1976.²³⁸ Thus, after 40 years the seminary's administration passed from the Jesuits to African priests. Approximately 40 of the 107 seminarians returned in 1975. Several of those who didn't return chose to join the guerrillas fighting against the Smith regime.²³⁹

The atmosphere at the seminary under Fr. Tobias Chiginya improved significantly. Chiginya was "quite adept and defused many of the students' concerns," including granting them an elected student representative council.²⁴⁰ He removed many of the petty rules that had been in force under the Jesuits and "treated us as adults," which was a great "relief" to the students: "It was what we were waiting for all along," reflected Fr. Walter Nyatsanza.

There were, however, tensions between Shona and Ndebele students that generally followed the divisions between ZANU and ZAPU. "Hell broke loose" shortly before the 1979 elections when ZAPU supporters tore down a ZANU poster.²⁴¹ According to Fr. Nyatsanza, Francis Mugadzi, Chiginya's successor as rector, "had very little choice" but to close the seminary as there was "almost war between the students." The seminary didn't reopen until after independence in April 1980.

In a commentary assessing the causes of the 1974 strike, Fr. W. F. Rea, S.J. opined that many Africans became Catholics and entered the seminary for "unworthy

motives, and mixed ones,” alleging that they did so for the only higher educational opportunities available to them at the time. “But when they see their contemporaries in secondary schools and the Universities making more progress than they,” he continued, “they cannot face up to the fact that this is due to their own lack of capacity and blame everyone and everything except themselves.” He similarly alleged that Africans chose to become priests for the social status that the advanced education that seminary training would bring them, and ultimately absolved the seminary administration of any responsibility for the strike, which—in his view—was the product of African frustration at the lack of status recognition combined with the political situation and bad treatment of the seminary by the bishops.²⁴²

It seems, however, that Rea himself was determined to place blame for the strike everywhere except with his brother Jesuits. The seminary staff repeatedly refused to change in the face of rising student expectations and demands: they did not heed T. E. Corrigan’s admonitions between 1961 and 1963; John Diamond thought the seminarians’ complaints to the bishops in 1965 were a joke; nor did the staff take any action on the comments of the young African priests in 1967. While the escalating political tensions in colonial Zimbabwe certainly contributed to the seminarians’ increasing consciousness of themselves as African Christians, the primary cause of the students’ activism in the 1960s and 1970s was the Jesuits’ failure to break with the dominant White Rhodesian culture and its paternalistic mind-set. This failure on the part of the Jesuits is indicative of their larger failure to inculturate the Catholic church at their missions in colonial Zimbabwe.

As such, African seminarians' expressions of nationalism were part of a broader struggle to decolonize the Catholic church.

In reflecting on his time as rector, Francis McKeown remarked that "it never crossed my mind that we would have bishops" training at the seminary.²⁴³ One can only wonder how different life at the Regional Major Seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More at Chishawasha would have been had McKeown, his contemporaries, and his successors borne in mind Pope Benedict XV's admonition that "the local clergy is not to be trained merely to perform the humbler duties of the ministry, acting as the assistants of foreign priests. On the contrary, they must take up God's work as equals, so that some day they will be able to enter upon the spiritual leadership of their people,"²⁴⁴ or Pius XI's prescient belief that locally trained seminarians would be the priests "who will be destined one day to govern parishes and dioceses. . .it is they who will one day govern the churches and Catholic communities founded by your sweat and labor,"²⁴⁵ as Chichester had done to some degree when he was superior of Chishawasha when it was a diocesan seminary.

Notes

1. Funding for the research for this manuscript was provided by the State of Michigan Department of Education's Martin Luther King-César Chavez-Rosa Parks Minority Future Faculty Initiative, a Graduate Merit Fellowship for Doctoral Dissertation Research of the Michigan State University College of Arts and Letters, and an additional research grant from the Michigan State University Graduate School. I would like to thank Professor Deborah Gaitskell, Wendy Urban-Mead, and the fellows of the Erasmus Institute at the University of Notre Dame for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Quotation from Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe (JAZ hereafter), Box 108, *Memoriale Visitationis*, T.E. Corrigan, March 27, 1961.
2. Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud: Apostolic Letter on the Propagation of the Faith Throughout the World*, (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1919), 5.
3. JAZ, Box 117/3, Report of Kevin Kinnane, OFM, the Secretary General of the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops' Conference (RCBC hereafter), October 5, 1974.
4. See Roland Von Nidda, SJ, "Reflections on the Strike"; T. Page, SJ, "Observations on the Strike," both in JAZ, Box 117/3; and "Report of the Seminary Commission," December 22, 1974 in JAZ, Box 117/4.
5. Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*, (New York: Times Books: 1992), 164. See 118-96 for a more complete explanation.
6. Richard W. Thomas, *Understanding Interracial Unity: A Study of U.S. Race Relations*, (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1996), 65-133.
7. See Joy Brain and Philippe Denis, ed., *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 124-50.
8. A. J. Dachs and W. F. Rea. *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 223.
9. Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, 4.
10. *ibid.*, 4-5.
11. *ibid.*, 5-6.
12. *ibid.*, 6.
13. *ibid.*, 7.
14. See Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 132-33.

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15. JAZ, Box 195/3, A. Reinhard, R.M.M. (Superior of Triashill Mission) to Parry, November 12, 1920.
16. JAZ, Box 195/3, Letter of J. Apel, S.J. [to Parry?], November 18, 1920.
17. *ibid.*
18. JAZ, Box 195/3, Letter of J. O'Neill, n.d.
19. *ibid.*
20. Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae* in *The Papal Encyclicals*, vol.3, Claudia Carlen, ed., (Raleigh: McGrath Publishing, 1981), 285, 86.
21. *ibid.*, 287, 288.
22. See JAZ, Box 108, Robert Brown, "Questions," July 1, 1926.
23. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 134.
24. JAZ, Box 108, Emil Schmitz, Chishawasha: "It is my opinion that Native Christians, who have a vocation, are intellectually and morally fit to become priests. Selected boys will have no difficulty in making the necessary studies."; Henry Quin: "That there are youths, who if encouraged are capable of developing a vocation for the priesthood, that intellectually it is only a matter of patient training and instruction, and morally there is no difficulty."
25. JAZ, Box 108, Jean-Baptiste Loubière: "La duplicité, la sensualité, l'inconstance surtout resteront des obstacles bien difficiles à surmonter."; Thomas Esser: "Intellectually few of our natives have reached Standard IV at the age of seventeen or twenty. They are not capable of higher studies."; H. Seed: "I should say most emphatically that as yet they are, intellectually and morally, quite unfit to be accepted as candidates for the priesthood. No matter how good & pious some appear to be, their piety is only skin deep, & they cannot withstand serious temptation for any length of time. They are still imbued with the superstitions of their ancestors & liable to revert to these any day."; Andrew Hartmann: "The natives under my observation are not a gifted race. . . .Amongst the schoolboys there are none who could be classified as brilliant or gifted. . . .none is able to write a decent letter, not even in Sindebele and much less in English. . . .None of them would be able to learn Latin."; Thomas Gardiner: "Up to now one has met very few natives with 'brains.'"
26. JAZ, Box 108, John Apel: "I believe that our Native Christians are yet unfit for the priesthood: a) intellectually on account of the inferior standard of education they can receive and the gross materialism of their surroundings. However, the school children, especially those of Christian parents, are showing signs of better intellectual development."; H. Kaibach: "I think there are some *intellectually* fit, i.e., who would be

capable of learning, they would probably require more time for it than Europeans, but I think they could attain the require [sic] knowledge.”; Francis Richartz: “There are certainly a number of young Christian Natives would be fit *intellectually* for the studies before priesthood; the difficulty is certainly greater with regard to moral fitness”; Anonymous: “I am of opinion that some natives of my Station and outschools are (a) intellectually (b) morally fit for the priesthood if only the wish to become priests can be instilled into them by a suitable education given in a suitable atmosphere.”; Anonymous (typed): I cannot say that I have come across any Native Christians at present fit for the priesthood. At the same time, I am of the opinion that two or three Native Christians, I have had to do with, had they been taken in time, would both morally and intellectually have been fit.”

27. This does not include the responses of Loubière and an anonymous Mariannhill priest at St. Benedict’s mission with references to “a few” and “some” respectively. N.B., Dachs and Rea reported only 14 Africans expressing interest in the priesthood. See Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 134.

28. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of John Apel, S.J.

29. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Francis Richartz, S.J.

30. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Thomas Gardiner, S.J.

31. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Henry Quin, S.J. See also Emil Schmitz: “There are signs indicating that vocations to the priesthood will arise if we begin working in this direction: The love of prayer and frequent holy Communion in *young* boys, the absence of mortal sins against the 6th commandment, the readiness to do hard work without grumbling, the devotion to the stations of the Cross and the devotion to our Lady—which devotions are liked by all the young boys.”

32. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Jean-Baptiste Loubière : “Quelques parents chretiens seraient heureux si le bon Dieu appelait leurs enfants au sacerdoce. Dans le village chretien les enfants imitent les cérémonies de l’église, processions enfantines, etc. C’est un bon signe.”; Francis Richartz: Potential candidates for the priesthood “should desire for higher perfection, to become lay brothers, join sodalities, etc.”

33. JAZ, Box 108, J. Moreau, S.J.: There were no signs of interest in the priesthood because of “the apparently total absence of demand for a native clergy and total absence of the means of raising it.”; Edward Biehler, S.J.: It is innate in them, that man is born for propagation, and all the native customs tend toward that from their childhood.”; John Apel: “I account for [the absence of vocations to the priesthood] by the pagan atmosphere which cannot altogether be avoided, by the young age of the mission, by the carnal character of the race and their selfishness. They are by nature thieves, liars, ungrateful, lazy, and dirty.”; T. Esser: Morally they have no backbone. They are vacillating in purpose and pursuit. They are prone to sudden discouragement. They are incapable of

constant self-control. The law of celibacy is beyond their present ideals. They are easily drawn by the eternal feminine. If most teachers, though drawn from the best are frail and require constant supervision with regard to the sixth commandment ["Thou shalt not commit adultery"], the married and unmarried being very much alike, native priests in this part of the world would in all probability cause great scandal and hinder God's work."; H. Seed: "They are a very degraded people, and in many cases the Christians among them have lapsed into paganism or immoral habits."; A. Hesse, S.J.: "Shyness, indolence, laziness."; Andrew Hartmann: Heathenism is so much ingrained in them and has such a hold on them that it will still take some time to ??? of them."

34. JAZ, Box 108, Jean-Baptiste Loubière: Ces signes ne se manifestent que dans les villages chrestiens. Partout ailleurs les petits enfants s'exerant á leurs dances et á leurs tambours."; Anonymous Mariannhillier 1: As long as we are not able to check excessive beer-drinking and more firmness of character there will be little hope to find many signs of vocation. Especially here at Monte Cassino it is difficult under the present circumstances. Boys only who have been a longer period in boarding schools may perhaps get a vocation only, as there is very little fostering the idea of priesthood among Christian parents. Even otherwise good parents get horrified at the thought that their children might refuse to marry and see it rather like a curse than a blessing."; Anonymous Mariannhillier 2: ". . .I trust that if the boys would stay a longer time at the Mission, some vocations to the priesthood are likely to arise as also some girls have asked already to be allowed to enter the native sisterhood."; Anonymous 2: ". . .my Natives have not been brought up in a Christian atmosphere."

35. JAZ, Box 108, Anonymous (typed) reply; H. Kaibach: "The total absence of such signs might result and I think in great part does result from the thought that the priesthood is only for white people. When one speaks to them of black priests in Uganda [African Christians] are terribly astonished and ask whether they eat sadza. Another reason is, I think, at least in these districts, the natives are kept too far apart from us, there is a sort of unbridgeable gulf between them and us."; Thomas Gardiner: Up to now they have thought the priesthood to be far above them."; Henry Quin: ". . .the priesthood has not been put before our Christian boys and youths, as a possible call from God. But how could we do so, when there has been no place where we could send boys or youths to try or develop their vocations. Even vocations to religious life as a brother in our Society [i.e., the Jesuits] have been discouraged, instead of being tried."Emil Schmitz: "There are signs indicating that vocations to the priesthood will arise if we begin working in this direction."

36. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Edward Biehler, S.J..

37. JAZ, Box 108, Replies of Jean-Baptiste Loubière and John Apel.

38. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Andrew Hartmann.

39. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Francis Richartz.

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40. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Emil Schmitz.
41. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of J. Moreau, S.J.
42. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of H. Kaibach.
43. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Henry Quin.
44. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Thomas Gardiner.
45. JAZ, Box 108, Anonymous (typed) reply. No explanation was given as to why this missionary presented the priesthood to African Christian parents yet not to the potential candidates themselves.
46. JAZ, Box 108, Replies of Francis Richartz and Anonymous 2.
47. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of H. Kaibach: I have never done it because my Christian parents are only just married and I have not yet thought my Christians in general good enough for such exhortations. They have good many other things to learn yet.”; Andrew Hartmann: “No! . . . It is premature. Native parents will not pray for their children, exceptions will be very rare; least of all will women pray for their children.”; Anonymous 2: “No, the children of Christian parents are still too young.”; Thomas Gardiner: “The great effort of the missionary has up to now been to consolidate Christian marriages and to insure the bringing up of Christian children in the fear of God. It is found difficult enough to get the boys to train to become efficient catechists—the catechist movement has lagged behind. So the missionary could scarcely go ahead and propose the priesthood.”; J. Moreau: “No, because there being no means in view [of] realizing these desires it would have been worse than useless to raise them. No, never as a thing of practical possibility of achievement.”
48. The full question asked: “Assuming, as a universal experience justifies one in doing, that vocations grow best in a thoroughly Christian home atmosphere, what means would you suggest as best calculated to create and spread such a home atmosphere?”
49. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Henry Quin: “It is absolutely necessary to gather our best and most earnest Christians into Christian villages, either on a mission station or even in the country away from the central mission. Then and only then can we create a really Christian home life atmosphere.”
50. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Thomas Gardiner. Emphasis in original. See also reply of A. Hesse, S.J.: “The ideal are Christian villages, where such can be erected. It is not possible—at least at present—everywhere. Next best are boarding schools in charge of Sisters.”

51. See the replies of John Apel, Monte Cassino Mariannhill missionary, and Andrew Hartmann's response to the question concerning presenting the idea of the priesthood to African Christian parents.

52. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Edward Biehler.

53. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Henry Seed.

54. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Francis Richartz. Emphasis in original.

55. JAZ, Box 108, Reply of Emil Schmitz. Emphasis in original.

56. Communication with author, March 3, 2001. The reference is to his 1990 University Sermon at Oxford University. See also, Terence Ranger, *"Are We Not Also Men?": The Samkange Family & African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-1964*, (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995).

57. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 135.

58. Richartz: "There are certainly a number of young Christian natives who would be fit *intellectually* for the studies before priesthood. The difficulty is certainly greater with regard to moral fitness, not only in reaching it, but more in maintaining it, unless the candidate be exceptionally good [sic] disposed and well guided and under control since experience shows how the inherited dangerous inclinations may unexpectedly become grave temptations." Hartmann: "Amongst the schoolboys there are none who could be classified as brilliant or gifted. Of course, there are some who are somewhat above the average, but none is able to write a decent letter, not even in Sindebele and much less in English, the knowledge of which does not go beyond some colloquial phrases. None of them would be able to learn Latin. . . . Among the [Jesuit] Fathers of the Station it is almost a proverb to say that these Natives have no will. The explanation for this is that their will has never been put under discipline. The children are left, from their infancy, to their own fancies, whims and devices. . . . [AmaNdebele parents] may have the good will to do the right thing but when it comes to the test they yield to the baser instincts. It is almost impossible for the children to lead a pure life, surrounded as they are in their homes by an atmosphere of immorality and corruption. Neither is the principal, or almost exclusive occupation of the boys out of school hours conducive to [an] honest life, viz. the herding of goats and cattle. A danger to their morals is the Kaffir beer and the smoking of wild hemp."

59. JAZ, Box 135/1, Robert Brown's 1928 Circular letter; JAZ, Box 135/2, "Kutama Training School, 1931," E. King, S.J., "The Training School at Kutama Mission," *Nuntii De Missionibus*, Vol 6, No.1 (June, 1933), 4-27; Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 136.

60. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, July 1, 1939; Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare (AAH hereafter), Box 528, File A (528/A hereafter), Kilian Samakande to

Chichester, March 8, 1939. Apparently Chichester sent a cross to Samakande as an ordination gift. There is no mention of this or of Kilian Samakande in Dachs and Rea's chapter on the founding of the seminary at Chishawasha.

61. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, October 24, 1962

62. JAZ, Box 108, Rev. Isidore Chikore, "The Regional Major Seminary, Chishawasha," March 1973, 1; Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 136-38.

63. JAZ, Box 108, Rev. Isidore Chikore, "The Regional Major Seminary, Chishawasha," March 1973.

64. See John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, (Nairobi: Daughters of St. Paul, 1998).

65. Joy Brain and Phillipe Denis, *The Catholic Church in Contemporary South Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), 126.

66. *ibid.*

67. *ibid.*, 126-27.

68. Dachs and Rea mentioned that Chichester visited Uganda, but one version of the rules for the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart was written on stationary from the Holy Ghost Training School in Morogoro, Tanganyika. See Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 136.

69. AAH, Box 528/A, A.V.D. Peyssal to Fr. Rector, April 8, 1930; anonymous three page letter concerning the White Fathers in Uganda, Tanganyika, and southern Sudan.

70. JAZ, Box 108, Rev. Isidore Chikore, "The Regional Major Seminary, Chishawasha," March, 1973, 1-2.

71. AAH, Box 528/A, Bishop Chichester's Notanda, October 9, 1933.

72. *ibid.*

73. *ibid.*

74. JAZ, Box 108, "Experimental Rules of the Confraternity of the Heart of Jesus," n.d.; AAH, Box 528/A, "Rules (Experimental) of the Confraternity of the Heart of Jesus," n.d.

75. JAZ, Box 108, "Experimental Rules of the Confraternity of the Heart of Jesus," n.d.

76. *ibid.*

77. AAH, Box 528/A, Francis Ketterer to Chichester, November 25, 1933.

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78. AAH, Box 528/A, Chichester to Fr. O'Rourke, February 5, 1935.
79. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 136.
80. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, January 1, 1936; Memoriale Visitationis, P. L. Beisley, S.J., July 27, 1942: "We should be careful, as far as the primitive conditions admit, to give the Seminarians a good example in neatness of dress and such things." Interview with Rev. Bernard Ndlovu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000.
81. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 136, 138.
82. Interview with Rev. Bernard Ndlovu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000.
83. *ibid.* See also interview with Mr. Laurence Masundire, Chancery, Archdiocese of Harare, May 18, 2000. Mr. Masundire, who entered the seminary in 1948, described the conditions as "pretty primitive," and the food as "pretty poor." He also corroborated the difficulties of collecting water "in a half drum" and firewood, and sleeping on the floor.
84. Sadza is the staple of the VaShona diet. It consists of ground corn meal boiled in water until it becomes stiff. Usavi is a stew of vegetables and meat that accompanies sadza.
85. Interview with Rev. Bernard Ndlovu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000.
86. AAH, Box 528/G, Memorandum concerning food at the Seminary, May 10, 1962.
87. Interview with Rev. Christopher Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.
88. JAZ, Box 108, Rev. Isidore Chikore, "The Regional Major Seminary, Chishawasha," March, 1973.
89. AAH, Box 528/ D, Chichester to Hugh Boyle, bishop of Johannesburg, August 17, 1955.
90. *ibid.*
91. *ibid.*
92. *ibid.*
93. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, February 3, 1940; February 1, 1944.

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94. Interview with Patrick Moloney, S.J., Prestage House Jesuit Community, Harare, May 29, 2000. See also Seminary *Historia Domus*, July 30, 1945: first public disputations in philosophy and theology.
95. AAH, Box 528/C, Chichester to N.E.D. Director Stark, March 7, 1949.
96. AAH, Box 528/C, Stark to Chichester, June 14, 1949.
97. AAH, Box 528/C, Chichester to N.E.D. Director Stark, March 7, 1949
98. AAH, Box 528/C, Cedric Myerscough, S.J., "Seminary Jottings, 1953."
99. AAH, Box 528/E, N.E.D. Director, H. Finkle to Archbishop Francis Markall, S.J., March 25, 1958; Markall to Francis McKeown, March 28, 1958.
100. AAH, Box 528/ D, Chichester to Hugh Boyle, August 17, 1955.
101. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, January 28, 1940.
102. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary Rule Book, 1938-1949.
103. *ibid.*
104. Interview with Rev. Christopher Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.
105. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary Rule Book, 1938-1949.
106. *ibid.*
107. AAH. Aston Chichester. "The Seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More," n.d.
108. AAH, Box 528/ D, Chichester to Hugh Boyle, bishop of Johannesburg. August 17, 1955.
109. *ibid.*
110. *ibid.*
111. JAZ, Box 116/5, "Extracts from the *Historia Domus* of the Seminary: Chishawasha, 1937-1975" (typescript), 14.
112. JAZ, Box 117/8, Constantine Mashonganyika. "The Seminary at Chishawasha," 24-25.
113. *ibid.*, 14, 24-25.

114. AAH, Box 528/B, Francis C. Barr, S.J. to Chichester, December 20, 1943. See JAZ, Box 116/5, W.F. Rea, "Extracts from the *Historia Domus* of the Seminary: Chishawasha, 1937-1975" (typescript), 27.

115. AAH, Box 528/B. Francis C. Barr, S.J. to Chichester, December 20, 1943. Emphasis in the original.

116. *ibid.* Emphasis in the original.

117. *ibid.*

118. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 136.

119. Interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000; Interview with Rev. Charles Mafurutu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000; Interview with Rev. Hebron Wilson, St. Patrick's Church, Bulawayo, May 11, 2000.

120. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, October 26, 1947; December 22 and 28, 1948.

121. Alois Nyanyete was ordained October 29, 1950, Joseph Kumbirai and Regis Chigwedere on October 26, 1952, Peter Claver Marimanzi and Thomas Marumbgwa on October 25, 1953. See Seminary *Historia Domus*.

122. AAH, Box 528/D, Chichester to Hugh Boyle, Bishop of Johannesburg, August 17, 1955.

123. *ibid.* See also AAH, Box 528/C, "Provisional Arrangement between the Bishop and African Priests," March 2, 1948.

124. AAH, Box 528/D, Chichester to Boyle, August 17, 1955.

125. *ibid.*

126. Interview with Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa, Chancery, Archdiocese of Harare, May 5, 2000; Interview with Rev. Walter Nyatsanza, Africa Synod House, Harare, May 15, 2000; Interview with Mr. Laurence Masundire, Chancery, Archdiocese of Harare, May 18, 2000; Interview with Rev. Ignatius Chidavaenzi, Bible House, Harare, May 18, 2000. A similar process obtained in the Bulawayo diocese, as well. Archbishop Pius Ncube recalled being inspired to become a priest by the example of Rev. Bernard Ndlovu, the first SiNdebele-speaking diocesan priest to complete the course of study at Chishawasha. Similarly, Fr. Ncube inspired and encouraged Hebron Wilson. Interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000; Interview with Rev. Hebron Wilson, St. Patrick's Church, Bulawayo, May 11, 2000.

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127. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, February 2, 1937; February 2, 1938.
128. *ibid.*, May 9, August 1, 1939; January 22, January 23, February 2, 1940.
129. *ibid.*, February 2, 1942.
130. *ibid.*, *passim.*, especially February 2, 1954 and February 2, 1957.
131. JAZ, Box 108, "The Common Rules of the Brothers of St. Peter Claver." There is apparently no documentary evidence of the existence of the Brothers of St. Peter Claver beyond this set of rules. The author was not able to locate anything concerning their existence as a religious congregation in the archives of the Archdiocese of Harare or the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe papers for Chishawasha and Kutama missions or the parish of St. Peter in Harare.
132. Interview with Rev. Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House, Harare, May 15, 2000. Interview with Br. Herman Toma, S.J., Old St. Peter's Church, Mbare, Harare, May 18, 2000. Due to the political violence in the run-up to the June, 2000 parliamentary elections several former members of the Brothers of St. Peter Claver declined to be interviewed.
133. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, January 27, 1958.
134. Interview with Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa, Chancery, Archdiocese of Harare, May 5, 2000; Interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000; Interview with Rev. Bernard Ndlovu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000; Interview with Br. Herman Toma, S.J., Old St. Peter's Church, Mbare, Harare, May 18, 2000.
135. AAH, Box 528/A, "The Seminary of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More, Salisbury Vicariate, Southern Rhodesia," n.d.
136. Conversation with Rev. Stephen G. Buckland, S.J., Arrupe College, Harare, December 15, 1999.
137. JAZ, Box 357/1, "Agreement Between The Right Rev. Aston Ignatius Chichester and the Institute of the Marist Brothers for the Acceptance of the Native Teacher Training School at Kutama," nn.4, 6.
138. Conversation with Rev. Ignatius Zvarevashe, S.J., St. Francis Xavier Church, Braeside, Harare, May 19, 2000.
139. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, February 16, 1955.
140. *ibid.*, April 24, 1955.
141. *ibid.*, May 21, 1956, September 8, 1956.

142. Interview with Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House, Harare, May 15, 2000; JAZ, Box 117/8, Constantine Mashonganyika, "The Seminary at Chishawasha," 21.

143. AAH, Box 528/E, Sacred Congregation for Propagating the Faith Decree, March 25, 1958.

144. AAH, Box 528/E, "Visitation of Seminaries," August 28, 1959. See also the 1918 Code of Canon Law, canon 1357.

145. See, e.g., AAH, 528/F, Francis McKeown, "Memorandum: Date & Place of Ordinations," June 21, 1960; McKeown to Markall, June 21, 1960; Francis McKeown, "Memorandum for Discussion at the next meeting of the Board of Bishops," n.d. N.B., the subject of the memorandum was "The Date of Major Ordinations."

146. From 1936 to 1938, several Dominican sisters taught at the seminary. Chichester "sacked" them despite their "good teaching" because they apparently had "little influence." See AAH, Box 528/D, Chichester to Hugh Boyle, August 17, 1955. There were also always one or two Jesuit brothers who supervised maintenance of the physical plant and grounds. See JAZ, Box 116/5, W.F. Rea, "Extracts from the *Historia Domus* of the Seminary: Chishawasha, 1937-1975," 27-28 and JAZ, Box 117/8, Constantine Mashonganyika, "The Seminary at Chishawasha," 18; "Some Reflections on the Seminary, March, 1960."

147. AAH, Box 528/C, Governor of Southern Rhodesia to Chichester, May 25, 1950. Chichester had applied for a £25,000 grant from the Beit Trust for seminary construction. AAH, Box 528/D, Chichester to Fr. Miles, November 21, 1954. Chichester was seeking sponsorship of £15 per year per seminarian for 15 years or a lump sum of £495.

148. AAH, Box 528/C, Cedric Myerscough, "Seminary Jottings, 1953."

149. AAH, Box 528/D, Chichester to Hugh Boyle, August 17, 1955.

150. AAH, Box 528/D, Cedric Myerscough, "Seminary Jottings, 1956."

151. *ibid.*

152. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, May 21, 1956.

153. AAH, Box 528/E, McKeown to Markall, July 23, 1958; Interview with Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House, Harare, May 15, 2000.

154. JAZ, Box 116/5, Francis McKeown, "Seminary Jottings, 1962"; "Seminary Jottings, 1963"; Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, January, 1963.

155. JAZ, Box 116/5, Francis McKeown, "Seminary Jottings, 1962"; "Seminary Jottings, 1963"; Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, January, 1963.

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156. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 144-48.
157. Conversation with Rev. Albert Plangger, S.M.B., Mambo House, Harare, May 16, 2000. See also the numerous publications of Mambo Press in both English and ChiShona on a variety of topics related to the Church and African culture.
158. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 148.
159. Chichester invited Irish Carmelites to take charge of the eastern districts in 1946, and in 1953, the Vatican erected the prefecture apostolic of Umtali, which became a diocese in 1957. See Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 181-82.
160. See Terence Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann Educational, 1970); idem., *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, (London: J. Currey and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
161. JAZ, Box 109, Seminary House Consultations Minutes, August 18, 1958. By this time the seminary staff had decided that corporal punishment was no longer appropriate given the age of the seminarians. AAH, Box 528, File E (1958-59), Archbishop Markall to Francis McKeown, January 18, 1958. JAZ, Box 116/6.
162. AAH, Box 528, File E (1958-59), Archbishop Markall to Francis McKeown, January 18, 1958.
163. JAZ, Box 109, Chishawasha Seminary House Consultors' Minutes Book, March 6, 1961, September 2, 1963.
164. AAH, Box 528, File G (1962-66), McKeown to Markall, December 6, 1961. See also JAZ, Box 116/3, "Seminary Custom Book, January 1963, nn. 74-79.
165. JAZ, Box 109, Chishawasha Seminary House Consultors' Minutes Book, November 6, 1961.
166. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, May 4, 1959; February 7, 1960; June 6, 1960; February 24, 1962; November 4, 1962.
167. Interview with Patrick Moloney, S.J., Prestage House Jesuit Community, Harare, May 29, 2000.
168. JAZ, Box 108, Memoriale Visitationis, T. E. Corrigan, March 27, 1961.
169. *ibid.*, September 19, 1962.
170. *ibid.*, September 23, 1963.

171. Interview with Patrick Moloney, S.J., May 29, 2000.

172. Interview with Rev. Walter Nyatsanza, Africa Synod House, Harare, May 15, 2000.

173. AAH, Box 528, File G (1962-66), McKeown to Markall, August 31, 1964, note handwritten comment in Markall's hand, "26-10-64 Bishops all gave me advice to go ahead. In [the] case of these two [it] must of course be my own decision."; Markall to McKeown, September 5, 1964. Interview with Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House Jesuit Community, May 15, 2000; Interview with Patrick Moloney, S.J., Prestage House Jesuit Community, May 29, 2000. There is extensive correspondence in JAZ, Box 117/1 from McKeown's successor as rector noting that McKeown had not consulted anyone at the seminary about the decision to admit the White students. AAH, Box 528, File G (1962-66), McKeown to Markall, December 31, 1964; Markall to McKeown, January 4, 1965.

174. Interview with Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House Jesuit Community, May 15, 2000; Interview with Patrick Moloney, S.J., Prestage House Jesuit Community, May 29, 2000. There is extensive correspondence in JAZ, Box 117/1 from McKeown's successor as rector noting that McKeown had not consulted anyone at the seminary about the decision to admit the white students. AAH, Box 528, File G (1962-66), McKeown to Markall, December 31, 1964; Markall to McKeown, January 4, 1965.

175. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, February 9, 1965.

176. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, February 9, 1965.

177. *ibid.*, February 19, 1965.

178. JAZ, Box 117/1, Seminary Group to His Lordship, February, 1965. See also JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, February 1965.

179. JAZ, Box 117/1, Anthony Turner, Memorandum to Reverend Father Rector, March 11, 1965.

180. Interview with Rev. Christopher B. Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.

181. *ibid.*

182. St. George's College was founded by the Jesuits in Bulawayo in 1896, moved to Salisbury in 1926, and until 1964 exclusively admitted White students.

183. Interview with Rev. Christopher B. Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.

184. Interview with Rev. Constantine Mashonganyika, IMBISA House, Harare, May 17, 2000.

185. *ibid.*

186. See JAZ, Box 117/1 *passim*.

187. Interview with Rev. Christopher B. Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.

188. JAZ, Box 117/1, Diamond to Edward Ennis, SJ, March 29, 1965.

189.

JAZ, Box 117/1, Seminary Group to His Lordship, February, 1965.

190. For example, Turner wrote: "Some members of the Society [of Jesus], including Professors, are frustrated when African priests and students never seem to get even the most basic ideas into their heads, especially philosophical and economical. . . I feel this myself and watch [it] so as not to hold fellow students in contempt for what to me is their obvious stupidity. The African is far more sensitive than the European. . . he [the African] feels that he is no longer a child (though mentally he may still be one; impatient people like myself must be careful of what we say, and be ready to apologise if we hurt someone, however unwittingly."

191. Interview with Rev. Christopher B. Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.

192. JAZ, Box 109, Seminary Consultors' Minutes, 1965-1966; See also, Box 116/7, Diamond to Bishop Adolph Schmitt, October 29, 1965: Diamond and the seminary consultors asked Schmitt to send a letter of encouragement and appreciation to Christopher Gardiner.

193. See JAZ, Box 109, Seminary Consultors' Minutes.

194. JAZ, Box 116/5, Francis McKeown, "A Letter to our Friends from the Seminary," December, 1964.

195. JAZ, Box 116/5, McKeown to Fr. Provincial, March, 16, 1960; Francis McKeown, "Some Reflections on matters missionary after a visit to East Africa and the Congo," June, 1960; 116/7, Diamond to Edward Ennis (Superior of the Jesuit Salisbury Mission), April 19, 1966.

196. JAZ, Box 116/5, McKeown to Fr. Provincial, March 16, 1960.

197. JAZ, Box 109, Seminary House Consultors' Minutes, 1960-68, passim; Interview with Patrick Moloney, S.J., May 29, 2000; Interview with Rev. Constantine Mashonganyika, IMBISA Centre, Harare, May 17, 2000.

198. JAZ, Box 117/1, Diamond to Edward P. Ennis, S.J., March 29, 1965.

199. AAH, Box 528, File G (1962-66), Markall to Cardinal Sigismondi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Propagating the Faith, n.d., but after May 5, 1965. Markall and the other bishops had in mind members of the staffs of the seminaries for Africans at Kachebere in Malawi and Hammanskraal in South Africa, and St. John Vianney seminary for Whites in South Africa.

200. See JAZ, Box 117/1, "Minutes of a Conversation between His Grace, the Archbishop of Salisbury and Father Diamond, Rector of the Seminary, Friday, 7th May 1965, 5:15 p.m."; John Diamond, "Proposal of the Board of Bishops to Invite Visitors to the Seminary," May 9, 1965; "Notes of Meeting between His Grace and Father Ennis re. the Request by the SRCBC to Propaganda for Visitors to be sent to the Seminary," Monday May 10, 1965, 8:30 p.m.; Ennis to Markall, May 11, 1965; Markall to Ennis, May 12, 1965; Ennis to T. E. Corrigan [English Provincial], May 17, 1965; Markall to Ennis, May 16, 1965; Ennis to Corrigan, May 21, 1965; Ennis to Markall, May 24, 1965; Ennis to Corrigan, May 25, 1965; Ennis to Corrigan, May 28, 1965; Ennis to Corrigan, May 29, 1965; Ennis to Corrigan, June 8, 1965; Markall to Ennis, June 9, 1965; Ennis to Corrigan, June 14, 1965; AAH, Box 528, File G (1962-66), Markall to Aloysius Haene [Bishop of Gwelo—also sent to other bishops of Rhodesia], June 2, 1965; Adolph Schmitt [Bishop of Bulawayo] to Markall, June 8, 1965; Ingatius Prieto [Bishop of Wankie] to Markall, June 8, 1965; Donal Lamont [Bishop of Umtali] to Markall, June 8, 1965.

201. JAZ, Box 117/1, Meeting with Seminary Staff, June 22, 1965; Interview with Rev. Christopher B. Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.

202. JAZ, Box 117/1, Minutes of Meeting with Seminary Staff, June 22, 1965.

203. *ibid.*

204. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, April 12, 1965; May 24, 1965; August 8, 15, 29, 1965; September 3, 1965.

205. *ibid.*, December 8, 1966. Gardiner was eventually ordained for the Diocese of Bulawayo in July, 1968. See *ibid.* July 13-14, 1968.

206. Interview with Rev. Christopher B. Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, Michigan, July 8, 2000.

207. *ibid.*, October, 1967; 1967 “Relatio Annuale to Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide,” in JAZ, Box 116/5 “Extracts from the *Historia Domus* of the Seminary [at] Chishawasha, 1937-1975” [Typescript], 17.

208. JAZ, Box 108, Seminary *Historia Domus*, October 10 and November 1, 1967.

209. JAZ, Box 116/7, Diamond to Father Superior, October 12, 1967. See also interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube, Archbishop’s office, Bulawayo, May 10, 2000. See interview with Rev. Constantine Mashonganyika, IMBISA Centre, Harare, May 17, 2000.

210. JAZ, Box 116/7, Diamond to Father Superior, October 12, 1967. Interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube, Archbishop’s office, Bulawayo, May 10, 2000. Interview with Rev. Constantine Mashonganyika, IMBISA Centre, Harare, May 17, 2000.

211. JAZ, Box 116/7, Diamond to the Bishops of Rhodesia, December 13, 1967.

212.

JAZ, Box 116/7, “Comments on their Seminary Training by 5 African Priests (Frs. Mugadzi, Nhariwa, Chiginya, Marimazhira, Urayai).”

213. JAZ, Box 116/7, Victor Mertens, S.J. to Haene, December 22, 1967. It is unclear how Diamond was able to maintain his position as rector at the seminary.

214. JAZ, Box 116/7 Diamond to Ennis, April 19, 1966.

215. JAZ, Box 117/2, Rhodesian Catholic Bishops’ Conference Minutes, October 22, 1970.

216. *ibid.*; Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, 223.

217. Interview with Rev. Walter Nyatsanza, Africa Synod House, Harare, May 15, 2000.

218. *ibid.*

219. JAZ, Box 117/3, John Berrell, S.J., “Rector’s Report: The Seminary Strike 30 September to 7 October 1974,” 3-4 (Rector’s report hereafter); JAZ, Box 117/4, Rhodesia Catholic Bishops’ Conference, “Report of [the] Seminary Commission,” December 22, 1974, 2 (Commission report hereafter). The report does not at all specify what specifically Mukuwapasi had done to anger Berrell, and informants who were present as seminarians did not recall Mukuwapasi’s actions either.

220. Commission report, 2-3.

221. According to Berrell, he “[offered] the deacon the opportunity of departing without embarrassment,” offering to have him driven from the seminary while the other students

were in classes. Rector's report, 4. Again, it is not clear what Berrell's "disturbing actions" were nor Mukuwapasi's reaction.

222. Commission report, 2.

223. Rev. Ignatius Mhonda, "A Report to the Bishops concerning the October Events at the Regional Major Seminary of Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More," November 25, 1974, cited in Commission report, 2.

224. Rector's report, 6; Commission report, 4.

225. Rector's report, 6; Commission report, 4.

226. It is not clear on what day a garbage can was emptied in one of the non-striker's rooms: Commission report, 4, says it happened late Tuesday night, while Rector's report, 7, says it happened on Wednesday night.

227. Rector's report, 7.

228. *ibid.*

229. *ibid.*, 7-8.

230. *ibid.*, 8; Commission report, 5.

231. Rector's report, 8; Commission report, 5.

232. Rector's report, 8-9; Commission report, 5-6.

233. Rector's report, 9; see also Commission report, 6-7.

234. Commission report, 7.

235. Rector's report, 10; Commission report, 7.

236. Rector's report, 10.

237. *ibid.*, 10.

238. Commission report, 10, 17.

239. AAH, Index, "Box 528/O: left after strike, 4 for guerrilla training, 22/10/74. . .Death of Jonathan Dzumbunu and Kenneth Mzilikazi (crossfire?)." Although this file was listed in the AAH Index, access was denied. Interview with Rev. Walter Nyatsanza, May 15, 2000.

240. Interview with Rev. Walter Nyatsanza, African Synod House, Harare, May 18, 2000. This had been one of their demands dating to 1970 when Berrell was first appointed rector.

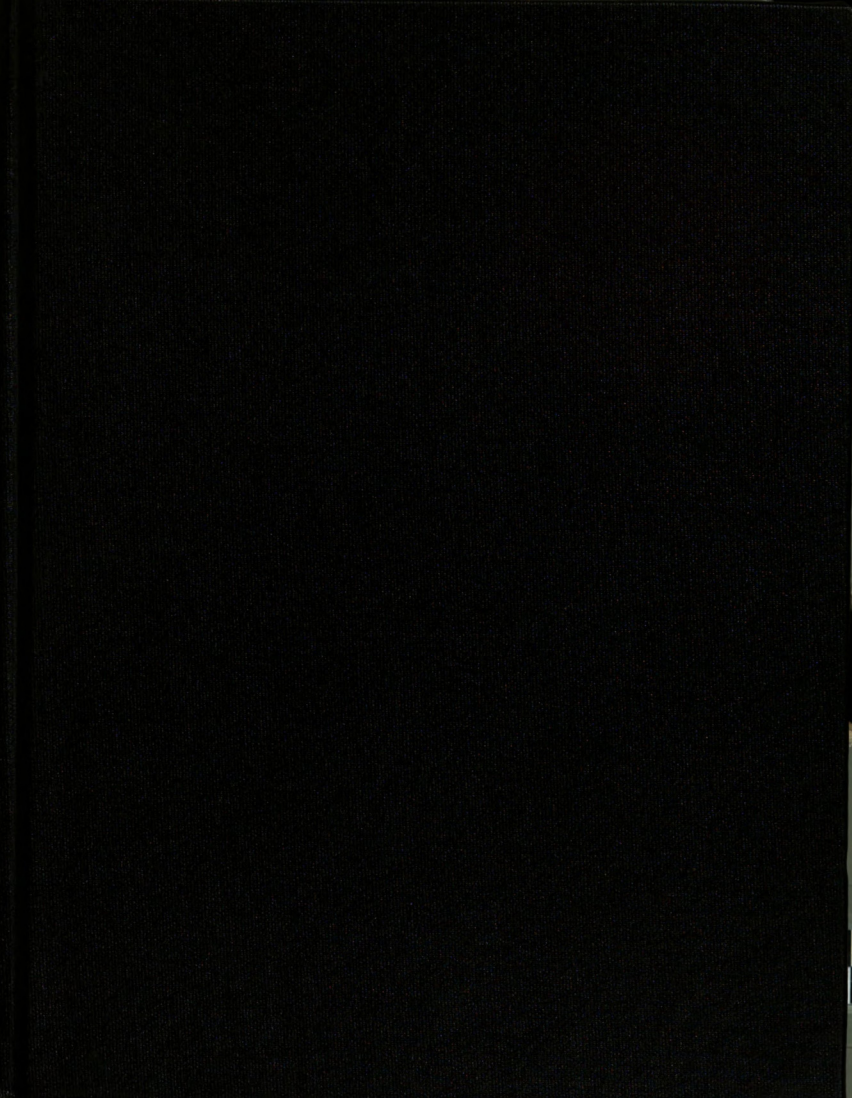
241. *ibid.*

242. JAZ, Box 116/5, "Extracts from the Historia Domus of the Seminary [at] Chishawasha, 1937-1975," 26.

243. Interview with Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House, Harare, May 15, 2000.

244. Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, 5-6.

245. Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 287, 288.



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**DOMESTICATING A FOREIGN IMPORT?
AFRICAN CULTURES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
AT JESUIT MISSIONS IN ZIMBABWE, 1879-1980**

VOLUME II

By

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Chapter 6: “A ‘Do-Nothing’ Organization?: The Catholic Association, 1934-1974”

“A ‘Catholic Association’ (African) which does little except discuss its own subscriptions. It never really got going and would now be completely dead were it not that many teachers attend regularly (fear of the boss). Bro. Waddilove [S.J.] holds similar views.” —Anonymous¹

There have been several studies of the Catholic church and its involvement in Zimbabwe’s liberation war, or the second *chimurenga*, yet no one has studied the history of the pastoral mission of the Church, or how the institutional church provided for the spiritual needs of its lay flocks during the period prior to the liberation struggle.² The two previous chapters examined the changing relations that resulted in the formation and incorporation of African women and men into the Catholic church’s hierarchy. This chapter, accordingly, studies the Catholic Association (called variously the Catholic African Congress, the African Catholic Congress, and the Catholic African Association as well), which was the first organized lay movement in the Catholic church in colonial Zimbabwe. Although founded by African lay men, the organization was constrained significantly by clerical understandings of Catholic Action, particularly those employed by the Jesuits. These attitudes regarding Catholic Action can be construed as a manifestation of Western colonialism within the church. Accordingly, in that light, the efforts of the Catholic Association (CA) can be seen as a moderate effort to decolonize the church on the part of the African laity. In addition to the constraints imposed by missionary colonialism, the leaders of the CA had to contend with attempted domination from the African nationalist movements in the form of intimidation and violent opposition.

While it is possible to trace the history of the Catholic Association in colonial Zimbabwe to the South African Catholic African Union, this chapter will focus principally on the developments of the organization in the vicariate apostolic (and from 1955 archdiocese) of Salisbury, and refer to developments within the four other dioceses of Southern Rhodesia insofar as information is available in the archdiocesan and Jesuit archives. A brief chronological overview of the lay movement will be followed by an analysis of its structural organization and constitutions, and thematic studies of the contributions of African women, teachers, clerical opponents, and *Moto* magazine to the development of the African Catholic laity in Zimbabwe.

The Catholic African Congress: 1934-1950

The organization that would become the Catholic Association was founded by Ambrose Majongwe in 1934. Majongwe was born of Catholic parents in 1912 in Manicaland. From 1927 to 1933, he served as a member of the British South Africa Police in Salisbury, rising to the rank of sergeant and senior interpreter at police headquarters.³ In 1933, Aston Chichester, the prefect apostolic of Salisbury, asked Majongwe to participate in a Jeanes teacher training course at Domboshawa (c. 25 kilometers north of Salisbury). The training was for a position that combined the duties of “school manager, agricultural advisor, and community development officer.” Majongwe was at first reluctant, but his father, “under pressure from Bishop Chichester, talked [him] into accepting the offered training.”⁴

Dachs and Rea claimed that “the first annual conference [of the CA] was held in 1934.”⁵ Hugh O’Donnell, on whose account Dachs and Rea based their summary,

however, noted that Majongwe “organised a meeting at Chishawasha” in 1934 for the members of the teacher training course. The meeting apparently included a spiritual retreat in which 14 people participated, including two Methodists.⁶ Among the speakers at this meeting was Bernard Huss, a German Mariannhill priest who founded the South African Catholic African Union in 1927 “to preserve the spiritual, moral, social and economic welfare of the Bantu” against the spread of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU) and its alleged communist threat.⁷ Huss believed it “useless to affirm the dignity and the vocation of the human person without working to transform the conditions which oppress the person,” and his writings on topics such as improving agricultural methods and education for Africans, and self-help schemes for African farmers had a great influence on Majongwe, who completed the teacher training course with honors and was subsequently assigned to inspect schools in the Makoni district in the eastern part of the colony.⁸ It was during his meetings to give agricultural demonstrations to adults that Majongwe developed the idea of incorporating monthly local meetings to implement the suggestions and resolutions of what would become the larger annual congresses.⁹

Joseph Dambaza Chikerema from Kutama mission also completed the training course at Domboshawa and participated in the 1934 meeting. As early as 1932, Dambaza expressed interest in agricultural cooperative schemes. According to Jesuit Jerome O’Hea, the superior of Kutama, he had several talks with Dambaza and

outlined a plan for a native farmers co-operative which should be run by him [Dambaza] amongst the Christians here and he has taken up the whole thing with enthusiasm. He has a hard job to convince the slow-witted Native; but he is sure, from his own experience of co-operation with Dominico and Emmanuel that it will be a good thing. If he will do the

work of Secretary, I have promised to be President and to advise where called upon to do so. To-night he was again on the plans and I believe it might be made a very fine thing. I certainly think he will be happy if it can be got going as he is naturally a leader and an organiser above the average native.¹⁰

Evidently, the meeting was a success as there was a larger more formal teachers' congress at Chishawasha the following year, which 70 teachers attended. There was a variety of presentations on topics such as Gregorian chant, "cooperation in Society" (given by O'Hea and deemed "rather too deep for the natives present" by the Chishawasha diarist), "Catholic Action and Public Opinion," the formation of a Catholic Teachers' Union (given by Joseph Dambaza), and women's work in Africa (given by an African nun).¹¹ Apparently, the congress organizers began to think in terms of institutionalizing the meetings and improving the quality of the presentations: "N.B. Future Congresses better get papers [and] pass [them] on to two or three critics, who will first be called upon for their judgment and opinion, followed by general discussion."¹² Although the African teachers were enthusiastic about forming a Catholic teachers' union, apparently the Jesuits were not. O'Hea noted that Joseph Dambaza didn't want to give a presentation about "the model krall [sic] school teacher," but preferred to speak "about the formation of a teacher's union—a thing we shall have to do sooner or later."¹³

While the Jesuits may not have been enthusiastic about forming a teacher's union, evidently Bishop Chichester was interested in institutionalizing the congresses annually. On September 10, 1935 he appointed a permanent committee "to arrange all about the annual congresses" that included Jesuits Francis Ketterer (the superior at Chishawasha) and Henry Seed, and African teachers Majongwe, Dambaza, Britto Membere from

Triashill mission, and Simon Taoneyi from Chishawasha.¹⁴ Chichester wanted arrangements for the 1936 congress made “as soon as possible” because he was “very keen that [they] should carry on the good work begun this year at the Chishawasha congress.” Accordingly, Ketterer polled the members of the committee for convenient meeting times and locations, and suggestions for the next congress program.¹⁵

Of the extant replies, Ambrose Majongwe’s is by far the longest and most detailed. It is also useful to see how the movement’s founder’s concerns and interests helped to determine the shape the movement would eventually take. Majongwe suggested that the congress be held at either Chishawasha “because it is more like the centre” or at Kutama “because it is a training school and therefore those young teachers in training ought to know more of what is going on. Secondly, members of the congress will also learn a great deal from what they see at the place.”¹⁶ The topics for lectures that the police sergeant turned teacher suggested included the teachers’ standard of living, “missionaries attitudes towards the general improvement of living conditions among the Christians, or people in the mission farms of all our missions” with particular emphases on “hygiene, better houses, better methods of ploughing, [and] afforestation,” daily attendance at kraal schools, what teachers should do “to keep abreast with the moving world,” refresher courses for teachers, a suggestion that attendance at the congresses be mandatory for “nearly all the teachers,” and a request that if the committee considered making Chishawasha the permanent location of the congress that it consider “what the Teachers of that mission should do to help others since they shall year after year have no travelling expenses of any kind.”¹⁷

Clearly Majongwe's vision was not as radical as that of his contemporaries in the ICU or those who would found the political parties that led the nationalist struggles in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁸ His suggestions, however, show a very keen awareness of the problematic living conditions of crushing rural poverty the majority of Africans living in overcrowded reserves during the Great Depression and in the wake of massive land expropriations following passage of the 1931 Land Apportionment Act, and a desire to improve those conditions, particularly for teachers as they were the ones who would most practically be able to help African agriculturalists help themselves.¹⁹ He was evidently concerned about what he perceived as disinterest on the part of the missionaries with the temporal conditions of their flocks, particularly on the missionaries' own farms. Majongwe also seems to have had a great interest in the on-going formation and professionalization of African teachers, as well as a belief in the equality among people and a need for parity in bearing the costs of the congress' schema. Despite the many changes that the congress movement would undergo in ensuing years, these themes would remain constant in the concerns and statements of its African leadership.

The congress planning committee met on December 9, 1935 with Chichester and all members present except Majongwe.²⁰ Among the matters discussed were resolutions to be presented during the congress' business meeting including: whether the congress should be held annually or biennially; the location and time of the next congress (i.e., 1937); and whether "the time [was] ripe to widen the doors of the Catholic Teachers' Federation to include others, e.g., artisans [sic], policemen, etc., and form a Catholic Rhodesian Federation?"²¹ The program that the committee planned for the congress

began with religious instructions by Membere on the bible, on “Our Blessed Lady” by Dambaza, and on the sacraments by Taoneyi, followed by a three day silent retreat given by Jesuit Father Charles Daignault.²² The congress resumed with presentations by Chief Native Commissioner Charles Bullock on living conditions in “native areas”; the chief medical director who “compared the trickery and witchcraft of the native medicine-men with the knowledge of the white doctor,” and informed the participants of the Southern Rhodesian governments efforts to set up dispensaries; Sr. Bronoslava, C.P.S. on visiting the sick in kraals; Majongwe on cooperative purchasing; the director of native education exhorting the teachers to cooperate “with all the Government schemes for the progress of the natives, and thus become leaders of their people”; and Sister Cora, O.P. speaking on “the influence that a truly educated native girl might wield in her family and kraal: not so much by her being able to read and write, but by the good example of a model home, that she was able to run as the result of her training in sewing, cooking, and domestic science.”²³ The only significant differences in the presentations from what the committee planned and what occurred at the congress were that Jerome O’Hea didn’t give a presentation on “practical cooperation among the natives” and that Director of Native Education George Stark was supposed to discuss “How education helps village life.”

In all, 118 African teachers attended the congress.²⁴ They voted to have annual congresses and decided that the 1937 congress be held at the mission at Driefontein. The delegates either chose not to address the issue of expanding the membership of the congress or were not allowed to do so, as “Bishop [Chichester] promised a draft of the rules for the Catholic Teachers’ Federation for the next general meeting.”²⁵ Evidently,

however, they were allowed to do so the following year at Driefontein, as the Chishawasha diarist noted that

Fr. Ketterer and Br. Blackledge went with five teachers to the Congress at Driefontein. Congress a success. New Federation includes all Catholic Natives. President: Emilio Muzira (Gokomere), Secretary: Joseph Dambaza (Kutama), Treasurer: Simon Taoneyi (Chishawasha); Executive Committee: Ambrose Majongwe and Britto Membere (Triashill), Geronimo Tarasinja (Gokomere).²⁶

Thus, in four years what began as a meeting and retreat for 14 teachers became a movement open to all African Catholics.

Curiously, despite the resolution at the 1936 congress in favor of annual meetings, between 1937 and 1945 the congresses were apparently held less frequently.²⁷ In a letter to mission superiors following the congress held at Chishawasha in May, 1946, Chichester noted that the delegates “expressed a wish that there should be annual congresses [and that they] propose to hold one in 1947.”²⁸ The 1946 congress was also the first event in which the African leadership manifested significant difference of opinion and disappointment with the European hierarchy and clergy.

According to the Chishawasha house diarist, congress planners were expecting about 100 African delegates to attend, but “about 150 turned up and then 100 or so locals rolled up to see what was going on.”²⁹ Consequently, all sessions after the first were held outside. The sessions included presentations by Director of Native Agriculture E.D. Alvord on “the development of the African in the reserves”; “Catholic Action and the Participation of Catholics in the Public Life of their Nation” by Jesuit Father Michael Hannan; Jesuit Father W. Donovan on “Retreats and Missions in the Reserves”; a session on education by Jesuit Ernest Kotski and Native Education Director Starke; and sessions

on “Native Councils” and “Homecraft Work in Connection with Culture and Home Life among African Women” by Chief Native Commissioner E. Hudson Beck and Miss E. Blomefield respectively. The only Africans on the program were Ambrose Majongwe who led a session on cooperative movements among Africans on the first day and Mariannhill Father Kilian Samakande who sang a high mass at the beginning of the second day.³⁰

The resolutions passed during the business session reflect a rift between the interests and desires of the African laity and the apparent state of affairs at the missions under the European missionaries. The delegates resolved “that it would be good to have annual congresses” and “that the cooperation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy would be greatly facilitated” by forming Catholic action committees in every Catholic community to “report to and receive advice from a central Catholic Action Committee of the Catholic African Congress.” They also requested that “missions be preached to strengthen our own faith and to bring back to the Church those who have given up the faith,” and that “each mission station provide retreats for men and women.” Further, the delegates asked that they be permitted to read the gospel in the ChiManyika dialect in churches and schools in Manicaland, and that a reprinting of “the big Bible History in this same dialect be speeded up.” Lastly, they asked that missions encourage “co-operative buying and selling so as to encourage people to form cooperative societies in years to come.”³¹

Following the congress, Chichester reported to his fellow missionaries that the Africans were disappointed with us, the missionaries. They considered that we had not done enough to ensure that the people [presenters] were

practical Catholics & that we had not shown sufficient interest in their economic development. My belief is they think we let them down.³²

According to the bishop, the “aim” of the 1946 congress was “to put before the Catholic Africans of the Vicariate THE PARTICIPATION OF CATHOLICS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN. This participation is not satisfactory, how can we make it more satisfactory.”³³ He also expressed his “regrets that the original proposal (C.A.U.) [Catholic African Union] cannot be carried out.”³⁴ Apparently the African leadership of the congress movement was dissatisfied with the institutional church’s lack of support for African social and economic development, particularly in the rural areas, and sought to form a union to redress the situation. Although Chichester believed it possible that “a Catholic African Union will eventually emerge from these congresses,” he wasn’t enthusiastic about the idea because of “The danger of communism in these unions.” Yet, having “recognised” the communist threat, the bishop thought it “ought to be faced if the African Catholic is to take his place in the development of the African nation. At present African Catholics are doing little, which does not seem to be in conformity with the wishes of the Popes.”³⁵ Although Chichester thought cooperative purchasing and selling “a wise measure,” he was not “prepared to allow priests to be responsible financially or to hold the money for any length of time in the [mission] house.” The bishop flatly refused to allow the gospel to be read in ChiManyika, and referred anyone interested in obtaining the ChiManyika bible history to contact the superior of Triashill mission.³⁶

Clearly, African Catholics felt a lack of concern for their well-being on the part of the missionaries. They also apparently felt that the missionaries were not providing them

enough spiritual nourishment, hence the requests for more preached missions and retreats. Chichester seemed to think that African Catholics weren't doing enough to help in their own development. He also, however, apparently listened to the members of his flock concerning their complaints about the missionaries' lack of support. In January 1947, in preparation for the congress to be held in May at Monte Cassino mission, Chichester appointed Jesuit Father George Binns to solicit reports from each mission superior "as to how far the resolutions of the 1946 Congress have been implemented at your station."³⁷ At the congress, the organizers scheduled a session to discuss "Reports from Mission Stations [on] Implementing Last Years' Resolutions."³⁸

The eleven extant responses can be grouped into three categories: missions at which there was no activity to implement the resolutions, missions which provided retreats only, and missions at which there was a variety of activities to implement the 1946 congress resolutions. The superior at Loreto mission in Que Que [Kwekwe] reported that "nothing has been done as there is nobody to do it and no proper Station either to implement it at [sic]."³⁹ Jesuit Francis Barr, the superior at Makumbi mission, had nothing to report except unspecified "increased activity amongst the Women's Sodalities."⁴⁰ The superior of the Catholic church in Gwelo had nothing to report "due to [his] not having much of an idea what the resolutions were."⁴¹

The superior at All Souls mission in Mtoko gave "a 'sort' of retreat before annual baptisms," and started a "Catholic Men's Society" which had nine members and met one Sunday every month. According to the superior, the group was "not inactive, but time must elapse to judge of its usefulness."⁴² Jesuit James Cogger reported that he gave

respective two day retreats to 11 men, six women, and 75 school children in standards IV through VI at St. Michael's mission in Mhondoro. According to Cogger, the "majority of local men [within a three mile radius of the station] were not interested and did not come."⁴³ At St. Paul's mission in Musami, 23 men and 70 women participated in respective retreats "on different days" in August, 1946. Nothing was done regarding cooperative action because the men at the central station "refused to hold monthly meetings to discuss ways and means of cooperation." Because the men at Musami's outstations were waiting to follow the lead of the men at the central station they did nothing either, though "one delegate to [the 1946] Congress returned to stir up trouble against the teacher at the local Catholic school and since the Congress has not attended Mass."⁴⁴ Although "many more Catholics of the district [were] stumping their fields and adding manure to the soil," the mission superior at St. Paul's couldn't necessarily attribute these development activities to the Congress. Similarly, although there were several Catholic headman on the newly formed native council for Mrewa district, "none had reported. . . as to how or whether he is making a stand for Catholic principles at the council meetings."⁴⁵

At St. Barbara's mission in Manicaland, in addition to giving two retreats to women and one to men at the central station, the priest not only gave instructions to practicing Catholics on "the importance of family life [and] the benefits ensuing from the sacrament of matrimony," but also provided assistance "in many ways" to the proprietors of two stores on the mission farm and helped a congregant returning from Bulawayo "to obtain a Native Purchase Area farm."⁴⁶ According to the report, there were 42 marriages

in 1946, the number of girls staying in school for standards I and II was “on the increase,” and the assistance to the shopkeepers “[had] been reciprocated.”⁴⁷ Regarding agricultural development, the residents were working with the local native commissioner “to arrest the serious deterioration of the land on the mission farm” by not ploughing their fields for a year and building contour ridges. The residents of St. Barbara’s began efforts at cooperative purchasing and selling as early as 1943, but “the whole scheme was vetoed by the Native Commissioner.” By the time of the report, the “leaders amongst our people [were] not raising a voice concerning the matter [because] some of the prime movers of the scheme have moved elsewhere.” Similarly, although there had been a Catholic Action Committee meeting among the elders (*vakuru*) at the central station “for many years,” the mission superior could not “report great results from its activities because of what he perceived as “the mutual fear which the members have for one another.” At the missions’ outschools there were similar committees of *vakuru* established for the “more effective management of the school in question” which, in the superior’s opinion, were more effective in providing material support than spiritual assistance.⁴⁸

Jesuit Ernest Kotski, the superior at Kutama mission reported that the four retreats given at “the mission proper” and the two given at outschools “proved to be a success.”⁴⁹ He also noted that the residents at Kutama had submitted a petition to the native commissioner at Sinoia (Chinoyi) to form a native council. The Kutama Catholics also held several meetings to discuss a variety of agricultural improvements, as well as hear their pastor explain “the principles and methods of Catholic action in two successive

talks,” from which resulted “a new small body or congregation of married women with the purpose of sanctifying family life and practicing family virtues.”⁵⁰

The Swiss Bethlehem Mission priest in charge of St. Joseph’s mission in Gwelo reported “six groups of Catholic Action-people”: about 40 men who catechized and led prayers including “Processions for rain in the kraals”; about 50 women “who do little in public, but their influence in their homes can’t be overseen”; “boys from the kraals [who] number few, as they go most for work. Some of them teach Catechism.”; more than 100 “girls from the kraals [who] teach catechism to children in the kraals, [and] come every Sunday to Mass and promise never to go outside the Reserve without leave from the priest, which is hardly ever given.”; and boarder boys and boarder girls who

are buzy [sic] on Sundays in calling all the Mass-Attendance-Registers for Men, Women, boys and girls, Adult-pagans, who are learning Catechism [c.300]. All the 1000 outschool children are called up every Sunday. All the registers together amount to 20. People would not like any more to be without this [sic] Attendance-Registers. It is not ideal, but it is a help for new christians.⁵¹

In a departure from the Jesuit way of proceeding, Father Reich gave the men and women a two day retreat together, for which they brought their own food: “the women will cook for their husbands. They keep silence except for dinner and supper.”⁵² In all, there were about 350 “Catholic Action-People” working with Reich who were also members of the Apostleship of Prayer, and who frequently reported “cases” to the priest. He didn’t allow them to do more, such as joining the Legion of Mary, Pathfinders, and Wayfarers (the latter two groups were Catholic scouting groups for boys and girls), because they did “good work, and I think some are even very good.”⁵³

In addition to providing an outline of the contours of life at the respective missions, these reports show the difficulties that African Catholic lay leaders had to face, specifically frequent lack of support and encouragement on the part of the clergy and sometimes general lack of interest on the part of their fellow coreligionists, particularly for schemes involving agricultural improvements and cooperative ventures. They also show an extreme desire on the part of the people for activities aimed at their spiritual renewal, such as retreats. It is also possible to glimpse African lay efforts to take a measure of control over their surroundings and organizing their lives at the missions. If Father Reich is to be believed at face value, his report shows African Christians looking after their own spiritual well-being in a very concretely structured way: taking and keeping track of attendance at Sunday mass. These early efforts at grassroots organization, while seemingly lackluster in their results, would prove significant for laying the groundwork for later more effective efforts.

The theme of Catholic Action was prominent in the 1947 reports as well as in the congresses throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Much of this was due to the influence of English Jesuit Michael Hannan after his arrival in Southern Rhodesia in 1941, and his particular understanding of that theme.

According to D.J. Geaney, Catholic Action was “both a concept and an organization of the laity.”⁵⁴ First used by Pope Pius X, his successor Pius XI developed the concept, defining it as “the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church’s hierarchy.”⁵⁵ There seems to have been a spectrum of understandings of Catholic Action: on one extreme theorists like Pius XI saw Catholic Action as “a tightly structured

organization that serves as an arm of the hierarchy in lay life,” restricted to action or work of the laity which was organized, apostolic, and done under a mandate of the local bishop.⁵⁶ On the other end of the spectrum were priests such as Belgian Cardinal Saliège and lay people who saw Catholic action less rigidly, and as a means to effect the institutional change of “conditions of life that many found unworthy of human beings.”

According to Saliège, the goal of Catholic Action was

to modify social pressure, to direct it, to make it favorable to the spread of Christian life, to let the Christian life create a climate, an atmosphere in which men [sic] can develop their human qualities, can lead a really human life, an atmosphere in which the Christian can breathe easily and stay a Christian.⁵⁷

William Portier, a historian of the American Catholic experience, described Catholic Action as follows:

“To restore all things in Christ.” This was Pius X’s motto and the standard for Catholic Action. Combat metaphors recur. . . .Restoration and integration or integralism imply damage and disintegration. Combat and conquest imply an adversary. . . .Under Pius IX and Pius X, two prominent Catholic Action popes, the Vatican was locked in combat with anti-clerical governments in Europe. In this context, Catholic Action appears as a papal call to the laity, the Catholic people, to join them, and literally to participate with them in winning back European culture from a very concrete and legally entrenched political enemy [i.e., the modern liberal state]. Since lay people were all citizens of the modern states against which the Vatican was struggling, the popes really were calling them to be “double agents.”⁵⁸

With regard to the combat imagery and the more conventional Christian images of church leaders as shepherds and the laity as sheep, Portier observed that the combat inscribed in writing on Catholic Action was

relatively recent. . . .[accompanying] the emergence of modern states in Europe and becomes acute after the French Revolution. As a result. . . .Catholic Action popes [didn’t] really have a clear idea of what they

want[ed] Catholic citizens to do in the “world.” Boundaries are contested. Unexpected developments occur. Sheep even graze with shepherds.⁵⁹

According to Portier, regionalism was also a significant factor in the implementation of Catholic Action. Referring to the situation in the United States, Portier claimed that “As Catholic Action’s move from Europe to North America, or from Chicago to Philadelphia to Boston, illustrates, Catholic Action works out differently in different places.”⁶⁰

Hannan frequently discussed the Congress movement and the Catholic African Association in terms of Catholic Action. Pius XI’s model of laity in Catholic Action was as an extension of the hierarchy and clergy, not of the laity sharing in priesthood of Christ.⁶¹ Although the Catholic African Association would face many problems, none were more serious than those stemming from Hannan and his Jesuit confreres—with the support of Chichester and Markall—trying to maintain rigid episcopal and clerical control of the organization. They apparently made no effort to try to adapt the theory of Catholic Action to the local circumstances in Southern Rhodesia. Thus, the Jesuits’ hierarchical understanding of Catholic Action placed significant constraints on the organization and activities of the CA.

Organization and Constitution of the CAA

The organizational structure of the lay movement became increasingly complex as it transformed itself from a relatively informal meeting and retreat for Catholic teachers to a diocesan organization, and eventually into a national body. From humble beginnings among 14 teachers, the Catholic African Association at its zenith in 1958 claimed 5,300 paid members in all five of the dioceses in Southern Rhodesia. As the Catholic

Association from 1961, membership declined significantly during the early years of the 1960s due to violent political intimidation of association members by members of the African nationalist parties. Catholic Association membership, however began to increase again around 1967 and by 1974 association leaders reported over 8,000 members.

The initial meetings of Catholic teachers in 1934 and 1935 seem to have been fairly informal affairs. Given that there was no organizational structure to speak of, and at the former there were only 14 men attending and 70 teachers at the latter, it is probable that Majongwe and his colleagues simply made all the necessary arrangements with the staff at Chishawasha mission and informed Bishop Chichester of their activities.

In September, 1935 Chichester appointed a permanent committee for the Catholic African congress consisting of two Jesuits and four African teachers.⁶² There are no records of the permanent committee's activities beyond their preparations for the 1936 congress held at Chishawasha, but given its *modus operandi* and those of the institutional structures that followed it, it seems plausible that the members met a few times a year to decide where the annual congress would be held, what topics would be addressed and by whom, and to determine what issues would be addressed during the business sessions, as well as to debrief following the congress. There are no records of congresses having occurred between 1938 and 1945, though it would seem fairly safe to say that there must have been some meetings during this period as Majongwe and his colleagues would not have suffered such a setback in silence. Curiously, the question of whether to stage congresses annually came up in 1946 and 1948 as well. Apparently, the missionaries

preferred to hold the congresses less frequently, but every time that the issue arose for discussion, the African laity opted for the annual meetings.⁶³

One hundred eighteen teachers attended the 1936 congress. The following year, the delegates to the congress at Driefontein mission decided to open membership to all African Catholics.⁶⁴ In 1946, about 250 people were present for the congress at Chishawasa. There are no statistics for the 1947 congress, but about 100 people attended the congress the following year at Kutama mission.⁶⁵ The smaller numbers were due to difficulties resulting from late rains and the high costs of travel to Kutama: some delegates paid ten shillings or more for transport.⁶⁶

At the 1949 congress at St. Peter's church in Harare, the congress secretary noted that "the general impression" from delegates' reports of local activities was that "much progress had been made during the past year."⁶⁷ Apparently the congress organizers did not allot enough time for all the delegates to read their reports. Approximately 1,250 delegates received communion at the Sunday masses offered during the congress and around 13,800 delegates participated in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament.⁶⁸

There are no records of there having been a congress in 1950, but the minutes for the following year's congress at Monte Cassino mission note that Ambrose Majongwe proclaimed that "The Congresses have grown from year to year in number and therefore now is the time for a Reorganization. There should be Local Congresses of the various Mission Centres and a Central Congress." He proposed establishing a structure in which local congresses

should be established to meet the needs of the various mission centres in the country, and work out schemes for the work of the station. . . .All that concerns the single Missions [sic] or rather Parishes should be discussed at

the Mission Congress. The Mission Congresses should be the Cells for a greater Organization, the Central Congress. There should be a standing Committee of the Central Congress collecting and sieving all that concerns all people and deciding what is necessary.⁶⁹

The 51 delegates representing the various missions of the Salisbury vicariate approved resolutions to establish local congresses and a congress central committee consisting of six officers and two delegates from each mission. Majongwe was elected chairman of the central committee. The congress delegates also voted to adopt temporarily the constitutions of the Monte Cassino local congress.⁷⁰

The Monte Cassino constitution, written circa 1948,⁷¹ provided four very general aims for the local congress:

- a. To safeguard, promote, and foster the Catholic Faith among the African people in the area under the Monte Cassino parish and the country in general.
- b. To work for the establishment of Catholic African Charitable organisations and any other Catholic societies.
- c. To promote the spiritual, economic, social, intellectual, and industrial education of Catholics, their hygienic welfare and general well-being in this area and in the country as a whole according to Catholic principles.
- d. To work for a better understanding between Africans, Europeans, and other races.⁷²

The constitution required of its constituents very broad and basic spiritual and social means to achieve its aims, including: mutual assistance to “live up to the Faith,” frequenting mass and the sacraments, assisting priests to bring back lapsed Catholics and convert non-Catholics, visiting the sick and dying, providing “the example of good Catholic lives in everyday life, in family and community” particularly in “good Catholic marriages,” raising children according to “Catholic ways,” working against influences “contrary to the Faith” especially those “tending towards the breaking up of families,”

attending meetings sponsored by government officials or customary chiefs with the intent of presenting “ideas as applicable to Catholic principles in social life and [opposing] those adverse and harmful to society,” and working “through the community to counteract plays, dances, etc. which are a danger to the moral welfare of the people.”⁷³ Congress members were also required to “follow proper agricultural methods, crop rotation, compost making, manuring, and all that pertains to good farming as advised by demonstrators and Govt. officials.” Political, intellectual, industrial, and hygienic duties respectively included attending local council meetings, “[buying] good books and [reading] them,” “[working] hard” and providing for one’s family, and building and maintaining “better houses” and improving sanitation and water supplies.⁷⁴

Membership in the congress was open to all Catholics at all schools and religious centers affiliated with Monte Cassino mission, and members had to pay a 2/6 annual fee. The congress had an executive committee with six officers and one or two representatives from each center, to which “only practicing persons” should have been elected. Each center was to have a standing committee whose members were to be elected annually. The executive committee was required meet quarterly in order to make all arrangements for the local annual congress, collect and keep records and dues, decide how to spend the money it collected, “bring about a true spirit of Catholic Action among members permeate the community with Catholic influence,” and to “help the priest in all that relates to the above by urging improvement of schools and spiritual life in general.” The priest in charge of Monte Cassino schools was designated as the executive committee’s spiritual director. With regard to the annual congress his decisions “in all matters was

final.” Similarly, he alone had the “power to approve, amend, [or] alter plans etc.” of the congress in general.⁷⁵

The emphasis on agricultural improvements, particularly stressing that congress members heed the counsel of agricultural demonstrators, as well as the broad powers given to the spiritual adviser, makes it likely that Ambrose Majongwe was the principal author of the Monte Cassino constitution. The narrow understanding of Catholic action found throughout the constitution, however, indicates that Francis Markall, who was on the staff at Monte Cassino during this period, more than likely influenced Majongwe’s thinking.

The Monte Cassino constitution is notable for its utter generality in terms of its aims and the means to achieve them: it essentially called on its members to pay two shillings and six pence per year to do those things that the church’s hierarchy enjoined upon all Catholic adults, that is, there was no particular action or spirituality to distinguish congress members from Catholic lay people who chose not to join it. Further, the constitution firmly placed the congress and its activities under the control of the hierarchy in the person of the executive committee spiritual adviser. While congress members of the time would have argued that they were helping the clerical hierarchy in fulfilling its mission, the practical result was that one European missionary had the capacity to veto arbitrarily the decisions or actions of committed African lay people. These problems of vague mission and clerical control would plague the organization throughout its existence.

It is also significant to note the inclusion of a clause providing for the encouragement of interracial cooperation in the constitution. Congress leaders would find their bishops hesitant about encouraging this value, and African nationalists literally violently opposed to such an ideal.

The newly established congress central committee voted to adopt the Monte Cassino constitution for all the mission centers in the Salisbury vicariate and Umtali prefecture apostolic, amending it only to allow each mission executive to set the annual subscription fee respectively, and to require that the officers of the executive committee be elected annually.⁷⁶ In 1953, the central committee received and accepted an invitation from the spiritual adviser of the Bulawayo vicariate's Catholic African Union to join a federation-wide union of African Catholic organizations. Significantly, Michael Hannan noted that joining such an organization would require changing the congress constitutions as the Bulawayo vicariate followed the South African Catholic Union's 1946 constitution.⁷⁷

Thus, in August, 1953, Hannan met with six other priests involved with Catholic African lay organizations and Bishop Aloysius Haene in Gwelo to draft a constitution for a national organization.⁷⁸ Significantly, there were no African lay people (or priests) present to contribute to the enterprise. Despite making some concessions and compromises to the priests representing Bulawayo, Hannan was largely successful in having the structures found in the Monte Cassino constitution imposed on the newly formed Catholic African Association (CAA).⁷⁹ Membership in the CAA was open to all Catholics who belonged to specific branches. Each branch had a local executive

committee with six officers⁸⁰ that met monthly and sent two representatives to the mission council, which met at least twice a year and consisted of the branch delegates, a six member executive, and a spiritual director appointed by the ordinary. The mission council sent two delegates to the regional council, which met at least once every 18 months, and comprised representatives from all the missions of a given diocese, a six member executive committee, and a spiritual director appointed by the diocesan bishop. The regional council sent two delegates to the territorial council which was supposed to meet at least once every three years and was composed of the delegates, six elected officers, and a spiritual adviser appointed by the apostolic delegate.⁸¹ In practice, the Salisbury regional council generally met twice a year to plan and debrief the annual regional congress and deal with issues arising from the missions. The territorial council met annually from its inception in 1955, and its spiritual adviser was appointed by the bishops' conference.

According to the constitution written by the European priests, "the spiritual adviser of any Council" had "the right to veto any action or decision of the Council or its Executive, subject to the right of the Council or Executive to appeal" to the spiritual adviser of the next higher council. Spiritual advisers could also remove any officer from a council for "gravely [neglecting] the duties of his office or [leading] a scandalous life," with the same proviso concerning appeals. Presumably the right of appeal should have allowed the territorial council to appeal to either the apostolic delegate or the bishops' conference, however, there was no such provision in the CAA constitution. Thus, for the duration of the Catholic African Association from 1953 to 1961 Michael Hannan as the

spiritual adviser of the territorial council had the constitutional power to veto the decisions and actions of the African laity, though there is no evidence that he actually did so.

The aims of the CAA were just as vague as those of the Monte Cassino constitution:

generally to promote unity in Catholic Action under the guidance of ecclesiastical authority; to make known and act on Catholic teaching so that Catholics may realize their responsibility as citizens, particularly as regards social justice and race relations; to promote the general improvement of the African community. "Better homes, better hearts, better harvests."; to encourage its members to take an active part in all forms of co-operation and self-help; to hold Catholic Congresses periodically; to speak for Catholics.⁸²

In 1961, the territorial committee debated and passed a resolution asking the bishops to change the CAA's name to the Catholic Association (CA) and establish it as the "territorial administrative body for all Catholic Action within [Southern] Rhodesia."⁸³ CAA leaders at all levels "always show[ed] good will, a readiness to cooperate and to accept guidance. But many feel frustrated by the lack of interest shown by some priests."⁸⁴ Additionally, members of the CAA thought the change would allow non-African Catholics to form branches and join the organization.⁸⁵ The bishops approved the name change with the proviso that it not "be implied that [the CA] is to be the parent body of all Catholic Action."⁸⁶ The bishops included the condition, which directly contradicted the will of the African lay leadership, because of

the problems which might be encountered vis-a-vis the European organisations. If the C.A. was to be the parent-body of all Catholic Action, then the European Organisations would have to be affiliated to it. The Bishops saw some problems in this—and for other reasons—decided that with the new name, viz. Catholic Association, it was not implied that the C.A. was to be the parent-body of all Catholic Action.⁸⁷

The resulting confusion caused by this contradiction resulted in the bishops calling a commission of inquiry to investigate the relationship of the CA to other Catholic organizations. Although the commission recommended amending the CA constitution so that its principle aims were to unite Catholics and “to impress on its members the full living of the Catholic life, loyalty to the Church, attendance at Sunday mass, and frequent reception of the Sacraments,” there is no evidence that the territorial council ever adopted the proposed amendment.⁸⁸ Clearly, African Catholics were far more advanced in their thinking with regard to interracial cooperation than their episcopal shepherds.

Two significant developments marked the decade of the 1960s for the CA: the rise of parish councils and political intimidation of its members by supporters of African nationalist parties.

The theological shift from Catholic action to the lay apostolate associated with the beginning of the reign of Pope John XXIII, brought with it the parish council, or a group of lay leaders elected by the membership of a given community who worked with the parish priest in meeting the pastoral needs of the community. As the primary organizational unit within the church, people belonging to or working with the parish council did not have to pay any membership fee. Not surprisingly, this led to conflicts with the CA, which still thought of itself as the primary mechanism for organizing the laity. At the meeting of the inquiry committee in 1962, Bishop Haene of Gwelo allegedly reported that he planned to “urge the parish committee” at a meeting of CA spiritual advisers, and Francis Barr, the CA spiritual adviser for Salisbury, noted that Archbishop Markall planned to introduce parish councils in the metropolitan see as well.⁸⁹ Tensions

between the CA and parish councils apparently mounted steadily. CA leaders evidently believed that parish priests opposed to the organization actively worked to subvert it. In April, 1974, concerned by “the energy with which certain priests—particularly expatriate ones—have been setting up [parish] councils (an energy which often by-passes existing organizing structures, particularly the CA),” the CA territorial council passed a resolution asking the bishops to

express to us your feelings on the continued existence of the C.A. Because, we feel that the C.A. contributes to the growth of the Church activities that do not appear to be part of the scope of these councils, particularly—the contact C.A. provides between different parishes, the work the C.A. does in economic development, the combined funding the C.A. has for projects beyond the scope of individual parishes.⁹⁰

Although Markall stated that he believed that the CA “should continue to exist according to its Constitution,” the organization’s continued existence depended on its fidelity to its constitution. The archbishop was adamant that

the C.A. must not try to usurp the functions of such structures of the Church as the Parish Council. Where the C.A. has undertaken such a function because a Parish Council did not exist it must cease completely to act in place of a Parish Council *as soon as* a Parish Council is formed at any particular place. Failure to do so has been the cause of great misunderstanding in some places.⁹¹

Edward Muchenje, the territorial council secretary, admitted that groups at various levels within the CA had committed “breaches of the constitution,” but also reminded Markall that “the C.A. was started before any other structures in parishes, and parishoners almost ‘grew’ up with the C.A. as ‘the’ structure in the parish.” He suggested that “an evolutionary rather than revolutionary” means to introduce the parish council would minimize confusion on the part of the people and tensions with the clergy.⁹²

Mabvuku, a peri-urban area on the outskirts of Salisbury, was one local community that evidently had tensions between the CA and the parish priest. According to Muchenje writing to Fr. Emmanuel Mavudzi, the Salisbury regional council spiritual adviser, Jesuit Fr. G. Finnieston, the parish priest at Mabvuku, apparently “banned” the CA parish board and instructed the local CA council chairman to give “all the money collected by the C.A. to the Executive Committee of the Parish Council there.”⁹³ Muchenje stated that in attempting to take such action the parish priest was in violation of no less than three articles of the CA constitution, and asked for Mavudzi’s help to resolve the situation “for the benefit of the C.A. and good relations in that Parish” and carbon copied the letter to Patrick Chakaipa, auxiliary bishop since 1973 and in charge of all pastoral work for the archdiocese. Mavudzi, while glad that Muchenje had sent a copy of the letter to the bishop, stated that could take no action as spiritual director because he had no “direct authority over a fellow parish priest,” and suggested that Muchenje invite Chakaipa to meet with Finnieston, the local CA board, the parish council, and himself.⁹⁴ The documentary evidence shows that by April. 1975, the conflict still had not been settled.⁹⁵

CA members also had to contend with political violence from African nationalists during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nationalists frequently associated Christianity with European culture and hegemony, and accordingly sought to dissuade African Christians from practicing their faith.

In 1958, the British Central Intelligence Department advised the Salisbury CAA regional council to change the name of the annual congress so as not to be confused with

the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress, the first African nationalist party established in 1957.⁹⁶ Accordingly, the minutes thereafter refer to the “annual general meeting,” though by 1964, they had switched back to using the term “congress.” Also in 1958, Archbishop Markall forbade CA officers from holding political office,⁹⁷ and frequently urged that speakers at the congresses avoid political subjects:

More particularly in view of the present day circumstances it will be important to be certain that nothing resembling any political allusions should find place in the speeches or be allowed to be proposed for discussion [at the 1962 annual general meeting at Makumbi mission].⁹⁸

While on a visit to Kutama mission to inspect the schools in 1960, Francis Barr, the secretary for education for the Archdiocese and spiritual adviser for the Salisbury regional council, thought it “absolutely essential” that “a European [be] present at each and every Meeting of the Parents, whether at Kutama or anywhere else in the Archdiocese” because the “older people are in serious need of help from such person at the present time if younger men with political leanings are not to overwhelm them by words and actions.”⁹⁹ Similarly, in 1962, Joseph Dambaza, the long-time catechist and teacher at Kutama, in asking the Jesuit provincial superior to send more priests to the teacher training school noted that “the state is and looks more alert about peace being threatened in Towns and in the Reserves that it sends Security Police to TROUBLE PLACES. Kutama area is one of these places.”¹⁰⁰

The superior at Chishawasha reported that for the period from 1962 to 1964 the mission had made “moderate progress,” and that “the uncertain status of political affairs and of the future civil government of this territory [*terrae*]” was “the principle impediment” militating against “greater perfection.” According to the Jesuit,

This uncertain status perturbs the minds and hearts of the masses and several times instigates an adverse perception of the church's doctrine and teachers. Some leaders of the indigenous, political methods have strongly kept a jealous watch over [*incubuerunt*] their disciples against the church, encouraging them, that they not worship God. For they claim that [Christianity] is an alien thing in this land and it is flourishing only among our people in Europe, if you will, [among those] born from the European stem. Other preachers about political matters, [which are] ruinous to indigenous Catholics, are the ones who threaten those who show themselves faithful to the church. [This is] why any Catholics, committed to our care, in view of the fear they show do not want to [be] sincere and strong friends of the church.¹⁰¹

By 1964, Jesuit Fr. John Dove, the newly appointed CA Salisbury regional council spiritual adviser reported that CA members throughout archdiocese were becoming the targets of increasing political intimidation and physical violence:

In the past month Fr. Dove and Mr. [Samson] Chibi have attended three local congresses of the CA at Mhondoro, Muda (Chishawasha district), and Pareirewa (Makumbi district). They have also visited members of local CA Executives at Kutama, Mtoko, Wedza, Musami, and Marandellas. The general impression is that there has been a fall off of membership due to the prevailing political situation and intimidation. Mr. Chibi spoke at all the congresses and the questions raised were mostly concerned with intimidation. From this it has been seen to be necessary to build up a strong [CA] and other groups to resist local intimidation. People are still being beaten up for going to mass and in some cases mothers have been severely threatened if they have their children baptised. Mr. Chibi has done much to encourage those who live under these conditions.¹⁰²

A ten page report concerning events at Chishawasha mission in July and August, 1964 in the Jesuit archives provides insight into dynamics the between African Christians, African nationalists, and Jesuit missionaries. The priest-reporter, presumably Fr. Cedric Myerscough, noted that he had received reports that there was to be a "political youth meeting" and other "illegal meetings" at the various schools and other locations on the mission property.¹⁰³ Myerscough duly notified the police, and reported

that subsequently the hut of one of his African informant's brother was burned down, and a woman who refused to attend one of the meetings was told to attend the next meeting or her hut would be burned.¹⁰⁴ In late July, 1964, "a respectable resident" and long-time employee of the mission had a conversation with one of the Jesuit brothers. When asked what he knew about the meetings and the possibility of organizing Christians to fight against the nationalists, the African Christian responded "that would not be a good thing" because

The trouble is that they would only come along and burn our huts. . .the people have been living here happily: why should they have troubles now? We don't want it but we are afraid: there is no happiness now: we are all afraid. If you call a meeting then there will be rumours and these people will call in those in Highfield [an African township of Salisbury] people and we will be burnt. If they can come at night and burn your slaughter house would you know who had done it? What if they burn our homes?. . .Some two weeks ago some of them came to my son and said he should join. They said also that they had been told that I had given the names of the people to you and that he had better join otherwise his father's house would be burnt.

"And did he go?"

"Yes, I think he did."

"But why did you let him?"

"What can I do?"

"And now what can we do about it? We are determined to stop it. What is the best way?"

"Call the Police and put them in gaol!"

"We have already told the Police."

"Yes, but something must be done. Done quickly otherwise there will be a very bad spirit all over Chishawasha. There is going to be trouble tomorrow and at the C.A. Meeting."

"Now what about having our meeting and fighting against them?"

"Ah well: it would be better if you did something but I will think about it."¹⁰⁵

The following day, the police came to prevent an "illegal meeting," and detained five people. The next day the wife of one of the mission kraal heads

came to complain that her brother-in-law [name deleted] had been beaten up (her husband not being at home). She herself had been threatened and accused of giving information concerning the meeting and was responsible for them having to move their cattle kraals. They said her husband was an informer and that they were going to take revenge. Before she finished her story, [name deleted] came with his son who had been beaten and said that they were threatening to wreck the whole village. The wife of [name deleted] (he was not home) came up and said that she had been attacked while cooking and that her house was being wrecked. The Police were sent for. Six huts belonging to [name deleted] and [name deleted] were smashed up inside and doors broken—ransacked. The more active perpetrators of this were [names deleted]. The Police took away [names deleted].¹⁰⁶

The remainder of the report details similar intrigues and accusations concerning “illegal meetings,” similar types of physical violence, and threats thereof. The author of the report noted that he provided a copy to a police sergeant at the district police office in Goromonzi.¹⁰⁷ These incidents clearly show why African nationalists thought the Jesuits to be complicitous with the Rhodesian authorities—their frequent recourse to the police to thwart the spread of support for African independence, and by extension “faithful” African Catholics. They also demonstrate the violent nature of the nationalists’ strategy: that they had few qualms about beating or burning the houses of people they perceived (i.e., without necessarily having any concrete proof) not only to be opposed to them, but also those who simply may not have necessarily been active in their support of them. These brief episodes also highlight the extremely difficult circumstances in which Catholic Association leaders had to work, and the relations they had to negotiate in order to keep the organization alive. As such, it is not surprising that paid membership plummeted during this period.¹⁰⁸

And yet, despite such difficulties, by 1966, the number of people becoming members of the CA began to increase. In 1974 (the last year for which there are numbers reported), the CA reported over 8,100 dues paying members—the most in its history—and three regional congresses in which over 6,500 people participated.¹⁰⁹ Clearly, after forty years and in spite of chronic lack of support from the clergy—more often clerical hostility, fierce competition from parish councils, and physical violence from African nationalists, the Catholic Association had learned to survive and adapt to the prevailing conditions. The documentary evidence shows that as late as 1976—at the height of the liberation war—the Salisbury regional council was preparing to stage another annual congress.

While the actual structure of the CAA (or CA from 1961) was effective, the organization suffered from a distinct lack of direction and confusion as to its purpose. This confusion gave rise to considerable debate and discussion as to what the purpose of the CA was beyond holding meetings. Even its spiritual advisers were not sure what its members actually did.¹¹⁰ It also provided the CA's critics—mostly European missionaries—with ample fodder with which to criticize it and to advocate for its demise. And yet, despite this inherent flaw in its mission, the CA continued to function into the 1970s.

Women in the CA

With regard to the structure of the organization, Hugh O'Donnell stated that “After the annual congress. . . the *monthly meetings* were the means of communicating ideas and implementing the resolutions and suggestions of the congress [which were]

based on the traditional [sic] idea of the *dare*, but with a new element, the inclusion of women.”¹¹¹ While Majongwe and other African lay leaders may have wanted to include women in the activities and deliberations of the movement, they are conspicuous by their virtual absence from the Catholic African Association’s leadership, and their actions were clearly constrained by the double patriarchy of the mid-century African culture and that of the Catholic church.

Marriage and Catholic family life were frequent themes of speakers at the annual congresses throughout the 1940s and 1950s, and these addresses reveal dominating patriarchal discourses from both European and African sources. Jesuit Ernest Kotski addressed the 1948 congress at Kutama mission concerning Catholic action. He suggested that “each mission should have its Catholic Action Committee of men,” and then

Turning to the women, he exhorted them also to overcome their fear, and to train their children from earliest youth in genuine Catholic practices. They should also visit and try to convert the lapsed. He exhorted all to show forth visibly and concretely that unity which we have as members of God’s family and to show more trust towards the local head of God’s family, the priest.¹¹²

Later the same day, Joseph Dambaza Chikerema spoke about the Catholic family. He first “invited the delegates to visit Nazareth and to learn from the Holy Family what a Catholic family should try to imitate.”¹¹³ According to Dambaza, the Catholic husband should “like St. Joseph, try to please his wife, work for her and do all he can to make her happy.” Similarly, the Catholic wife should “as Our Lady did, respect her husband and regard him as the head of the family. Though hers was the greater dignity, yet she always

put St. Joseph before her.” Although noting that Catholic parents had an obligation to educate their “children of both sexes,” he

grew very emphatic in the course of his remarks on the way in which young men choose their future wives. Nowadays they seem to make their choice merely on the grounds that the girl has a good figure or wears attractive headgear. In the old days a bachelor on the look-out for a future wife used to notice the huts from which much water was thrown. If there were much water thrown from a house, this was a sign that the girl who lived there was a hard worker, and the ability to work hard was taken as the first requisite for a good wife.¹¹⁴

Similarly, at the congress the following year at St. Peter’s church in the Harare section of Salisbury, the director of native affairs highlighted the “difficulties [caused] by girls who come to town without their fathers’ permission,” and teacher Raphael Ruzive, in his presentation on marriage “reported satisfactory progress at the Homecraft school of Miss Bloomfield, who welcomed those girls who were already married or who would be married shortly.”¹¹⁵

Thus, according to the foregoing discourses, Catholic African women—though ostensibly possessing greater dignity than men—were expected: to be submissive to male authority in the home and church; to remain in their rural homes subject to parental authority and not to go to the towns; to be “hard workers” if they ever hoped to leave their homes and marry; to bear children; to receive an education “in genuine Catholic practices” and impart these practices to their children; and to try to bring back people who had grown slack in their practice of “the Faith” or who had abandoned it altogether. Whereas African religious women (i.e., nuns) exchanged one form of patriarchy for another, African Catholic lay women experienced the oppression of both African and Western patriarchies.

Despite this double oppression, however, African women did attend the congresses, though it is not possible to know how many did so in either absolute numbers or as a relative proportion of attendees. Few, if any, seem to have been invited to give major addresses. At a meeting of the congress central committee in 1952 Peter Magwaza

mentioned that women were given less chance of speaking at the Congress than men: he thought it better to allot some more time or to increase the days of the Congress to three instead of two, so as to allow women to speak. This will be dealt with when we are going to draw up the time-table for the next Congress.¹¹⁶

The congress planners evidently chose not to extend the conference because at the central committee's next meeting in April, 1953, a member noted that "women who attend the Congress do not get enough time or opportunity to express their views," and proposed that "at least one woman should give a talk at [the 1953 congress held at Triashill mission]."¹¹⁷ Of course, the congress planners also "expected that the five African priests will be the ones giving the talks: these Speakers will each take a different aspect of the general theme of the Congress, 'The Liturgical Movement.'"¹¹⁸

Although women were not the major speakers at the congresses, neither were they silent at the sessions they attended, though these—as well as the congress liturgies—were frequently segregated by gender.¹¹⁹ At the 1949 congress, following Raphael Ruzive's presentation on marriage Jesuit Francis Barr asked

what steps could be taken to ensure Christian marriages among our young people: too often, he said, a girl would know everything about her intended husband except his religion. This question was not really answered in the ensuing discussion. A Catholic father should know his duty, and as he is the one who receives lobola, he is to blame if his daughter is pledged to one who is not Catholic. But what if the father is not a Catholic? Various views were expressed, especially by the women, about the difficulties of marriage and the obstinacy of their children, and the discussion wandered from the point at issue.¹²⁰

In the business session, during discussion of a proposal for the 1950 congress to be held at Makumbi mission the 1949 congress minutes note that “Further, the women asked that at this congress they should have a meeting of their own.”¹²¹ There is no evidence, however, that a congress was held in 1950. In a discussion of the leadership training courses in December 1953, a delegate to the Salisbury Regional Council from Chishawasha “said that women should attend their own Leadership Course, otherwise they feel much neglected.”¹²² Peter Magwaza also expressed the opinion that “some capable women ought to be attending Central Committee Meetings,” and Ambrose Majongwe noted that “Monte Cassino had once held a Leadership Course for women.”¹²³

Although it is extremely unlikely that the congress organizers would have cancelled the annual meeting to forego allowing women to have a session of their own, what is clear is that African Catholic women who attended the congress knew their own interests and weren’t afraid to express their views, even to the annoyance of the Jesuit scribes. It is significant to note that nowhere was it recorded that a woman served as a delegate representing a mission council at a congress, thus, all the women who attended the congresses did so because they chose to and paid for their own transportation to and from the congress venue, as well as for food while there—although there are complaints in the Salisbury Regional Council’s minutes of women cooking their own food and not paying the 2/6 meal fee required of all those attending the congresses.¹²⁴

In 1956, the training team that presented the leadership courses reported that the mission council at Marandellas elected “for the first time in the history of [the] Salisbury Archdiocese,” a woman to the executive committee.¹²⁵ Where women received the most

frequent mention, however, was in the reports from the mission councils on the activities of the local branches of the CAA. In addition to raising “good” Catholic children and visiting the lapsed, women also: did almost all of the cooking to feed the delegates at the congresses (after the 1956 congress at St. Michael’s mission in Mhondoro one delegate “spoke feelingly of the effects of the bad food [at the congress] and asked that women and not men be appointed to cook.”¹²⁶); visited the sick; participated in explicitly prayer-centered groups such as the Legion of Mary and sodalities dedicated to Mary the Queen of Heaven and the Sacred Heart of Jesus; contributed their money to the support of the church in general and to funds to support scholarships, as well as to build churches, schools, and hospitals; attended retreats; taught catechism and shared in the work of evangelization, among other activities. In fact, the mission councils that reported the most success frequently had more than one local women’s group. Thus, to the extent that the CAA garnered any success in its activities women held a stake at least equal to if not greater than that of the men.

Clericalism and Lack of Clerical Support

Although the congress movement began as a meeting for laypeople and subsequent meetings sought to develop African Catholic lay leadership, the CAA was perpetually hamstrung by the Jesuits’ emphasis on clerical and hierarchical control of Catholic Action, most particularly by Michael Hannan, the founder of the CAA territorial council and its first spiritual adviser, and Francis Markall, the first spiritual adviser appointed by Chichester and second archbishop of Salisbury.

At the 1948 congress held at Kutama mission, Hannan addressed the delegates concerning “what is meant by the growth of the Church in a mission country.” This address is particularly illustrative of his understanding of Catholic Action and the (African) laity’s role therein. According to Hannan, the growth of the church was

conditioned by the degree in which the people of the country help the Church to progress. . . . [and that] without generous cooperation, beyond the bounds of mere obligation, the Church could not make the progress that is wanted by God. The growth of the Church means the multiplication of places where the ordinary means of salvation are permanently available.¹²⁷

Clearly, Hannan equated hierarchy or clergy with “Church” in this context: he referred to “the people of the country,” not to “the people of God” which implies a more intimate and integral union and sharing in the common priesthood of Jesus Christ. Rather, “the people of the country” here are distinct and apart from “the Church” and are required to help “the Church” progress with their “generous cooperation,” but not their initiative or own action. According to Hannan, the growth of “the Church” that God wants is an increase in the places where “the ordinary means of salvation,” i.e., the sacraments, “are permanently available,” namely churches, chapels, and schools under “the Church’s” control. According to pre-Vatican II Catholic theology, the priest was the minister of the sacraments and stood as the bishop’s representative in a given territory within the bishop’s jurisdiction. The bishop—chosen by the pope, Jesus Christ’s vicar on earth—shares in the mission of the apostles chosen by Jesus Christ and is their successor. Thus, the priest shares in the apostles’ pastoral and teaching mission. Hannan, accordingly, exhorted “the people of the country” to do more than observe the sacraments and help “the Church” (read priests and bishops) in its mission to spread the sacraments to various

locations on a permanent basis. To do so, would require active people to help bring converts into “the Church’s” fold, and to build the infrastructures necessary to accommodate them, i.e., churches and schools. If the church were to have a resident pastor (i.e., priest) he would require a residence, and the school—often staffed by religious women (i.e., nuns)—required a separate residence. Catholic Action in this narrow context, then, meant the laity sharing in the mission of the hierarchy, not having a mission of its own.

Hannan then “reminded” the delegates “of certain obligations which they find difficult to carry out:

to give good example, to support the Church with their offerings, to send their children to Catholic schools, to refuse to accept lobola from a non-Catholic suitor for their daughter’s hand. These obligations are burdensome, but there are other hard things that must be done, even though no individual is bound to them under pain of sin. Examples of such difficult, though necessary, things were given: to teach in Catholic schools instead of government schools, to teach in village schools instead of central schools, to live in the reserves and act as catechist and leader instead of working in town or buying one’s own farm, to stay at home after passing Standard VI instead of going to work in the towns.¹²⁸

Here Hannan again showed a clerical understanding Catholic Action. If the congress scribe’s rendering of Hannan’s speech is correct, then the Jesuit implied that not giving a good example or supporting the church with offerings of money or labor, or sending one’s children to Catholic schools, or preventing one’s daughter from marrying a non-Catholic (i.e., by refusing his lobola) were all sinful actions which could only be atoned for by confessing one’s sins and performing a penance assigned by the confessor. As the minister of the sacraments, the priest served as the confessor who mediated the penance upon the penitent. Furthermore, according to pre-conciliar theology, any person who was

not in a “state of grace” (i.e., who had committed a sin and not received absolution from a confessor) was not allowed to receive the eucharist during the liturgy of the mass, that is, was denied full participation in the quintessential action that signified and distinguished one as a Catholic. Again, according to pre-Vatican II theology, the priest as minister of the sacraments could withhold communion from a person if he knew that that person was in a state of sin.

Thus, Hannan clearly placed the priest threateningly in the lives of the congress delegates, and by extension in the lives of lay African Catholics, as well as gave a clearly clerical tone to Catholic Action: the obligations of the Catholic faith required the approbation of the clergy. The demands of Catholic Action beyond the obligations of the faith required concrete and substantial sacrifice of one’s self, one’s family, and one’s community ostensibly for the greater good of the church: teaching in Catholic schools instead of government schools, or in an outschool instead of a central mission school meant a teacher would receive less money for more as well as more difficult work which resulted in the teacher earning less money with which to support his/her family and spending less time with them even though the children in a given area were benefitting from that sacrifice. Similarly, remaining in a reserve farming on communal land to work as a catechist or be a leader of a local church community (usually at an outstation remote from the central station where the priest was based) meant significant economic hardship compared to the potential benefits from owning one’s own farm or (ostensibly for men only) migrating to an urban area to earn cash wages, especially if one had completed

primary school (Standard VI)—the highest educational level available to Africans in the 1940s and 1950s.

Nevertheless, the congress scribe noted that during the discussion following Hannan's speech "time was wasted. . .by those who felt irked by the Church's law forbidding children's education in non-Catholic schools, and by teachers who wished to be appointed African principals of boarding schools."¹²⁹ Evidently, the lay African delegates attending the congress had priorities different from those that Hannan espoused.

Hannan's actions manifested concretely his beliefs concerning the status of the clergy vis-a-vis the laity: during the 1949 congress at St. Peter's church in Harare Hannan chaired all sessions. At the 1951 congress at Monte Cassino mission regarding reports from missions and centers, the congress scribe noted

There seems to have been some misunderstanding somewhere as only 3 reports altogether were submitted. The teachers said that they have not been informed, but this cannot be understood as this is a standing item on all Congresses.¹³⁰

Several months prior to the congress, however, Hannan wrote to Bishop Chichester asking him to send a circular letter to the superiors of mission stations, "of which more than one copy should go to each mission," advising

the Fathers-in-charge. . .that they should warn their people that unless a report is sent in from a centre, a verbal report will not be accepted from a representative from a centre. Indeed, only those centres which report something worth hearing will be asked to make a verbal report at the Congress.¹³¹

Evidently Hannan either neglected to inform the lay organizers of the congress of this new rule and/or determined that only three missions had "something worth hearing" to report.

More significantly, Hannan played a significant role in the formation of the CAA in 1953, as the territorial council's spiritual adviser until 1961, and simultaneously as the Salisbury regional council's adviser from 1956 to 1958 following Francis Markall's appointment as the archbishop of Salisbury. At the August, 1953 meeting of seven European missionaries with Bishop Haene of Gwelo, Hannan was elected as chair of the meeting, and with relatively few concessions to Mariannhill representatives from Bulawayo and Wankie, Swiss Bethlehem missionaries from Gwelo, and Irish Carmelites from Umtali, pushed through the structures of the Monte Cassino constitution in their entirety, including broad powers for the spiritual advisers. In addition to the spiritual adviser's aforementioned powers to veto any decisions or actions of the council he advised and to remove an officer for dereliction of duty or scandalous behavior, the priest was required to sit at the immediate right of the chairman (a position of honor),¹³² could censor press releases, and was "absolved" of any financial responsibilities.¹³³

Hannan also wrote a set of explanatory notes that were printed with the constitution in 1955.¹³⁴ The notes discussed in exacting detail how to run a meeting according to parliamentary procedure, as well as suggested points for discussion of Catholic teaching and perspective on spiritual, educational, social, economic, and liturgical progress and action. Here again Hannan betrayed his mind regarding African laity and Catholic Action. According to Hannan, educational progress not only entailed the education of the children of Catholic parents at Catholic schools "by only Catholic teachers," but also the recognition

that if, through no fault of ours, there are not places for our children, it is better for them to stop going to school than to go to higher standards at a non-Catholic school.¹³⁵

The section on social progress and action stressed the preservation of Catholic marriage and home life, the rejection of “drunkenness and beer parties” and “immoral dances and immodest songs,” and obedience to clerical and secular authorities.¹³⁶ Economic progress involved promoting “the best agricultural methods,” saving money, conserving timber, working with cooperative schemes, practicing “home industries” such as “mat making, basketry, carving, sewing, pottery,” and working

hard to gain what is necessary to feed their children well, clothe them well (not in a flashy way) and to pay for their education. Let others buy motor cars and put asbestos or zinc on their roofs. Catholics want to make a show in heaven, by their care for their children.¹³⁷

During workshops that the CAA Salisbury training team gave to branch and mission officers Hannan’s lectures focused on how to run CAA meetings, emphasizing issues such as preparing meeting agenda and how to “make [the meeting] work.”¹³⁸ Similarly, at a meeting of the regional spiritual advisers in preparation for the first meeting of the territorial council, Hannan claimed that he prepared the explanatory notes to obviate the problem of “useless discussion of finances” at local council meetings.¹³⁹ At the territorial council meeting, Hannan tried and failed to prevent the council’s adoption of the Gwelo diocese’s version of the translation of the CAA constitution into ChiShona—which was overseen by the Bethlehem missionaries, but succeeded in having a three pence per capita tax to raise funds for the territorial council over the objections of the Mariannhill spiritual adviser from Bulawayo.¹⁴⁰ At the next Salisbury regional council meeting Hannan asked the secretary to submit the minutes to him so that he could

censor them before they were distributed to the council members and the mission councils.¹⁴¹

Michael Hannan was not alone in his efforts to exert clerical control over the CAA, however. Francis Markall, as the spiritual adviser of the Salisbury congress executive committee and of the CAA regional council, and from 1956 as archbishop of Salisbury significantly influenced the actions of the African lay men who led the organization.

Markall's thinking with regard to Catholic Action was very similar to Hannan's. Following the establishment of the CAA in August 1953, the Salisbury regional council received a letter from an African layman in Northern Rhodesia (colonial Zambia) requesting a copy of the CAA constitution because he wanted to start a similar organization in that colony. Markall responded that the layman should first ask his local priest, and if the priest approved Markall would send the layman a copy of the constitution when it was printed because

It is important to remember that no form of Catholic Action may be started or carried out without the approval of the parish priest.¹⁴²

As early as 1952, Markall recommended that the congress executive committee should appoint a priest as "organising commissioner."¹⁴³ Evidently, he did not realize (or care about) the irony of suggesting a priest to be the organizing secretary of a lay movement, but he did so five years later when the territorial council appointed a Bethlehem priest from the Gwelo diocese to represent the CAA at a lay congress in Rome.¹⁴⁴ In 1956, after having become archbishop, Markall forbade CAA council members and officers from getting involved in politics, though this did not prevent the

Salisbury regional council from asking Tom Zawaira from staying on as regional chairman after having been elected to parliament in 1972.¹⁴⁵

Given Aston Chichester's ambivalence concerning African candidates for the priesthood and women's religious institutes, it is not surprising that his attitude was similar with regard to the African Catholic laity. Despite his professed support for the lay movement, he was not always willing to take actions that CAA leaders thought necessary to strengthen its position, particularly with other missionaries. In his letter to the first meeting of the congress central committee in 1951, Chichester noted the lack of support on the part of his priests, but also expressed ambivalence concerning the African laity's ability to organize the annual congresses and simultaneously exerted episcopal control over the movement:

He [Chichester] went on to give the various opinions of different Fathers with regard to the African Congress. Some, owing to the pressure of work, may not seem to be giving much help. Others, because of our peoples' lack of interest and initiative during the year, may think it too early to place the complete organisation of the Congress in the hands of an African Committee. But there are those who, while admitting that not everyone is born an organiser, think it time to try an African Committee, just as African Associations have been formed for secular affairs. His Lordship has adopted this point of view, and you have from today to show whether you can carry on the Congress or not, because all is in your hands. As elected men you have the power to vote. But all resolutions passed have to receive the Bishop's approval. Anything disapproved will be sent back to the Committee for a review.¹⁴⁶

Thus, in 1955, when the Salisbury regional council asked Chichester to appoint spiritual advisers to the mission councils as per article 18 of the constitutions, the archbishop replied that he would not appoint spiritual advisers at every mission because Hannan was the spiritual adviser for the CAA. "and that will suffice for the present."¹⁴⁷ Hannan, in an

effort to calm the angered prelate, remarked that he understood the respective mission superiors to be the CAA mission council spiritual advisers, and that

The CAA is meant to be a way of organising those lay people who wish to share in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Of the essence of the hierarchy is that the sacred authority gives orders. If the laity just do what seems good to them without formal union and submission to authority, that is not Catholic Action. The only person who can represent the Ordinary is one who has been appointed to do so by the Ordinary.¹⁴⁸

The CAA and CA leaders frequently complained of the chronic lack of support for the organization on the part of Western missionaries, including the spiritual advisers. In 1955, the CAA Salisbury regional council sent letters to Archbishop Chichester and Bishop Donal Lamont of Umtali asking the bishops to ask their priests to stop throwing out CAA correspondence and reports.¹⁴⁹ In 1958, at Hannan's urging, the Salisbury regional council passed a resolution allowing only the mission spiritual adviser (the mission superior according to Hannan's explanation to Chichester) to invite the training team to conduct its workshops.¹⁵⁰ By December, Peter Magwaza, the chair of the regional council, noted that as a result of the resolution only one mission had invited the training team, and that "This was a very disturbing development as the work and influence of the Training Team was very important for the progress of the C.A.A. [sic]"¹⁵¹

A resolution passed by the Salisbury regional council in 1953 best demonstrates the practical results of the combined clerical understanding of Catholic Action and lack of support from the clergy for the CAA:

Mr. John Cizarura, Makumbe [sic], brought up a point of paramount importance. He said that in the outschools during the holidays teachers go out holidaying and then there is nobody to lead Sunday Prayers when Christians group together. Cannot something be done to train some good Christian leaders at each outschool to conduct Sunday Prayers during the absence of the teachers. A *resolution* was drawn up that the Bishop

[Chichester] be asked whether some good natured Christians could be trained to lead Sunday Prayers during the absence of the teachers in the outschools.¹⁵²

Although the resolution passed, and although it is not clear whether it was implemented, that lay people felt incapable of leading themselves in prayer in the absence of a priest or appointed teacher is very telling of the attitudes with which African lay people had to work on the part of the clergy.

In 1958, Michael Hannan resigned as spiritual adviser for the CAA Salisbury regional council, and three years later he stepped down as the spiritual adviser to the territorial council, although he occasionally advised the Salisbury regional council when the regularly appointed spiritual adviser could not be present. Hannan's departure combined with the theological shift to focusing on the lay apostolate as opposed to Catholic Action that came with papal reign of John XXIII and the Second Vatican council gave the CA leadership greater opportunity to direct the affairs of their Catholic lay organization. Salisbury regional council spiritual advisers Francis Barr and John Dove (both Jesuits) acted in a much more advisory capacity than Markall or Hannan, making far fewer interventions during council and executive committee meetings. Although Markall appointed Alois Nyanhete as the CAA spiritual adviser for St. Peter's in Harare as early as 1957, and Patrick Chakaipa for Makumbi mission in 1968, it wasn't until 1974 that an African priest, Fr. Emmanuel Mavudzi, became the spiritual adviser for the Salisbury regional council.¹⁵³

African Voice and Perspective

And yet, despite the clerical constraints, the African lay people that comprised the CAA/CA negotiated space for themselves to express their own perspective to the bishops and leaders within the Catholic church, but also to the broader Rhodesian society as well. Although CA members were politically more moderate than members of the African nationalist parties, they expressed a critical awareness of their position within the church and wider society, particularly through *Moto* magazine.¹⁵⁴

Beginning with the 1948 congress at Kutama mission the African laity asked specifically for African priests to give retreats and missions, whereas before they had asked only that there be missions preached and retreats given.¹⁵⁵ Evidently they had not only a desire for spiritual fulfillment, but also hoped to receive that spirituality from church leaders who would be more sympathetic to their cultural perspectives, or minimally who shared the same language and who could preach intelligibly. In 1951, at the congress at Monte Cassino mission (and again in 1955 at the regional council meeting), the congress delegates passed a resolution asking that an African priest be appointed assistant spiritual adviser.¹⁵⁶ Apparently, they also wanted a priest who understood their language and/or perspective to have a voice in the governance of their organization. It was not until November, 1957, that Archbishop Markall appointed Fr. Alois Nyanhete as assistant spiritual adviser, but only for St. Peter's parish in Harare.¹⁵⁷

Although it was noted above that the Jesuit scribes of the 1948 Kutama congress felt the discussions following the presentations by Frs. Kotzki and Hannan, and Joseph Dambaza on marriage and the mandatory Catholic education of Catholic children at Catholic schools were "wasted time," the complaints on the part of African Catholics are

significant because they represent an African perspective on these issues that didn't accord harmoniously with the positions espoused by the missionaries. The complaint about nuns limiting African men's access to young African women in boarding schools, while perhaps a nuisance to a celibate European scribe, reflects a concern on the part of African men that the church was interfering with VaShona marriage practices. The issue of marriage was of such importance to the African laity that they raised the question of solemn betrothal as a means towards the canonical regularization of African marriages (which was the dominant concern of the missionaries), frequently raised the issue of high lobola (bride price), and in 1968 decided that the theme for the congress at St. Peter's should focus on marriage.¹⁵⁸

Similarly, despite the determination of missionaries like Michael Hannan to ensure that Catholic Africans send their children exclusively to Catholic schools (even to the point of encouraging parents to keep their children home rather than send them to a non-Catholic school), many African Catholics apparently did not value Catholic education to the same degree as they valued educational opportunity in itself. In this respect, African Catholics mirrored the attitudes of many of their coreligionists in the United States and elsewhere.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, delegates to the Congress central committee (and later regional council) from Lourdes mission proposed a resolution asking that Catholic parents be allowed to send children from Standard IV and beyond to any Catholic school in the Salisbury vicariate, and expressed a concern that their school be granted a Standard IV as their children upon completing Standard III at the Catholic school, had to go to a Dutch Reformed Church school to continue their education.¹⁶⁰

Similarly, in 1954, the Salisbury regional council wanted to double subscription fees for each mission from £5 to £10 per year in order to raise money for scholarships so that Catholic students could pursue higher education.¹⁶¹

Following the establishment of the African Catholic Congress central committee, the complaints from the lay leaders about the lack of support from the clergy were almost as frequent as the latter's claim of the former's incapacity to function as an organization. As early as 1952, during the reports from local branches the committee secretary noted "the stupendous difficulties" that the local committees met.¹⁶² The following year, the delegates passed resolutions asking the bishops to allow priests to give more missions and retreats at outschools, not just at the central mission stations, and that the bishops encourage priests to allow lay people to form local branches.¹⁶³ In 1955, the regional council sent letters to Archbishop Chichester and Bishop Lamont of Umtali asking them to ask their priests to stop throwing out CAA correspondence.¹⁶⁴ During the same year, the regional council petitioned Chichester to appoint spiritual advisers to the respective mission councils as per the CAA constitution, which the metropolitan refused to do.¹⁶⁵ Three years later, the territorial council complained that the bishops still weren't appointing spiritual advisers to the mission councils, and that if they had done so, the CAA would have received more respect.¹⁶⁶ In 1959, the territorial council again asked the bishops to "promulgate" mission council spiritual advisers, apparently to no avail.¹⁶⁷ Various council minutes register the same complaints throughout the 1960s.¹⁶⁸

More significantly, in 1961, the territorial council decided to send an African lay person to London for training in Catholic teaching on social justice and grassroots

organizing and committed £200 in support of the venture, and subsequently chose Tom Zawaira (who would later serve as chairman of the Salisbury regional council) to the seminar at Claver house.¹⁶⁹ At the same meeting, the territorial delegates passed a resolution asking the bishops to establish study groups and a territorial conference “on African life and custom and [their] possible adaptation to Christian life.”¹⁷⁰ This action pushed the bishops to take up the question of adapting “African life and custom” to Christian life in their committee on vernacular liturgy.¹⁷¹ This began a process of debate about what could be admitted to approved Catholic practice in the church in colonial Zimbabwe, particularly the practice of honoring the spirits of deceased ancestors in the *kurova guva* rite.¹⁷² Nine years later, the territorial council passed a resolution asking the bishops

to make better use of the C.A. in investigating African opinion in such matters as KUROVE GUVA [sic] ceremony, liturgical questions, Diaconate, political problems, etc., and that the findings of such committees be reported to C.A. through the Territorial Council.¹⁷³

As the political crisis became more acute following the Rhodesian Front government’s unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in November, 1965, the CA leadership weighed in on several issues, supporting the stand taken by the Catholic bishops on the “Principle of Justice concerning the Land Tenure Act and School Issue,” and in favor of racial integration in their pastoral letter “A Crisis of Conscience.”¹⁷⁴ In 1971, the CA territorial council and the Salisbury regional council established committees to study the Pearce commission proposals and both recommended that the bishops reject any internal settlement.¹⁷⁵

Similarly, the territorial council asked the bishops

to inform the people in simple terms of any approaches made by them [the bishops] to the Government on matters which affect the people as a whole. This is to avoid the impression by the people that the Church is silent at a critical period.¹⁷⁶

They also asked the bishops “to produce a summary of the relevant Vatican Council decrees in the vernacular.”¹⁷⁷

The foregoing brief survey of the activities of the Catholic Association’s leadership councils clearly shows that as lay people they were well informed on the political and theological issues of the day, that they had a clear vision of and interests in the society and church in which they lived, and that they worked to implement that vision. To determine how successful they were in implementing their vision, and the degree to which that vision trickled down to the grassroots level will require more research. That being said, it is safe to conclude that the Catholic Association leadership had a fairly broad base of support for its program, and filled a need—be it social, spiritual, or a desire for unity in Catholic Action—on the part of African Catholic lay people. The numbers of participants who voluntarily paid to attend the annual congresses attest to this. Lest one think that the councils which conducted the business of the association were a small handful of the same people, by 1970, the Salisbury regional council consisted of 151 delegates from 22 mission councils,¹⁷⁸ and four years later there were more paid members from the Marandellas region (which had been split from Salisbury with an eye to making it a separate vicariate apostolic) than the from the metropolitan see.¹⁷⁹

Catholic African Teachers Association (CATA)

Given that the CAA started as a meeting of and retreat for 14 teachers taking advanced training, it is quite ironic that the few references to teachers' involvement with the organization are almost wholly negative for the period prior to 1961. During the business meeting at the 1949 congress held at St. Peter's Harare, the teachers among the delegates discussed the African Teachers' Association, "which they were urged to join," and debated the merits of forming a Catholic teachers' association. After reading the constitutions of the Catholic African Teachers' Association from Natal, South Africa, the delegates resolved that "The Catholic African Teachers of S. Rhodesia wish to form a federation of Catholic African teachers" and voted to choose a committee consisting of two teachers from each ecclesiastical jurisdiction and Michael Hannan as spiritual adviser to adapt the constitutions to the circumstances in Southern Rhodesia. The teachers also asked that Chichester circulate the draft constitutions among his fellow bishops and that the first meeting take place as soon as possible. "As a sign of their eagerness," the teachers collected £2,14 toward the cost of copying the constitutions.¹⁸⁰

Throughout the 1950s the only references to the Catholic teachers' organization (called a guild, federation, or association) in the minutes of the executive/regional council discuss "problems":

On the point of the Catholic African Teachers Guild (CATG), and the difficulties in getting it going, general dissatisfaction was expressed in regard to the attitude of most young Catholic teachers. Acting Chief Makoni, supported by many delegates, pointed out that in spiritual matters they are becoming a hindrance and non-cooperative, in particular as regards support of parental authority and high ideals in social life.¹⁸¹

The following year, Dominic Samakomva, a delegate from Musami, noted that despite Hannan's best efforts to get the teachers' organization going,

no result has been forthcoming. Several delegates complained that the young teachers are becoming less & less interested in all pertaining to Catholic Action, and therefore show no initiative or sense of leadership. One delegate urged that it is from example rather than from teaching that a teacher can be successful, both in religious and social upliftment.¹⁸²

Accordingly, the committee resolved to urge all teachers to attend the forthcoming congress at Chishawasha and that they remain for a session specifically devoted encouraging them to form guilds “under the Catholic African Teachers’ Union,” and that Chichester’s attention “be drawn to the general impression felt about the young teachers.”¹⁸³ While the elder teachers who formed the core of the CAA’s leadership “deplored the lack of interest” that younger teachers showed in their organization, only one delegate offered an opinion as to why: according to J. Mauro of Chishawasha the young teachers “shrink back because of the jealousy of old men, who do not like them as office bearers.”¹⁸⁴ Surprisingly, the central committee made no effort to determine whether Mauro’s view was correct, or what the causes of the youths’ disinterest were. In 1961, when the bishops gave their conditional approval for the CAA to change its name to the Catholic Association, they also allowed the various diocesan teachers’ organizations to unite into a territory-wide Catholic African teachers’ Federation.¹⁸⁵

Moto Magazine

The periodical that would eventually become *Moto* magazine experienced furtive and very difficult birth pangs. As early as 1933, Chichester established a paper called *Chipianiso*, which met with little success.¹⁸⁶ Around 1946, Chichester tried again, this time with a monthly paper called *Mwenje*. Although the delegates who attended the 1947 congress “had acclaimed” its publication, very few Catholic African laypeople were

willing to pay 2d a month for the paper.¹⁸⁷ By May, 1952, *Mwenje* had failed “due to the lack of support on the part of Catholics.”¹⁸⁸

In 1953, the ACC central committee received an invitation from the editor of *The Rock*, the monthly paper of the Catholic African Union of the Bulawayo vicariate apostolic, to submit “articles and news items” and to support the paper with subscriptions. The committee vetoed a resolution to support the paper because “the main language is English and the majority of us do not understand it [and] the cost is too great, the paper not being in any way worth sixpence.”¹⁸⁹

At a meeting of the CAA’s regional spiritual advisers in 1955, Hannan informed the other priests that Bishop Aloysius Haene of Gwelo was planning to start publishing a paper in 1957. The editorial staff would consist of “one priest and a number Africans.” Haene believed that *Chipianiso*, *Mwenje*, and *The Rock* had all failed because the individual and/or mission that publishing the paper had also taken on the responsibility for distribution. Accordingly, the bishop proposed to use the CAA organization “as a distribution machine for the new paper”:

If local branches in the out-stations were to vote a certain sum—£3 or £5—as initial capital with which to pay for copies of the paper, then the local branch would have the responsibility of reimbursing itself by selling the paper.¹⁹⁰

A proposal to increase the annual membership fee to cover the cost of producing the paper was voted down “on the grounds that many CAA members could not read.”¹⁹¹ At the first meeting of the CAA Territorial Council three days later, the delegates decided to form an information bureau with two members from Gwelo, and Hannan announced that

the paper would run “Catholic news from all over the world” as well as news from Southern Rhodesia.¹⁹²

By April, 1958, there was still no national Catholic newspaper because Father Monico, the editor, had received no reports or money. In the meantime, however, there were some local papers being published, and more importantly, the Catholic Mission Press also established by Haene was prepared to open and planned to sponsor a contest to name the forthcoming national paper.¹⁹³

The paper made its debut and was distributed through the CAA in the Salisbury archdiocese at the annual general meeting at Musami in 1959 for a price of 2/6 per copy.¹⁹⁴ By the end of the year only five mission councils in the archdiocese were buying the “Gwelo Catholic paper.”¹⁹⁵ By 1961, *Moto* was considered valuable for Catholic Action, but most regions and mission councils relied on spiritual advisers for sales.¹⁹⁶ According to the CA territorial council, by May, 1963, *Moto* had a circulation of 9,000 in the Gwelo diocese alone, and by 1971, when it began publishing weekly, circulation nationwide was 26,000.¹⁹⁷

From these modest beginnings, *Moto* fast became one of the most outspoken voices of lay African perspective in Rhodesia, often providing scathing criticism of the settler government and support for African nationalist parties. Between 1959 and 1974 the Catholic bishops published eight pastoral letters condemning racism. As the leading organ of African Catholics, *Moto* gave vociferous support to the bishops as they came increasingly into conflict with the government’s racist policies.¹⁹⁸

Led by lay editor-in-chief Paul Chidyausiku, the magazine was published in Rhodesia's three major languages: ChiShona, SiNdebele, and English. It spoke out in favor of majority rule and opposed the Unilateral Declaration of Independence that made Rhodesia a white-dominated nation. It criticized the divisive split between the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the successor to the National Democratic Party founded by Joshua Nkomo in 1961, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), a splinter group set up by several of Nkomo's lieutenants, including Robert Mugabe. *Moto* also opposed the Land Tenure Act of 1970, which, like South Africa's Group Areas Act that was one of the four pillars of Apartheid, divided the land inequitably. It gave approximately 45 million acres of prime agricultural land to fewer than 250,000 whites and provided roughly the same amount of agriculturally unsuitable land to over five and a half million Africans.

Moto provides a window through which to view the maturation of a distinctly African Catholic view of the church. In addition to advocating African political rights, the magazine covered local church-related events in Rhodesia and kept a very close watch on the formation of the African clergy and religious, paying particular attention to the elevation of Africans to the hierarchy and the ranks of the canonized. Thus, its pages demonstrate Africa's increasing importance in the Catholic church. Through its staff and readership, *Moto* magazine touched upon many facets of the inculturation of the church in an African context, including liturgy, formation of the African clergy, and promotion of African literature. Its hard-line stances resulted in the arrest, trial, conviction, and deportation of expatriate members of the editorial staff, but until it was banned by the

government in 1974, the magazine contributed greatly both to the nationalist struggle and to the Africanization of the church in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

Dachs and Rea, after reading O'Donnell's paper on the CA, argued that

The very success of the Association in many ways contributed to its decline. The keen involvement and leadership of the laity meant in many areas corresponding neglect of the Association by priests, whose skills and energies were in heavy demand elsewhere. The size of the membership provoked attacks from nationalist politicians and assault upon the Association members. Moreover within the church large territorial associations were yielding to local community groups, annual national conferences were giving way to regular and frequent parish council meetings; and from 1962 both membership and organization began to fade, especially in the regions away from Salisbury.¹⁹⁹

As with much of their work, this assessment clearly misses the mark. This brief study of the CA's documentation clearly shows that the missionaries' neglect of the organization did not correspond to those areas in which the laity was active. Rather, it would appear that the CA tried to fill many of the gaps that the clergy left unattended: the constant demand for spiritual renewal in retreats and missions, frequent efforts to provide for the education (Catholic or otherwise) of African Catholic youth, evangelization and engaging in the corporal works of mercy, advocacy for the integration of African culture into the church's liturgical and theological corpora, support for the bishops on highly charged political issues—without which the bishops would not have been nearly as successful in their advocacy.

Similarly, African nationalists did not attack CA members merely because of the organization's size. Rather, the African Catholic laity received threatening intimidation and physical violence because nationalists saw them as willingly subordinate to foreign

Whites who associated with and participated in a morally bankrupt regime that oppressed the majority of the people in the colony along racial lines. Whether that was actually the case or not, that was certainly the perception.

Lastly, the “large territorial association” did not yield to local community groups—in fact, it was composed of small community groups at its base, and the annual national conferences did not give way “to regular and frequent parish council meetings.” Rather, it appears that the bishops intentionally introduced the structure of the parish council at the same time that their investigative committee tried to gut what little sense of direction and organizational purpose from the constitution that was imposed on the CAA by Michael Hannan and the other European missionaries in 1953. The African leadership of the CAA knew fully well what it was doing when it asked to drop the “African” from its title and become the “parent body of all Catholic Action.” The bishops balked at this clear and relatively early opportunity for interracial cooperation and equality on a national level. While they may not have intended for the CA’s demise, their actions had a distinctly deleterious effect on the organization, which continued to coexist ambiguously with the parish councils, without receiving any clear guidance as to what distinguished one from the other. In fact, it is safe to say that Edward Muchenje’s assertion that the parish councils in colonial Zimbabwe grew out of the CA’s structure is correct.

O’Donnell, and Dachs and Rea argue that 1962 and the committee of inquiry signaled the death knell of the CA. Both say that membership peaked around 1960 and by 1962, the CA went into permanent decline, although O’Donnell did mention that in the Salisbury and Umtali dioceses the CA experienced “a renewal” in the late 1960s but was

dead in Bulawayo and Wankie.²⁰⁰ In point of fact, CAA membership first peaked in 1958, not 1960 or 1961, with 5,300 paid members. Not surprisingly, that number declined in the face of violent opposition from the nationalist parties. Bulawayo continued to send representatives to the territorial council until 1964 and Gwelo until 1973. Although the CA was no longer a national organization in the sense that it had members participating from all five dioceses (six following the erection of the Sinoia prefecture apostolic from the northern part of the Salisbury archdiocese in 1973), what is most significant about the “renewal” in the late 1960s and early 1970s is that membership exploded in those areas—particularly in the Salisbury archdiocese—where the second *chimurenga* was becoming most intense. It would be most interesting to study whether there was a correlation between these two phenomena or if it was merely coincidental. Regardless of the answer, the issue raises a further question of the extent to which and reasons why people in times of war have recourse to religion.

Hugh O'Donnell concluded that the CA's achievements included: fostering a sense of unity through the congress, raising particular subjects and problems for discussion during the congress' lectures and question and answer sessions, and providing basic leadership training and opportunities for leadership; and that its failures included a lack of action after congresses, vague aims, poor leadership, a lack of support on the part of clergy, constantly revising its constitutions, missionaries imposing external ideas without a clear understanding of the local situation, and the inability to reconcile with parish councils.²⁰¹

While ostensibly a fairly balanced assessment of the CA's career, it is significant to note that Hugh O'Donnell is an Irish Franciscan missionary who served as a spiritual adviser to the CA. Accordingly, his preponderantly negative view and grim outlook for the future of the CA are informed by the perspective of the missionaries who were the CA's critics.

Ironically, Jesuit Fr. John Dove, the Salisbury regional council's spiritual adviser from 1964 to 1971, had a much more positive perspective on the CA and its activities. When asked whether the CA was in fact a "do-nothing organization," Dove responded that he thought that to be "an unfair criticism":

[The CA] was started for a Christian influence in village life: take marriage, for example, what if a man wanted a second wife, or if she were forced into it? . . . There was also information about agriculture: knowledge of fertilizers and cooperative farming, sharing scotch carts and tools, bulk purchases—but money was always paid to the individual. . . . It was a general movement to Christianize a village: how to handle local problems. . . . The problems and questions [they dealt with] show how they related to life every day. The CA went on and people went to the CA person. They were very effective—they weren't necessarily parading on Sundays, but they had the CA meetings at the local level. . . . People preferred spiritual topics and accepted agriculture and education. It held together in a very strange way: dealing with traditional problems in confrontation with Christianity.²⁰²

And that, perhaps, is a fitting image: of people caught in the crucible of being "traditional" Africans in very concrete circumstances in specific times confronted with and trying to integrate constantly contested understandings Christianity into their lives and the worlds around themselves. The Catholic Association may not have done monumental things that are recorded as the great deeds of great people, but the men and women who joined its ranks, attended its congresses, gave their money in support of its

projects, and supported one another in the mundane activities of quotidian village life certainly did something: and that something was a careful and successful negotiation of the complex and constantly shifting relationships in which these African Catholics found themselves with the church's hierarchy, and with the nationalist movements that placed unusual pressure on them as collaborators with the settler regime. In their own way, they pushed the clerical leadership of the church—both European and African—to recognize and address the interests of the laity. They adapted to complex structures and difficult situations, often used oppressively against them. And they learned to use those structures and situations to their own advantage, and that of their African understanding of Christianity.

In the following three chapters, the laity will drop significantly from the central focus of analysis, receiving scant mention in primary sources, or largely mentioned with reference to their collective inaction (as in the chapter on marriage) or general disregard to regulations laid down by the Jesuits (all three chapters, concerning the use of the name Mwari for God, marriage practices, and performing *kurova guva* rites). It is vital to remember, however, that it was the positive action of the lay leadership that opened the question of the *kurova guva* rites in the first place, and that the Jesuits were responding to lay practices regarding Mwari and marriage. Thus, although few lay people will be seen clearly, it was their beliefs and practices that provoked the church's hierarchy to action.

Notes

1. Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare (AAH hereafter), Box 412-1/A, anonymous note, n.d. [c. March, 1971].
2. See for example, Ian Linden, *The Catholic church and the struggle for Zimbabwe*, (London: Longman, 1980; and Janice McLaughlin, *On the Frontline: The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, (Harare: Baobab Publishing, 1995). The first *chimurenga* refers to the African rebellion against the administration of Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company in 1896-1897.
3. Leo Gallagher, *The Catholic Church in Manicaland, 1896-1996*, (Harare: Kolbe Press, 1996), 37; Hugh O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association: A Short History," unpublished Master's paper, May, 1973, available in AAH, Box 412-1/A, 2.
4. O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 2.
5. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 193.
6. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, January 10, 1934: Retreat for teachers (Jeanes teachers and two Wesleyans): including Joseph Dambasa [sic], Ambrose Majombwa [sic-Majongwe], James Kora, Fidelis Huma, Joseph Marimo and nine others.
7. O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 1-2.
8. Francis Schimlek, *Against the Stream: Life of Father Bernard Huss, C.M.M., The Social Apostle of the Bantu*, (Mariannhill Mission Press, n.d.), cited in O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 1-2.
9. O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 2.
10. JAZ, Box 23/1, Jerome O'Hea to Francis Johanny, January 21, 1932.
11. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, June 8-15, 1935.
12. *ibid.*, June 11, 1935.
13. JAZ, Box 23/1, Jerome O'Hea to Francis Ketterer, May 20, 1935.
14. AAH, Box 412/A, Francis Ketterer, S.J. to Congress Permanent Committee, September 11, 1935.
15. *ibid.*
16. AAH, Box 412/A, Ambrose Majongwe to Ketterer, October 14, 1935.
17. *ibid.*

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18. See Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*.
19. See Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
20. AAH, Box 412/A, "Precis of Congress Committee Meeting, December 9, 1935."
21. *ibid.*
22. *ibid.*; JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, "Retreat and Congress at Chishawasha," n.d.
23. "Retreat and Congress at Chishawasha."
24. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, June 7, 1936.
25. *ibid.*, June 11-14.
26. *ibid.*, June 22, 1937.
27. There is no information as to whether congresses were held—and if so how frequently— from 1938 to 1945 in the Chishawasha papers.
28. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, Chichester Circular Letter, June 12, 1946.
29. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, May 21, 1946.
30. *ibid.*, May 21-22, 1946.
31. AAH, Box 412/A, "Resolutions Passed at 1946 Catholic African Congress at Chishawasha." See Herbert Chimhundu, "Early Missionaries and the Ethnolinguistic Factor during the 'Invention of Tribalism' in Zimbabwe," *The Journal of African History*, 33/1, (1992), 87-109, and Chapter 8 on the Mwari controversy below.
32. Chichester Circular Letter, June 12, 1946.
33. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, "The Catholic African Congress, Chishawasha May, 21-22, 1946." Emphasis in original.
34. Chichester Circular Letter, June 12, 1946.
35. *ibid.*
36. *ibid.* See Chapter 7 below on the Mwari controversy.
37. AAH, Box 412/A, Circular Letter of George Binns, January 17, 1947. Interestingly, Binns noted that he was writing "by order of the Bishop."

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38. AAH, Box 412/A, Schedule of the Catholic African Congress at Monte Cassino, May 16-18, 1947.
39. AAH, Box 412/A, L. Boetkenhoff to Binns, January 23, 1947.
40. AAH, Box 412/A, F.C. Barr to Binns, January 31, 1947.
41. AAH, Box 412/A, Charles Ferguson to Binns, February 26, 1947.
42. AAH, Box 412/A, All Souls Mission Superior to Binns, January 22, 1947.
43. AAH, Box 412/A, J. Cogger to Binns, February 15, 1947.
44. AAH, Box 412/A, "Report from the Catholic Centres of Musami Mission," n.d.
45. *ibid.*
46. AAH, Box 412/A, "Report Showing How Far the Resolutions of the African Congress 1946 Have Been Implemented at St. Barbara's Mission," n.d.
47. *ibid.*
48. *ibid.*
49. AAH, Box 412/A, E. Kotski to Binns, February 23, 1947.
50. *ibid.*
51. AAH, Box 412/A, Fr. Reich, S.M.B. to Binns, February 10, 1947.
52. *ibid.*
53. *ibid.*
54. D.J. Geaney, "Catholic Action." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.?, 262-63. For more on Catholic Action see Theodore M. Hesburgh, *The Theology of Catholic Action*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1946); Gianfranco Poggi, *Catholic Action in Italy: The Sociology of a Sponsored Organization*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967); Jean-Guy Vaillancourt, *Papal Power: A Study in Vatican Control over Catholic Lay Elites*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998*, (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000).
55. Pius XI, "Discourse to Italian Catholic Young Women," March, 1927, cited in Geany. See also Pius XI, "Ubi Arcano Dei," (1922) and "Non Abbiamo Bisogno," (1931) in *The Papal Encyclicals*, Claudia Carlen, ed., (Raleigh: McGrath Publishing, 1981), Volume 3.
56. Geaney, "Catholic Action," 262.

57. *ibid.*

58. William L. Portier, "Welcome to the 'Lay Zone,'" Comments on the panel, "Challenging American Catholic Laity at Mid-century," Joint Meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association and the Canadian Catholic Historical Association, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, April, 2001. I am grateful to Dr. Portier for having shared a copy of the full text of his comments.

59. *ibid.*

60. *ibid.*

61. 1 Peter

62. AAH, Box 412/A, Francis Ketterer, S.J. to Congress Permanent Committee, September 11, 1935.

63. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, Chichester Circular Letter, June 12, 1946; AAH, Box 412/A, "The Catholic African Congress. Kutama. May 11th and 12th, 1948," 2.

64. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus*, June 22, 1937.

65. JAZ, Box 135, Kutama Diary [*Historia Domus*] 1940-1968, May 11-12, 1948.

66. AAH, Box 412/A, "The Catholic African Congress. Kutama. May 11th and 12th, 1948," 1.

67. AAH, Box 412/A, "Congress of Catholic Africans, 19th August-22nd August 1949, St. Peter's, Salisbury," 1.

68. *ibid.*, 5.

69. Minutes of the African Catholic Congress. Monte Cassino mission, August 25-26, 1951, 5.

70. *ibid.*, 9.

71. See O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 4, 11.

72. AAH, Box 412/A, "Suggested Constitution for Monte Cassino Parish African Congress of Catholic Action."

73. *ibid.*

74. *ibid.*

75. *ibid.*

76. AAH, Box 412/A, African Catholic Congress Central Committee minutes, December 8, 1951 and May 3, 1952.

77. AAH, Box 412/A, African Catholic Congress Central Committee minutes, April 24, 1953.

78. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the meeting to draft the Constitution for a Catholic African organization for all Vicariates of Southern Rhodesia, August 17-18, 1953.

79. The territorial council of the Catholic African Association decided to use the abbreviation "CAA" so as not to confuse the organization with the Central African Airways, which used the abbreviation "C.A.A." See AAH, Box 412/A, Territorial Council Minutes, September 9, 1955.

80. chairman, vice chairman, secretary, vice secretary, treasurer, and vice treasurer.

81. An apostolic delegate was the papal representative to a mission territory who functioned essentially as the Vatican's ambassador. The apostolic delegation for Southern Africa was established in South Africa in 1926. See W.E. Brown, *The History of the Catholic Church in South Africa*,; Brain and Denis, *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999).

82. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the meeting to draft the Constitution for a Catholic African organization for all Vicariates of Southern Rhodesia, August 17-18, 1953. "Better homes, better hearts, better harvests" was a motto used by Bernard Huss to describe the work of the South African Catholic African Union, and adopted by Majongwe to apply to the CAA.

83. AAH, Box 412/B, Territorial Council Executive Committee minutes, January 4, 1961.

84. *ibid.*

85. AAH, Box 412/B, Territorial Council minutes, May 3, 1961.

86. AAH, Box 412/B, Markall to Hannan, May 25, 1961.

87. AAH, Box 412/C, Minutes of the meeting of the Committee appointed by the Hierarchy to investigate the Catholic Association and its relationship to other Catholic Associations., March 27, 1962 (Inquiry Committee hereafter), 8.

88. The question of amending the aims of the CA came up again in the wake of Vatican II, but had little bearing on the actual structure or operation of the association. All other constitutional amendments were fairly minor by comparison.

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89. AAH, Box 412/C, Francis Barr, "Report on the Discussion at Bishop's House, Gwelo, 27th March, 1962"; See also Minutes of Inquiry Committee, March 27, 1962, 8, 12, 15-16.
90. AAH, Box 412-1/B, Edward N. Muchenje to Markall, May 3, 1974.
91. AAH, Box 412-1/B, Markall to Muchenje, June 11, 1974. Emphasis in the original.
92. AAH, Box 412-1/B, Muchenje to Markall, October 30, 1974.
93. AAH, Box 412-1/B, Muchenje to Mavudzi, September 24, 1974.
94. AAH, Box 412-1/B, Mavudzi to Muchenje, October 4, 1974.
95. AAH, Box 412-1/B, C. Bernard Magorimbo to Markall, April, 1975; Markall to Magorimbo, April 29, 1975.
96. AAH, Box 412/B, Salisbury CAA executive committee minutes, October, 1958.
97. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of CAA Salisbury Regional Council, December 12, 1958.
98. AAH, Box 412/C, Markall to Hannan, July 13, 1962.
99. JAZ, Box 135/4, Francis Barr, "Report of a Visit to Kutama Mission on June 27, 1960."
100. JAZ, Box 135/4, Joseph Dambaza to T.E. Corrigan, November 2, 1962. Emphasis in original.
101. JAZ, Box 100/3, 1962-1964 Annual Letters, Chishawasha Residence of St. Ignatius.
102. AAH, Box 412/C, John Dove, "A Report on Catholic Action." August, 1964.
103. JAZ, Box 104/5, "Chishawasha" report.
104. Although the report provides the names of many of the people involved, in the interest of protecting those people and their relatives and/or associates, I have decided not to use their names, especially given the political violence occurring at the time of the writing of this dissertation.
105. JAZ, Box 104/5, "Chishawasha" report. 1-2.
106. *ibid.*, 3.
107. *ibid.*, 8.
108. See Figure 6.

109. See Figure 6.

110. See Inquiry committee minutes.

111. O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 5. Emphasis in original. The *dare* was a meeting of village elders that met to resolve disputes during the pre-colonial era and served as a local court during the colonial period. It consisted entirely of men. See Michael F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 127.

112. AAH, Box 412/A, "The Catholic African Congress. Kutama. May 11th and 12th, 1948," 2-3.

113. *ibid.*, 3.

114. *ibid.*, 4.

115. AAH, Box 412/A, "Congress of Catholic Africans, 19th August-22nd August 1949, St. Peter's, Salisbury," 2, 4.

116. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee, African Catholic Congress," December 20, 1952.

117. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Central Committee, African Catholic Congress," April 24, 1953.

118. *ibid.*

119. See, e.g., timetable for the 1956 Congress at St. Michael's Mission, Mhondoro in AAH, Box 412/A.

120. AAH, Box 412/A, "Congress of Catholic Africans, 19th August-22nd August 1949, St. Peter's, Salisbury," 4.

121. *ibid.*, 5.

122. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Central Committee, Catholic African Association [CAA hereafter], Formerly called 'African Catholic Congress [sic]," December 19, 1953.

123. *ibid.*

124. See, e.g., CAA Salisbury Regional Council minutes, December 12, 1958.

125. AAH, Box 412/A, CAA Report on Leadership Courses for Branch Officials, July, 1956.

126. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of 15th Meeting of Salisbury Regional Council CAA, May 4, 1957. This resolution was passed.

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127. AAH, Box 412/A, "The Catholic African Congress. Kutama. May 11th and 12th, 1948," 4.
128. *ibid.*, 5.
129. *ibid.*, 5.
130. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the Congress at Monte Cassino Mission, August 25-26, 1951, 12.
131. AAH, Box 412/A, Hannan to Chichester, April 30, 1951.
132. See gospel passage re James and John asking to sit at Jesus' right in the Kingdom of God.
133. AAH, Box 412/A, Catholic African Association Minutes of the Meeting to Draft the Constitution, August 17-18, 1953, Articles 46, 47, 50, 57, 58.
134. CAA Constitution, pp.8-38.
135. *ibid.*, 13.
136. *ibid.*, 13-15.
137. *ibid.*, 15-16.
138. AAH, Box 412/A, Report of the Training Team, Leadership Course, May 4-6, 1955.
139. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the Spiritual Advisers meeting, September 6, 1955.
140. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the Territorial Council, September 9, 1955.
141. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the CAA Salisbury Regional Council, September 10, 1955.
142. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the CAA Salisbury Regional Council, December 19, 1953.
143. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the African Catholic Congress central committee, December 20, 1952.
144. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of the Territorial Council, May 7, 1957; Markall to Peter Simbisai, May 7, 1957.
145. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of the Salisbury Regional Council, October 27, 1956; AAH, Box 412-1/A, CAA Salisbury Regional Council, December 22, 1972.

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146. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the African Catholic Congress Central Committee, December 8, 1951.
147. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the Salisbury Regional Council, September 10, 1955; D.L. Samakomva to Chichester, September 17, 1955; Chichester to Samakomva, September 26, 1955.
148. AAH, Box 412/A, Hannan to Chichester, October 13, 1955.
149. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of CAA Salisbury Regional Council, May 6, 1955; D.L. Samakomva to Chichester, May 20, 1955.
150. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of the CAA Salisbury Regional Council, April 26, 1958.
151. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of the CAA Salisbury Regional Council, December 12, 1958.
152. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the CAA Salisbury Regional Council, December 19, 1953.
153. AAH, Box 412/B, Rev. Alois Nyanhete to Markall, November 14, 1957; Box 412-1/A, Markall's Secretary to Rev. Patrick Chakaipa, January 18, 1968; Box 412-1/B, Markall to Rev. E[manuel] J. Mavudzi, July 19, 1974.
154. For more on the increasingly radical African Christian perspective in *Moto* magazine, see Nicholas M. Creary, "Inculturation of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, 1958-1977," *The Historian*, 61/4 (Summer, 1999), 765-81.
155. Frs. Simon Turo and Isidore Chikore were ordained at Chishawasha in October, 1947. See previous chapter.
156. AAH, Box 412/A, Minutes of the African Catholic Congress; CAA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, January 10, 1955.
157. AAH, Box 412/B, Nyanhete to Markall, November 14, 1957.
158. AAH, Box 412/B, Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, April 26, 1958; Territorial Council Minutes, May 12, 1959; Box 412/C, CA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, April 29, 1967; Box 412-1/A, Minutes of the 1968 CA congress.
159. Only a minority of Catholic parents complied with the decree of the American bishops at the third plenary council of Baltimore in 1884 that mandated that all Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools.
160. AAH, Box 412/A, African Catholic Congress Central Committee Minutes, April 24, 1953; CAA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, December 19, 1953.

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161. AAH, Box 412/A, CAA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, May 7, 1954. Ultimately, they didn't raise the subscription fee, rather they voted for a one shilling per capita fee from each mission.
162. AAH, Box 412/A, African Catholic Congress Central Committee Minutes, December 20, 1952.
163. AAH, Box 412/A, African Catholic Congress Central Committee Minutes, April 24, 1953.
164. AAH, Box 412/A, CAA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, May 6, 1955; D.L Samakomva to Chichester, May 20, 1955.
165. AAH, Box 412/A, CAA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes, September 10, 1955; D.L Samakomva to Chichester, September 17, 1955; Chichester to Samakomva, September 26, 1955.
166. AAH, Box 412/B, CAA Territorial Council minutes, April 29, 1958.
167. AAH, Box 412/B, CAA Territorial Council minutes, May 12, 1959.
168. See, e.g., AAH, Box 412/C, CA Salisbury Regional Council Minutes April 2 and December 17, 1966.
169. AAH, Box 412/C, Territorial Council Minutes, April 25, 1962.
170. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of the CA Territorial Council, May 3, 1961.
171. AAH, Box 412/B, Archbishop Francis Markall to Michael Hannan, May 25, 1961.
172. See Chapter 6 below.
173. AAH, Box 412-1/A, Sean Dunne, O.Carm. To The Most Reverend Ordinaries, October 12, 1970.
174. AAH, Box 412-1/A, Edward Muchenje to Markall, April 27, 1970; Sean Dunne, O.Carm. To The Most Reverend Ordinaries, October 12, 1970.
175. AAH, Box 412-1/A, Report of Ad Hoc Committee, CA territorial council, December 5, 1971; Minutes of CA territorial council, May 9, 1972; Minutes of the CA Salisbury Regional Council, December 14, 1973.
176. AAH, Box 412-1/A, Dunne to Markall, June 11, 1969.
177. *ibid.*
178. AAH, Box 412-1/A, Edward Muchenje to Markall, April 27, 1970.

179. See Figure 1.

180. AAH, Box 412/A, "Congress of Catholic Africans, 19th August-22nd August 1949, St. Peter's, Salisbury," 7-8. In 1949, there were vicariates apostolic erected in Salisbury and Bulawayo, and a prefecture apostolic in Fort Victoria (Masvingo).

181. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the First Meeting of the Central Committee of the African Catholic Congress," December 8, 1951.

182. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Central Committee of the African Catholic Congress," May 3, 1952.

183. *ibid.*

184. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the 9th Central Committee Meeting of the Catholic African Association," May 6, 1955.

185. AAH, Box 412/B, "The 6th Meeting of the Territorial Council of the Catholic African Association," May 3, 1961; Markall to Hannan, May 25, 1961.

186. Dachs and Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 201. Chipianiso is ChiShona for "cross."

187. AAH, Box 412/A, "The Catholic African Congress. Kutama. May 11th and 12th, 1948," 2.

188. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Central Committee of the African Catholic Congress," May 3, 1952.

189. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Central Committee, African Catholic Congress," April 24, 1953.

190. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Regional Spiritual Advisers," September 6, 1955.

191. *ibid.*

192. AAH, Box 412/A, "Minutes of the First Meeting of the Territorial Council," September 9, 1955.

193. AAH, Box 412/B, "Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Territorial Council," April 29, 1958.

194. AAH, Box 412/B, "Minutes of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the CAA Regional Council, Salisbury Archdiocese," October 2, 1959.

195. AAH, Box 412/B, "Minutes of the 20th Meeting of the CAA Regional Council, Salisbury Archdiocese," December 12, 1959.

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196. AAH, Box 412/B, Minutes of the Meeting of the Territorial Council, May 3, 1961.
197. AAH, Box 412/C, CA Territorial Council minutes, May 1, 1963; Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, 201.
198. For more on the specific contents and effectiveness of *Moto*, see Nicholas M. Creary, "Inculturation of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, 1958-1977," *The Historian*, 61/4 (Summer, 1999), 765-81.
199. Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 194.
200. O'Donnell, "The Catholic Association," 6-7.
201. *ibid.*, 8-10.
202. Conversation with John Dove, S.J., Silveira House, Chishawasha, May 22, 2000.

Figure 6: The Catholic Association, 1934-1974

All data were taken from minutes and reports of the various councils and meetings of the:

Catholic African Congress (1934-1949)

African Catholic Congress (1951-1953)

Catholic African Association (1953-1961)

Catholic Association (1961-1974)

found in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare and the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe

Byo=Bulawayo

Gwo=Gwelo

Mar=Marandellas (Marondera)

Sby=Salisbury (Harare)

Sin=Sinoia (Chinoyi)

Wan=Wankie (Hwange)

Umt=Umtali (Mutare)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Congress Venue</u>	<u>Congress Participants</u>
1934	Sby	-----	Chishawasha	14
1935	Sby	-----	Chishawasha	70
1936	Sby	-----	Chishawasha	118
1937	Sby	-----	Driefontein	NA
1946	Sby	-----	Chishawasha	c.250
1947	Sby	-----	Monte Cassino	>100
1948	Sby	-----	Kutama	c.100
1949	Sby	-----	St. Peter's Harare	1250
1951	Sby	-----	Monte Cassino	1000
1952	Sby	788 ¹	Chishawasha	1400
1953	Sby	NA	Triashill	NA
1954	Sby	1106 ²	Musami	NA
1955	Sby	634 ³	No Congress due to poor harvests	
	Byo	<u>589</u>	NA	NA
	<i>Total:</i>	1223 ⁴		
1956	Sby	1615	Mhondoro	784/>2000 ⁵
	Gwo	1804		
	Umt	<956		
	Wan	<113		
	Byo	<u>NA</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	c.4450		
1957	Sby	2616	All Souls. Mtoko	NA ("Well attended")
	Gwo	864		
	Umt	956		
	Wan	113		
	Byo	<u>NA</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	4488		
1958	Sby	2616	Chishawasha	1,420
	Gwo	1453 ⁶		
	Umt	793	NA	1.800
	Wan	180 ⁷		
	Byo	<u>259</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	5301		

<u>Year</u>	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Congress Venue</u>	<u>Congress Participants</u>
1959	Sby	2774	Musami	1304
	Gwo	1377	Gokomere	NA
	Umt	613	Triashill	“Poorly attended”
	Wan	NA		
	Byo	<u>NA</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	4764		
1960	Sby	2626	Wedza	2,000
	Gwo	1108		
	Umt	921	St. Kilian’s	2,200
	Wan	109		
	Byo	<u>NA</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	4764		
1961	Sby	1150	NA	NA (No report/ delegate at TC)
	Gwo	1003		
	Umt	365 ⁸		
	Wan	NA		
	Byo	<u>NA</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	2518		
1962	Sby	799	Makumbi	NA (No report/ delegate at TC)
	Gwo	817 ⁹	Gokomere/Zimutu	2500 ¹⁰
	Umt	357 ¹¹	St. Therese	NA
	Wan	NA (Inquired if Regional Council still functioning)		
	Byo	<u>NA</u> (Byo seeks to combine CA w/other groups; CA as “head organization”)		
	<i>Total:</i>	1973		
1963	Sby	1197	Chishawasha	No congress. leadership retreat
	Umt	<u>187</u> ¹²	NA	300
	<i>Total:</i>	1384		
1964	Sby	1057 ¹³	Kutama	NA
	Gwo	735		
	Umt	347	St. Joseph’s Umtali	1200
	Wan	NA		
	Byo	<u>528</u> ¹⁴		
	<i>Total:</i>	2667		
1965	Sby	986	Mhondoro No Congress due to finances. leadership retreat	

<u>Year</u>	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Congress Venue</u>	<u>Congress Participants</u>
1966	Sby	1008	No congress due to petrol rationing, political situation, and finances; local congresses instead	
1967	Sby	2022	Mt.St.Mary's Wedza	NA
1968	Sby	1781	St. Peter's Harare	>1000
1969	Sby	3008	Musami	NA; 16 local congresses
1970	Sby	3495	Enkeldoorn	c.2000; 18 local congresses
1971	Sby	3028	Chishawasha	>4000; 16 local congresses
	Gwo	51		
	Umt	<u>278</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	3357		
1972	Sby	2500	Kutama	2000; 11 local congresses
	Byo	declared "dead"		
1973	Sby	1405	Chishawasha Sem.	>3000
	Gwo	52 declared "dead"		
	Umt	<u>278</u>		
	<i>Total:</i>	1735		
1974	Sby	2800	Makumbi	>3000
	Umt	366	Triashill	1500
	Mar	5000	Marandellas	2000
	Sin	<u>NA</u>	Sinoia	NA
	<i>Total:</i>	8166		

Notes

1. Does not include Monte Cassino, “perhaps the most advanced of the local congresses.”
2. 6 of 10 mission councils reported numbers.
3. Members paid through September, 1955.
4. 1955 statistics for Catholic population: Sby: 36,000; Byo: 14,000; Gwo: 41,000; Umt: 16,000; Wan: 1,000; Total Catholic population: 108,000. Thus, even allowing for twice the number reported, CAA membership only comprised 1-2% of African Catholics in Southern Rhodesia.
5. 784=number of meal tickets sold; >2000=number of meals Simon Taoneyi served.
6. “Many more people attend the meetings but don’t pay their membership.”
7. 180 members, only 120 paid membership fees.
8. 3 of 7 mission councils reported numbers.
9. “Very many more attended without paying.”
10. Total from two congresses. “Generally more women than men at meetings.”
11. 4 of 7 mission councils reported numbers, one mission council presumed defunct.
12. Only 2 active mission councils in diocese.
13. Numbers decline due to “intimidation of the faithful.”
14. 6 of 7 mission councils reported numbers.

Chapter 7: Until Death do Us Part?: African Marriage Practices and the Catholic Church, c.1890-1979

Francesca Misodzi rejects the claim of Vale Mupunga though she is the mother of his child. She declares that in marrying again, she will observe the rites of the Faith; the Catholic church. She desired her children to remain at Chishawasha when requested to express her opinion on their being removed to Hartley. It is the known wish of her late husband, Henry Muronda, that she and her five children should remain [in] a position where they can be instructed in their faith. He gave the eldest daughter over to the care of the [Dominican] Sisters for her protection. The children are: Clara Chitima, born 28th November, 1903; One, a boy died; Francis Chirenda, school boy; Rosa Nyorerergwa; Joseph Musiwa; one illegitimate child by Vale Mupunga.¹

For most of the colonial period, the hierarchy of the Catholic church in Southern Rhodesia—presuming the superiority of Western Christian marriage—made no significant efforts to adapt or integrate African and Western Christian marriage practices, and was more concerned with the regularization of canonically invalid unions of African Catholics by various means available within canon law. African Catholics for their part generally disregarded the Church's canonical requirements, marrying according to "customary law." By 1967, approximately 80 percent of African Catholics were not marrying in the Catholic church according to canonical form. This situation pushed the bishops to form two commissions to study the problem and recommend possible solutions. The commissions recommended, against the opinion of Jesuit canonists, that the bishops recognize African customary unions as the basis for a canonical marriage within the church, which they accepted. The recommendation was largely ineffective, thus, in 1975, the bishops went so far as to petition Rome for permission to allow elder lay Catholics to preside at Catholic weddings as a means to integrate African and church practices. Although they apparently did not receive authorization to do so, the request

itself, as well as the marriage commissions' recommendation to recognize African customary unions, is indicative of a significant change in perspective on the part of the church's leadership with regard to understanding African marriage practices, and an unprecedented openness to experimentation to incorporate African marriage processes formally into Church structures.

At the advent of the colonial period, sexual and marital relations between African men and women derived meaning and function within a broader social context. Marriage was not merely the union of two individuals, it was the joining of two families. During this period there was no single wedding ritual as such which signaled the beginning of a marriage. Rather, marriage entailed a process of negotiation between the families, and a man and woman were considered married either when the first part of the bride price (*lobola*) was paid to the woman's family in cattle or crops, or when the woman was accompanied to her husband's homestead (*kuperekedzwa*), or when the woman bore her first child.² An intermediary engaged by the prospective husband's family, or *munyai*, usually arranged preliminary negotiations between the families, including the *vhuramuromo*, or payment to the woman's father, or *tezvara* [father-in-law], to encourage him to specify the lobola price.³ Elopement, however, was a common means to begin the negotiation process, usually having the tacit knowledge and approval of the woman's paternal aunt, or *tete*.⁴

Following the 1896-97 chimurenga, and prior to the rapid monetization of the colonial African economy, matrilocal service marriages in which the prospective husband, or *mukuwasha* [son-in-law], agreed to work for the *tezvara* for a number of

years rather than pay lobola became more common.⁵ By the 1920's, as more young African men entered the colonial economy as laborers in towns or mines *vadzitezvara* began to require lobola payments in cash, and increasingly “in a single transaction, or at least a significantly large first payment. This was a wholly different kind of transaction from the long-term transfer of goods which had characterized the marriage alliances of the 1890s, involving a lifetime of exchange and obligation linking families across generations.”⁶ It was also during this period that *vadzitezvara* began to exact *rutsambo*, or a large initial cash payment payable by the suitor himself rather than his family, first as protection against the bad faith of African migrant workers but subsequently as a means of income. Payment of cattle continued to be associated with the birth of children.⁷

In an effort to prevent another rebellion similar to the *chimurenga*, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and settler administrations adopted a policy of limited non-interference with African culture during the colonial period. In effect, this entailed members of the natives affairs department consulting with wealthy and influential African men as to what constituted legitimate African “tradition” or “custom,” and enacting it into law. The net result of these consultations was the development of African “customary law,” or the promotion and protection of the interests of wealthy African men so long as those interests did not conflict with the interests of BSAC or, from 1923, the settler administration.⁸ The 1898 order in council provided that in civil cases between Africans the courts “shall be guided by native law so far as that law is not repugnant to natural justice or morality.”⁹ Thus, for example, marriage legislation allowed the continuation of lobola and polygyny, but banned child pledging and forced marriages.

The Southern Rhodesian colonial authorities passed several pieces of legislation designed to regulate African marriages. The 1901 Native Marriage Ordinance (NMO) allowed for polygynous marriages, required the payment of lobola within 12 months of the date of marriage (to prevent pledging of young girls), limited lobola to four head of cattle (or five for the daughter of a chief) or the cash equivalent, and required the registration of the marriage at a native commissioner's office to ensure that the woman had given her consent (to prevent forced marriages) and recording of the lobola payment to prevent excessive payments or non-payment. Significantly, Christian marriages were exempt from the provisions of the 1901 NMO.¹⁰ The 1901 ordinance was based on an "extremely limited understanding of African marriage processes," and aimed more at preventing than encouraging marriages, for example, by not recognizing elopement marriages.¹¹

The 1901 NMO presumed that marriage was a discrete event that required an official sanction. This western understanding of marriage did not account for African beliefs and practices that marriage alliances could be contracted between the families involved in the absence of any official sanction, or without the payment of lobola (e.g., in service marriages).¹² In attempting to address these issues, the 1905 Native Marriage Ordinance had the unintended effect of encouraging "technical concubinage," or unions that Africans saw as marriages but according to European norms were illegal because they weren't registered at an NC's office.¹³ Interestingly, Christian marriages also encouraged technical concubinage because African Christian men were forbidden to contract second marriages under the penalty of bigamy, and thus could not register any

marriages contracted according to African practice, which resulted in rendering such wives concubines according to European law.¹⁴ Thus, in 1912, the colonial authorities passed another marriage ordinance which outlawed child pledging, mandated the registration of all African marriages regardless of whether or not lobola was paid, removed the limit on the amount of lobola , and allowed African men who married according to Christian rites to contract polygynous marriages according to African practices. Such marriages would be registered and recognized according to civil law only.¹⁵ According to Jeater, these laws did not “fundamentally alter [African] marriage practices,” as Africans frequently chose to ignore the requirements to register their marriages.¹⁶

Five years later, the BSAC administration passed yet another marriage ordinance. The 1917 NMO was enacted in large part as a result of the disputes between the administration and Christian missionaries. The latter opposed the continuance of polygyny, and were particularly unhappy with the provisions of the 1912 NMO that allowed African Christians to contract polygynous marriages according to African practices. Native commissioners were unhappy with missionaries who frequently refused to obtain a *tezvara*’s consent prior to performing Christian marriages, which technically was not required by law (though was required according to African practice). Christian marriages were subject only to English common law, thus if an African woman was 21 years old she didn’t require her parents’ consent to marry.¹⁷ The administration was also concerned that African men who contracted Christian marriages frequently didn’t register non-Christian polygynous marriages, and as the courts did not recognize unregistered

marriages the women technically became concubines before the law and the man in questions could not be held liable for bigamy.¹⁸ The 1917 NMO, thus considered any unregistered marriage as invalid (as per the 1901 NMO a woman had to give her consent to marriage at an NC's office in order to register a marriage); outlawed pledging and forced marriage (previously a forced marriage was only considered as the grounds for disallowing a marriage); and required that a woman's parent or guardian give his consent before the marriage occurred.¹⁹ According to Schmidt, the 1917 NMO allowed a woman to appeal her guardian's refusal of consent if she thought he had done so unreasonably, but she was only allowed to marry without his consent provided that the territorial administrator gave his consent: "In other words, her tutelage was transferred from an African guardian, deemed incompetent by the state, to a substitute European patriarch."²⁰ Jeater argued that the 1917 NMO effectively established an African "customary" marriage: by requiring that registration occur after the payment of lobola and before consummation it enabled native commissioners to distinguish between lawful marriages and informal sexual unions; by expanding the registration requirements it ensured a woman's consent.²¹ Significantly, the 1917 NMO's definition of African custom effectively invalidated elopement as a means to contracting a lawful marriage.²² As with previous marriage legislation, however, the 1917 NMO was largely ineffective: Schmidt noted that into the 1930s child pledging was "prevalent" and forced marriages were still "widely practiced."²³ According to Jeater, several NC's complained that the legislation had effectively criminalized over half of the African population of Southern Rhodesia.²⁴

In 1929, the Rhodesian settler government further amended the marriage law. The 1929 NMO maintained the criminal offense for not registering marriages, but would no longer invalidate them. Additionally, African men married by Christian rites were legally obliged to remain monogamous regardless of whether or not they registered additional marriages.²⁵

In an effort to curb increasing amounts of lobola required by vadzitezvara, the 1951 African Marriages Act limited the amount of lobola to £20.²⁶ More significantly, however, it required a couple to apply in person for a certificate from a district commissioner or district officer stating that the tezvara did not object to the marriage.²⁷ In 1962, the Southern Rhodesian parliament repealed the £20 limit on lobola.²⁸

The 1964 African Marriages Act appointed a registrar of marriages to oversee the registration of all African marriages within the colony; required the written consent the parent or guardian of any person under 21 years of age wishing to be married and forbade the marriage of African boys under 18 and African girls under 16; removed the ban on a person marrying the brother or sister of a spouse from whom s/he had been divorced while the spouse was alive; and required a couple to obtain an enabling certificate to marry according to Christian rites.²⁹ The legislature consulted the Catholic bishops during the formulation of the 1964 African Marriage act, and apparently deferred to them “on a number of points.”³⁰ Archbishop Markall noted that although the bishops disagreed with several parts of the legislation, on the whole “they feel that the new Act is as well-conceived and effective a piece of legislation as could have been hoped for in this important matter.”³¹ One can find an example of the evident consultation with the

Catholic bishops and the cause for their pleasure with the new marriage law in the section delineating the requirements for the publication of marriage banns. The law stipulated that a couple could publish or verbally announce the wedding banns at a worship service on three Sundays prior to the wedding date (not necessarily on successive Sundays), or publish a notice of intent to marry fifteen days prior to the wedding date, or obtain a marriage license from a district commissioner.³² According to the regulations that accompanied the promulgation of the marriage act, the couple had to pay fees of two shillings and six pence or five pounds for the notice of intention to marry or marriage license respectively.³³ There were no fees required for the publication of wedding banns, which was the method prescribed for Catholics according to canon law.

The Catholic church's understanding of marriage is that it is a permanent, indissoluble, sacramental union between a man and a woman instituted by God in the person of Jesus Christ.³⁴ According to Catholic doctrine, divorce is not a possibility, although an ecclesiastical court may issue a decree of nullity, or an annulment, if it determines that the grounds for a given marriage were defective, or invalid.

The regulations concerning the validity and licitness for marriage within the Catholic church are found within its canon law.³⁵ Although the first collection of the *corpus iuris canonici* dates to 1190, the Church did not promulgate a single, unified code of canon law for the entire church throughout the world until 1917. In 1963, Pope John XXIII established a commission to revise the code in light of the changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council.³⁶ The revised code was promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983.

With specific regard to the Church's marriage legislation, as early as 1563, the Council of Trent in its twenty fourth session issued the decree, "Tametsi" which required a man and women to publish wedding banns publicly and to marry in the presence of a priest and at least two witnesses for a valid marriage within the church.³⁷ For a variety of reasons, "Tametsi" was not universally promulgated throughout the Church, and so Pope Pius X promulgated the decree "Ne Temere" in 1907, which reiterated the canonically valid form of marriage found in "Tamesti," and the provisions of "Ne Temere" were subsequently incorporated into the 1917 code.³⁸ Canon 1098 of the 1917 code, however, provided for two exceptions to the canonical form: marriage could be contracted licitly and validly in the presence of two witnesses only (i.e., without the presence of a priest) in danger of death, or if a couple could not go to a priest "without great inconvenience" (*sine gravi incommodo*).³⁹

As early as the third century, the Catholic church opposed the marriage of a Catholic to a "schismatic or heretic" (i.e., non-Catholic) and considered a union between a Catholic and a non-Christian as canonically invalid (i.e., the bond of matrimony does not exist) and as an impediment to valid canonical marriage within the Church (a diriment impediment). Marriage between a Catholic and baptized, non-Catholic Christian was considered canonically valid (i.e., the bond of marriage exists) but illicit (an impedient impediment), or invalid and illicit without a valid dispensation.⁴⁰

The documentary evidence from the Jesuit archives and the Harare archdiocesan archives generally supports Schmidt's and Jeater's arguments, though it also raises issues that have bearing on the Church's efforts—or lack thereof—to adapt its marriage

practices to those of its African constituents. According to Schmidt, Jesuit and Wesleyan Methodist missionaries did not allow African women the use of “the custom of elopement, which would have entailed sexual relations before a church wedding.”⁴¹ While the Jesuits at Chishawasha may not have allowed resident Christians to elope, they apparently recognized elopement as an accepted VaShona marriage practice, and as a preliminary basis for contracting Christian marriage. In 1905, Jesuit Emil Schmitz expressed a view commonly held among his confreres that eloping

is the only *native proof* that a girl wants a boy. As long as this is not done, there is no real proof of her love or will in the eyes of the natives. This custom exists all over the country. In the past, when complications were likely to follow—as the result of running away, we always sent the boy to the N.C., and Capt. Nesbitt after questioning the girl, always allowed her to stay at Chishawasha for six months to see if she was fit for a Christian marriage. I may mention here, that “Christian marriage” is an important step for both parties concerned since it means “union for life with one wife.” Therefore, we think the girl should get a chance of at least six months instruction before marrying. . . . May I add that for Christian marriages, we cannot possibly follow the routine followed for Pagans. And this Capt. Nesbitt understood and accordingly helped as far as he could to be instructed and made fit for Christian marriage once a girl had shown proof of her wish by running away from home. This I should say is quite a natural view to take for a civilising Christian government.⁴²

This passage from Schmitz’s letter is significant as well for showing the rather cordial and informal arrangement that the Jesuits at Chishawasha had with the native commissioner for Goromonzi district and the implicit assumption of the superiority of Christian marriage to that of African marriage.

Schmidt noted that “[w]hile the state appreciated missionary values, it resented their interference in state affairs,” including the adjudication of non-Christian marriage cases.⁴³ In one such case, Jesuit Edward Biehler referred the case of Chief Usiku’s son,

Chinyani, to fellow Jesuit Charles Bert rather than a native commissioner. Evidently the child of Chinyani and his second wife, Mushonga, died, and about a month later Mushonga's mother, Pabiri (variously spelled Vabiri) took Mushonga back to her kraal in Mazoe district even though Chinyani had paid five head of cattle in lobola. According to Usiku, Pabiri had threatened to poison Chinyani "if he came to her kraal to fetch his wife." Biehler thus advised Bert that

Osiku [sic] is afraid of Nesbitt [NC Goromonzi] sending Chinyani to fetch the woman. If so, Osiku says Chinyani will be poisoned and killed. It will be good to let Capt. Nesbitt know this, since the old Vabiri is [a] dangerous woman. . . . Therefore, it would be necessary in order to settle the case, to call for the [tezvara], Kudjgachete (in Shopo's kraal, Mazoe district), the wife of Chinyani, Mushonga, and the little girl Maria Mwera (in Mangewe's kraal also), and the baby Sheniwo on Mushonga's back. Of course Capt. Nesbitt would get these people through Mr. Kenny, NC of Mazoe. The old Vabiri deserves a good punishment.⁴⁴

Given the apparently cordial relations between the Jesuits at Chishawasha and their local NC at Goromonzi, it is probable that Captain Nesbitt would have appreciated Biehler and Bert's involvement, though officials at the Native department headquarters in Salisbury, such as W.S. Taberer and J.A. Halliday, would have perceived such involvement as meddling.

On two separate occasions Charles Bert had reason to inquire as to the status of African Christian widows.⁴⁵ Pre-colonial and early colonial VaShona marriage practices provided for the inheritance of a widow by another man in her deceased husband's family.⁴⁶ Church teaching dating to the Council of Trent (and subsequently according to the 1917 code of canon law) simply stated that although "chaste widowhood is more honorable," second marriages were permissible so long as the first marriage bond was

proven dissolved and that there were no impediments to a valid marriage.⁴⁷ In one instance Chief Native Commissioner W.S. Taberer informed Bert that a Christian widow could not be forced to become “the property [sic] and wife of a pagan against her will,” because even though an inherited wife didn’t necessarily have the right to exercise her free will as a woman who married for the first time, “the absolute forcing of any woman to cohabit with a man against her will, whether she be pagan or Christian, is repugnant to natural justice and morality, and any custom enforcing such a submission is insupportable in our law.” Further, such a woman was not liable to taxation unless she became the second wife of a man “with her consent.”⁴⁸ In the second instance, NC Nesbitt advised Bert that “native law” required the payment of lobola to a Christian widow’s father or guardian just as “for a woman on the occasion of her first marriage,” and that the widow’s parent or guardian would be liable to the decedent’s next-of-kin if he demanded the return of the original lobola.⁴⁹

These cases clearly demonstrate examples of the manufacture of African “customary law”: African Christian women expressed concern about their status upon the death of their (presumably) Christian husbands and caused Fr. Bert to make the appropriate inquiries of native department officials. Bert’s desire to protect his African Christian women charges made Taberer invoke and interpret the 1898 order in council concerning “repugnance to natural justice and morality,” and likewise Nesbitt to impose Western logic on a previously fluid African social practice. Presumably Bert would have reiterated the Church’s teaching concerning the indissolubility of Catholic marriage as

well as its monogamous and sacramental nature to the widows and their intended husbands prior to issuing wedding banns and presiding at the marriage ceremonies.

Given the foregoing discussion of the status of African Christian widows, it appears logical that Jesuit John Apel would have received an affirmative reply to the following case:

A Native Christian widow wants to be married to a Native Christian widower, who is the brother of her former husband. Kindly inform me if the law allows the marriage. In this case the union is very desirable, as both have small children.⁵⁰

This case can clearly be considered an early African effort to inculturate, or adapt, church practices to local African practices: As Apel described the situation, the African couple took the initiative to seek to marry according to the rites of the Church, but significantly they applied ecclesiastical practice to a distinctly African way of proceeding, the inheritance of a widow by a man in her late husband's family. Although it is questionable to what degree the principles of a specific case could have been generalized into church policy or practice, the absence of discussion of the possibility in the documentary records of Chishawasha mission indicate another failed opportunity for the Jesuits to have mitigated what they considered a pernicious practice among their African residents, and to have brought a more lasting Christian influence to bear on them.

The Jesuits at Chishawasha seem to have taken careful note of the frequent changes in marriage legislation and to have carefully explained the contents of the various native marriage ordinances.⁵¹ In 1913, following the passage of the 1912 Native Marriage Ordinance, Zambezi Mission superior, Richard Sykes sent a circular letter to the priests of the mission summarizing the main provisions of the legislation. Noting that

even those African men who married according to Christian rites could legally contract subsequent polygamous marriages according to “native custom” and have them registered and recognized by the BSAC administration, Sykes ordered that

the following directions should be carefully observed. Although the natural marriage of Pagans becomes a Christian marriage on the reception of Baptism by the parties, it will be advisable and even necessary, in order to protect as far as possible neophytes against themselves and to do away with the temptations of polygamy, to impart full solemnity to their Christian marriage by observing the customary celebrations, including publication of banns and regular marriage rites, so as publicly to stamp the previous native marriage with the full celebration of a Christian sacrament [and thus] render the parties liable to criminal proceedings for bigamy should they proceed to another attempted marriage. Consequently the parties should not merely renew their consent and receive an informal blessing when they become Christians but the recognised marriage ceremony of the Ritual should be performed, and the now Christian marriage entered in the Government register and the legal certificate forwarded to the proper quarters. . . . The proper thing, that *long before the marriage*, in Christian instruction, this effects [sic] of the Christian marriage should be made clear to the catechumen, that it may even prevent him from joining the Christian religion if he does not feel able to fulfill the conditions.⁵²

In this passage, Sykes described what canon lawyers call “convalidation,” or the removal of an impediment to valid marriage by the conversion of the non-Catholic partner followed by the public renewal of their marriage consent before a priest and at least two witnesses in “the recognised marriage ceremony of the Ritual.” The Jesuit prefect apostolic also expressed views that were common for missionaries of his time: the need to protect recent Christian converts from themselves and the dangers of polygamy—even to the point of discouraging a potential convert from joining the Church, and the necessity of registering Christian marriages according to civil law.

That the Jesuits more than likely taught the Christians in their charge the contents of the various civil marriage laws as well as the laws of the Catholic church is evident by the following case. In May 1920, John Apel wrote to the NC Mrewa district informing him that the woman Mambidzeni had married Muvirimi in the district office.

They had two children, one is dead and the other has been taken by Muvirimi.

Muvirimi received baptism, after which he dismissed his wife, advancing the plea that she was a heathen. Still, the woman has ever since been anxious to stay with him because she loved him. In fact, she has gone to Fr. Burbridge at [St. Peter's Church] Salisbury and has come to me here with the idea and in the hope that we could induce Joseph Muvirimi to take her back. Our efforts have been unsuccessful. Joseph even contemplates contracting another marriage with a girl called Katarina Kupara, living at Brown's Farm, Salisbury.

According to church law, Muvirimi ought to take back Mambidzeni as his wife, seeing that she wants to live with him in peace.

May I suggest that you call Muvirimi and arrange matters between the two.⁵³

Clearly, Muvirimi was familiar with the dictates of the civil law that allowed him to marry and divorce, and even to contract multiple marriages so long as he didn't marry his junior wives according to Christian rites. But more significantly, he was also evidently aware of the church's teaching noted by Sykes above that when two non-Christians become Catholic the church recognized the canonical validity of their marriage, and that if a non-Catholic married to another non-Catholic converted, the neophyte Catholic's marriage to the non-Christian was null and void in the eyes of the church. Thus, according to the 1917 Code of Canon Law, presuming that there were no other impediments, Joseph Muvirimi could have licitly and validly married Katarina Kupara according to Catholic rites and raised his child by Mambidzeni (whose custody he could claim according to VaShona marriage practice by virtue of his having paid lobola, a

requisite for the civil registration of an African marriage according to the 1912 marriage ordinance) within the church. Strictly speaking, Apel's claim that "[a]ccording to church law, Muvirimi ought to take back Mambidzeni as his wife" contradicted Canon 1070 of the 1917 code, his good will toward Mambidzeni notwithstanding.⁵⁴ This, then, is a rare instance in which a Jesuit supported the case of an unbaptized, "pagan," African woman against the dictates of Catholic canon law.

The marriage cases found in the records of St. Peter's parish in the archives of the archdiocese of Harare⁵⁵ clearly show the institutional church's primary concern with canonically regularizing African Catholics' marriages, rather than finding ways to adapt church practices to African practices. They also show the faith of African Catholics, and their desire to put their marriages right in the eyes of the church.

In one case, Agnes, a Catholic, married Felix, a Methodist "from outstanding Methodist parents" in 1957. According to the African diocesan priest promoting their case, from the time of their marriage, Agnes

has been living with him peacefully. All her children, Campion, Felix, Regis, Godfrey, and Stephen are baptised and they received the sacraments. She goes to church herself [with] the children and [Felix] sometimes takes them there. I and some of his friends have been encouraging him to become a Catholic. [He replied] "I shall be the only one from my family becoming a Catholic and to me it means abandoning my family. But I am very sorry for my wife, who cannot receive the sacraments because of me. I wish something could be done." He says this quite sincerely.⁵⁶

Fr. Chifeya believed that the family was "quite stable," and thought there was no "danger of divorce at all." Accordingly, he requested permission for—and received—a mixed marriage dispensation from Archbishop Markall.⁵⁷

By contrast, the case of Joseph and Agatha (also promoted by Fr. Chifeya) was more complicated. Joseph had married a “pagan” woman in 1930 at the NC Selukwe’s office, but had no civil divorce documents. Agatha had also married a “pagan” according to “African custom” but did register it. Joseph and Agatha had a civil marriage in 1946, and by 1966 had five children. Joseph’s first wife and her parents had been living in Selukwe while they were married, but by the time Chifeya presented the case to Markall (1966) Joseph thought that she was either dead or remarried “because 1930 is such a long time for anyone to wait.” Joseph and Agatha “want[ed] to marry properly according to Christian rites in the Catholic church” because “they are both quite old now [and] they think it’s now time they put themselves in the hands of God.”⁵⁸ McNamara asked Chifeya for more information, specifically for Joseph’s and Agatha’s baptismal certificates, and whether there was any evidence that “Joseph’s first partner is dead. . . 1930 may be a long time ago but Joseph himself is not dead so we cannot presume that [she] is without some evidence.”⁵⁹ There was no documentation in the general files as to whether Joseph and Agatha received a dispensation and were allowed to marry in the church.⁶⁰

One of the more interesting marriage cases in the St. Peter’s parish records involved Charles Mzingeli, a member of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in the 1920s and 1930s, and a leader of the revived ICU in the 1950s. When Mzingeli joined the ICU in the 1920s, it had been condemned by the South African Catholic bishops.

On these grounds the priest at St. Peter’s [Fr. Alfred Burbridge] obliged him to leave it under pain of excommunication. He [Mzingeli] was so upset by this that he had several talks with Monsignor [Robert Brown, the prefect apostolic of the Zambezi Mission] who he said could only rely on the other Bishops’ decision. Fr. Johanny was also asked if he could

smooth the matter out. Fr. Johanny told me he could not manage to get the matter settled. Mr. Mzingeli believes that because the Government of South Africa did not like the Union assisting Africans to Trade Unionism the Church followed the Government in place of defending people's rights. He believes he was never excommunicated by the Church, but by his priest.

Deprived of the Sacraments and wishing to marry, he married at the NC's office with a Methodist. From the time of the "excommunication" until about 1950 he has not been a practicing Catholic. He has walked in processions and on several occasions has publicly testified to his adherence to the Catholic faith, during the period 1950 to the present [1954]. He has also been to Mass sometimes. I put the [mass times] such that Mass could be attended before the frequent meetings held on Sunday mornings. He is, however, often away addressing meetings.

Mrs. Mzingeli was a Methodist and with some help from her husband and two women she has been won over to the Catholic Faith. She is an invalid and could be received in the near future.

Today I spoke with Mr. Mzingeli about putting the marriage in order. He is willing to do this but says he has been so hurt by the treatment he received that he would first like an assurance that he was not wrong in seeking the aid of those who would help Africans towards trade unionism.⁶¹

Clearly, Mzingeli was aware of Burbidge's violation of church teaching in denying him access to receive communion as only a bishop had the power to excommunicate. And yet, despite the personal affront which hurt him deeply, as well as the hierarchy's failure in proclaiming and implementing the Church's teaching on social justice,⁶² Mzingeli was willing to submit his marriage for canonization within the Church on the condition that Chichester and his minions acknowledge that the labor leader had done no wrong. There is no record of a response from Bishop Chichester or of a resolution to the case.

Taken together, these three cases clearly show that the church's hierarchy, including African priests, was operating according to Western legal norms. Agnes and Felix received a dispensation from the impeding impediment of a mixed marriage so that

Agnes could participate fully in the sacramental life of the church, specifically so that she could receive communion at mass. Joseph and Agatha's baptismal certificates were necessary to determine whether and what type of dispensation was required in order to allow them to marry within the church: if either of them had been baptized Catholic before their respective first marriages to non-Christians, technically s/he would have been required to seek his/her bishop's permission to marry a non-Christian which would have necessitated a dispensation from disparity of cult, which (as with a dispensation from mixed religion—i.e. , with a baptized non-Catholic Christian) would have required the non-Catholic partner to promise "to remove all danger of perversion of the Catholic party," and both partners to promise "that all their children shall be baptized and brought up as Catholics."⁶³ If neither had been baptized prior to marriage but converted to the church subsequently then "the valid marriage of unbaptized persons [could be] dissolved in favor of the faith by the Pauline privilege."⁶⁴ The Pauline privilege refers to the freedom of the non-Christian partner to leave the marriage and the non-obligation of the Christian neophyte to be bound to remain in such a marriage.⁶⁵ If Joseph's first wife had still been living at the time that Fr. Chifeya promoted the case, either he or Joseph would have been required to interpellate the first wife before Joseph could marry Agatha, that is,

to ask (1) whether the [non-Christian] party wishes to be converted and baptized, (2) in case the [non-Christian] party does not wish to be baptized, whether he. or she, is willing to live in marriage without offense to God, which is to say that he, or she, will not interfere with the religious obligations of the convert [i.e., the practice of the Catholic faith and Catholic upbringing of their children].⁶⁶

Given that Mzingeli's wife was apparently willing to convert to the Catholic church, after her formal reception into the church their marriage could have been regularized by

convalidation, or the public renewal of marital consent in the presence of a priest and at least two witnesses. If she had not been willing to become a Catholic, however, then—presuming the stability of the marriage (i.e., the likelihood that the partners would not separate)—the marriage could have been regularized by means of a *sanatio in radice* [cleansing at the root], which is the validation of marriage “which imports, besides dispensation from, or a cessation of, an impediment, a dispensation from the law of renewing consent, and a retro-action by fiction of law [*per fictionem iuris*], in reference to the canonical effects in the past state while the union was invalid.”⁶⁷

These cases also, however, show the deep faith of many African Catholics and the consequences of the Church’s failure to consider accommodating its marriage practice to African practices in some form prior to 1967. Evidently, many Catholics knowingly married non-Catholics according to “African custom” and/or civilly without the consent or approval of the clergy or hierarchy. Yet Mzingeli, and no doubt others like him, felt “deprived of the sacraments.” Joseph and Agatha wanted “to put themselves in the hands of God.” There was no evident material gain to be had in regularizing marriage according to the church’s norms, save for being able to receive communion at mass: Catholics in canonically invalid unions could still attend mass and otherwise participate in the life of the Church and their parochial communities. The spiritual benefits according to their beliefs, however, were tremendous in that they would be allowed full participation in the life of the church and the reception of the body of blood of Jesus Christ sacramentally present in the form of bread and wine. This shows a distinct commitment to faith on the part of those African Catholics who sought to enter more deeply into the church’s fold.

Despite the Catholic bishops' relative pleasure with the 1964 marriage act, they were confronted with a situation in which approximately 80 percent of African Catholics were not marrying in the church, much less according to canonical norms. Accordingly, in January 1967, they established a commission with representatives from each of the five dioceses in the territory to study the causes of this problem and to suggest possible solutions.⁶⁸

The commission sent a circular letter to all the priests in Southern Rhodesia asking for their opinions on a number of questions dealing with the marriage situation, and asking them to consult with "interested lay people."⁶⁹ The commission members wanted to know: whether the clergy (and laity) thought that civil legislation was responsible for the high rate of canonically invalid marriages and if so to what degree, particularly provisions for obtaining an enabling certificate; at what point in the African marriage process the couple was considered married; if the church were to recognize African "customary" marriages what effects it would have, and if it were possible for the church to do so how it should be done and "what safeguards would be necessary;" whether they thought lobola was "the main obstacle to the convalidation of African marriages;" whether public opinion was helpful in convalidating marriage; and whether "the Church [paid] sufficient attention to instructing the people with regard to the Sacrament of Matrimony."⁷⁰

During the course of the year, the commission received 73 replies to Fr. Dunne's circular letter, and prepared and submitted a report based on them to the bishops' conference in January 1968, with two recommendations: first, that the church recognize

African “customary unions” as the basis for canonical regularization, and “that the matter should be submitted to a canonical study.” The bishops, however, considered the report insufficient and “requested the Commission to continue its study.”⁷¹ Archbishop Markall apparently then asked Jesuit canonist Lachlan Hughes, who was not a member of the commission, to write a canonical evaluation of the commission’s report—though this was not the official report recommended by the commission—and circulated Hughes’ private opinion to the bishops and commission.⁷² This touched off a debate of sorts between Hughes who supported the Jesuit “minority opinion” on the commission and Bethlehem Missionary Fr. Joseph Suter, who represented the majority.⁷³ The debate was largely over differing interpretations of canon law and its application to African culture. Whereas Suter and the majority of the commission were willing to admit elements of African practice as necessary preconditions to valid canonical marriage within the church, Hughes and a minority of the commission saw those elements as impediments to valid marriage which either had to be abolished or ignored in order to regularize African Christian marriages.

The marriage commission recommended that African customary unions be recognized as the basis of marriages that required canonical regularization, and that three elements were necessary in order to verify the existence of an African customary union: the consent of the woman, her guardian (tezvara), and the man (mukuwasha); the mutual agreement to payment of lobola by the mukuwasha and its acceptance by the woman’s family; and the formal handing over of the bride.⁷⁴ The commission further recommended that the church develop a rite centered on the VaShona *kuperekedzwa*

ceremony (the time during the marriage process when the woman is handed over to her husband), and suggested that “undertaking” to pay lobola (versus payment in full) was sufficient grounds to allow marriage according to Christian rites.⁷⁵ A dissenting minority opinion (put forward by Jesuit John Diamond), however, held that African elders recognized no uniform customary marriage and that the church couldn’t use customary unions as the basis for canonical regularization because they lacked stability (i.e., allowed polygyny and divorce), and the stability they possessed was guaranteed only by the payment of lobola and the birth of healthy children.⁷⁶

Hughes’ memorandum was concerned primarily with the issue of canonically valid marital consent. Hughes argued that the commission failed to distinguish between *matrimonium in fieri* (i.e., the moment of consent) and *matrimonium in facto esse naturale* (i.e., the marriage lived out following the exchange of consent),⁷⁷ and that the lack of distinction “induce[s] a confusion into the [commission’s] recommendations.”⁷⁸ In his view, African customary law was unsuitable and inadequate to serve as the basis for Christian marriage, but that customary unions were valuable as preparation for canonical marriage. He believed that it was not possible to canonize customary law because: it required the consent of a third party (tezvara) to marriage under pain of nullity; it was “conditional in [marriage] consent;” and its requirement of full payment of lobola to the tezvara was an “invalidating impediment” to canonical marriage which caused “significant delay of marriage” and “lengthy concubinage.” Further, he opposed the church recognizing and canonically regularizing unregistered customary unions because doing so would “introduce two classes of [African] marriage”: marriages

registered at a district commissioner's office and thus afforded protection under civil law, and unregistered marriages that wouldn't have legal protection from the government.⁷⁹

Hughes addressed what he perceived to be the inadequacies of the three elements that the commission stipulated as constitutive of an African customary union at length. With regard to consent, Hughes claimed that the commission's recommendation to recognize customary unions was flawed because canon law does not recognize the consent of anyone but the two people intending to marry as necessary, and the consent of either of the two people concerned cannot be conditional upon the consent of a third party (e.g., a *tezvara*), thus "the customary union is not apt for the canonical consent."⁸⁰

Similarly, Hughes objected to the commission's provision for an agreement to pay *lobola* because it was not required canonically, and if it were a "subjective requirement of [the] *Tezvara* before he consents," then the marriage could not be validated due to the conditional nature of a third party's consent.⁸¹ He further questioned the commission's position that only an agreement to pay *lobola* was sufficient by referring to the "fact" that *vadzitezvara* frequently withheld permission to marry "until full *lobola* has been paid—and sometimes beyond the agreement."⁸² Accordingly, "even the agreement to *lobola* cannot be accepted as a constituent element of customary union. Therefore customary union as such is not apt for canonical consent or form."

Although Hughes did not object to the development of a Catholic rite to be performed at the time of the *kuperekedzwa* ceremony (in fact, he extolled it as "a sufficiently direct symbol of itself to be acceptable as the 'locus' for canonical form"—i.e., the public exchange of vows before a priest and two witnesses), he questioned

whether the tezvara's handing over of the woman was absolute or contingent upon fulfilling certain conditions, (e.g., the completion of lobola) "in such a fashion that if the conditions are not fulfilled the handing over is 'rescindible [sic],'" and if so, then validation was not possible.⁸³

Hughes then discussed at length the relation of lobola to canonical requirements for consent,⁸⁴ and concluded that the conditions associated with lobola payments effectively negated the possibility for valid consent to a canonical marriage and that therefore, the "consensual element of customary union is not very apt to be the basis" of Christian marriage.⁸⁵ He included a series of five objections to his argument concerning lobola and consent with responses to each objection.⁸⁶ It would appear that one of the Jesuit representatives to the marriage commission informed Hughes of the contents of their deliberations (for example, he described the responses to the commission's circular letter to the clergy as "wild" and "simplistic"⁸⁷), and this was Hughes' effort to respond to those members of the commission who favored recognizing African customary unions. Hughes taught at the regional major seminary at Chishawasha, and John Diamond, the seminary rector, was one of the Salisbury archdiocese's two Jesuit representatives to the commission.

Hughes concluded that the three elements that the commission suggested as constituting a customary union would be useful to determine the stability and other requisite elements for a valid canonical marriage, but that they couldn't be required for the regularization of marriage because "this would allow that other agencies than the Church can establish diriment impediments for Christians [i.e., Catholics]."⁸⁸ He further

concluded that because African customary unions were neither “suitable” nor “adequate” as a basis for regularizing marriages they couldn’t be used as such unless they were “so modified” that the people would no longer recognize them as customary unions. Customary unions, accordingly, could be used “as a means of preparing the marriage,” which should include the “exchange of proper canonical consent,” and that while consent could be exchanged at the kuperekedzwa ceremony the “difficulties. . . arising from distance from a Church, attendance of the priest, etc., in kuperekedzwa, should not be underestimated.”⁸⁹

Having responded to the issues raised by the marriage commission, Hughes next proposed “practical steps” to regularize registered and unregistered customary unions. He first thought it necessary to verify that customary marriages “are actually subsisting” and only lacked canonical form. If so, then there would be “comparatively little difficulty” to validate them by “complete full marriage,” convalidation, or sanatio, that is, the ordinary means that the church used to canonize marriages. In Hughes’ opinion, the tezvara’s approval of a church marriage was evidence of a “subsisting” customary union and his refusal would be “evidence that the union was not a genuine customary law marriage.”⁹⁰

Hughes recommended the same process of verification and validation for unregistered customary unions, and suggested that it would be possible either to marry within the church couples with customary unions that were unregistered due to the tezvara’s opposition or to validate the marriage via sanatio after the inquiry into the couple’s continued consent.⁹¹ He thought this “a very radical solution,” however, because it would introduce “two classes of African marriage” one protected by civil law and the

other not, and because there would be “a great number of broken valid marriages” unless “there was very marked stability in the marriages thus treated.”⁹²

Finally, Hughes turned his attention to “the problem of how to go about securing good Catholic marriages from the beginning.” Briefly acknowledging the need for the church to provide “education and formation” (particularly if African Catholics were choosing to marry in customary unions instead of canonical marriages), and the need to maintain “traditional observances” (noting that kuperekedzwa would be ideal for including canonical consent in the customary marriage process), he addressed the issue of what to do if the tezvara refused to approve of a church wedding. Hughes believed that the vadzitezvara generally agreed to help a couple obtain an enabling certificate only after lobola had been paid in full, thus the church had two options if the tezvara did not accept the “undertaking” to pay lobola “as sufficient to proceed to the Church marriage”: “either admit that the problem was insoluble or join issue with the vadzitezvara.” Ideally, “joining issue” with the vadzitezvara should involve persuasion, but if it were ineffective then again the church must either admit the insolubility of the problem or “disregard the opposition of the vadzitezvara.” The danger of disregarding the vadzitezvara, however, would be to leave couples so married without the protection of the civil law (N.B.: tezvara’s consent was required for customary marriage and civil registration of marriage), “and indeed it might be possible that the vadzitezvara would invoke the help of the government to recover control of their women,” a situation that Hughes felt capable of producing “a greater evil.” Accordingly, Hughes recommended invoking a law for appeal against “ridiculous sums set as lobola,” but thought that it was the vadzitezvara’s

“tendency to ever-increasing exactions which bodes so ill for the future of Christian marriage.”⁹³

Joseph Suter, a Bethlehem missionary priest and member of the commission from the Gwelo diocese, structured his response to Hughes around three questions: whether it was possible to “raise” customary unions to church marriage, whether there was consent in customary unions, and why weren’t African Catholic couples obtaining enabling certificates in order to marry within the church. Regarding the possibility of canonizing customary unions, Suter observed that Hughes’ distinction between *matrimonium in fieri* and *matrimonium in facto esse naturale* was useful, but secondary to the question of which unions were marriages (*matrimonium*) and thus capable of becoming church marriages as opposed to “concubinage” (*contubernia*) which were incapable of being “raised” to church marriages.⁹⁴ Suter listed four categories of unions that couldn’t become church marriages: unions that contained a diriment impediment,⁹⁵ whether absolute (i.e., no possibility of granting a dispensation) or relative (i.e., a possible dispensation had not yet been granted); polygamous unions that violated the unity of marriage (i.e., a man and his first wife are validly married, all subsequent unions while both partners remain alive are invalid and not capable of regularization); unions that violated the indissolubility of marriage (i.e., if either or both partners don’t “want to enter a permanent union for life”); or unions that lacked the consent of the husband or wife, or that contained consent conditional upon a future act.⁹⁶ Suter believed that the greatest “leakage” was in unions that violated the indissolubility of marriage: “these people shun away from any Church or Civil marriage, as it is later troublesome to get a divorce and as

responsibilities have to be faced.”⁹⁷ Concerning lobola and consent, Suter responded directly to Hughes by arguing that whereas Europeans saw lobola as a business transaction, Africans saw it the establishment of “new personal relations.”

A whole new kinship system is established by lobolo [sic] and a whole pattern of behaviour among the various groups. For the girl the decisive question is: Is my beloved accepted as mukuwasha? If that is so, tangibly proved by accepting money and cattle, then her interests of being protected by her family are safeguarded, and that is all she wants. Therefore, if a lobolo arrangement is made, the woman understands the following steps as leading to a proper marriage to which she fully cooperates with her consent, as she wants the man to be her true husband. If no lobolo arrangement is made, the woman knows very well that this union does not mean marriage, at least not yet. Consequently there is no marriage consent and no basis for a Church marriage. Therefore matrimonial consent is absent or at least very doubtful where there is no lobolo arrangement made.⁹⁸

Although Suter didn't know how many African couples' marriages were excluded from the possibility of regularization within the church, he presumed that there were a significant number who were living *matrimonium in facto esse naturale*, which he defined as a couple not prevented from marriage by a diriment impediment that lives monogamously and intends to remain so for the rest of their lives, in which “a real and true consent is expressed and still exists, but they did not comply with Canon 1094 due to grave and serious reasons,”⁹⁹ and that only those cases could and should be rectified. He further defined *matrimonium in fieri* as “pathetic cases of intended marriage. The two engaged people wait for years, sometimes almost heroically, till the young man has saved enough money to complete the lobolo payment, which may be raised at will by the tezvara.”¹⁰⁰

Suter next directed his attention to the question of valid consent in customary unions, directly confronting Hughes' contention that the "customary union as such is not apt to canonical consent or form."¹⁰¹ Suter began by proposing "a solution" that first required verification: of a customary union for the validity of consent; that the union did not fall into one of the four categories that were incapable of regularization; of a valid reason for the couple not having obtained an enabling certificate. If the case was one of a civilly registered customary union in *matrimonio in facto esse naturale* then the marriage could be convalidated. If the case was one of a civilly unregistered customary union in *matrimonio in facto esse naturale* then the marriage could receive a *sanatio in radice* because the "radix [root] exists and consent continues."¹⁰² In cases of *matrimonium in fieri*, presuming verification of the aforementioned three elements, Suter recommended that "the couple should be adviced [sic] to make use of the extraordinary form of can. 1098."¹⁰³ Canon 1098 allowed a couple to marry in the presence of two witnesses only provided that they could not go to a priest "without great inconvenience" [*sine gravi incommodo*].¹⁰⁴ As will be seen below, this was a significantly innovative application of canon law to the African context.

Suter then reiterated the commission's view regarding the three elements that constituted a customary union, i.e., the consent of the woman, the man, and the tezvara; the mutual agreement to pay lobola; and the formal handing over of the bride. Concerning the tezvara's consent, Suter distinguished between consent to cohabitation, which was necessary for a legal claim to lobola, and consent to civil or church marriage in a district commissioner's office which implied that the tezvara had received enough

lobola and was not expecting much more as debt against the enabling certificate. Citing the VaShona proverb that a mukuwasha was like a fig tree to be eaten without end [*Mukuwasha muonde usingaperi kudyiwa*].¹⁰⁵ Suter noted that the tezvara would be willing to grant consent to cohabit but reluctant to consent to an enabling certificate in the DC's office.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, "As only the right for cohabitation is essential for marriage, but not the customary transfer of wealth, the first consent is only essential and is sufficient to the marriage contract."¹⁰⁷

With regard to the mutual agreement to pay lobola, Suter, noting that the amount of lobola frequently wasn't fixed for many years, argued that lobola arrangements were "in the first place not a question of wealth, but a question of person."

The tezvara group has to decide: Do we accept this young man as our mukuwasha? Can we trust him? Are we ready to enter into a marriage agreement with him, to establish a new kinship relation with him and his relatives? Will this young man and his family group behave toward us as expected by tradition, paying proper respect and providing help in case of trouble and death? Can we trust that he will fulfil all his obligations as mukuwasha? (One of these obligations is to pay the due lobolo [sic]). The traditional ceremony of "kupinza mukuwasha kumusha", i.e., to receive him into the village, is the tangible answer that he is in fact received as son-in-law. Thus the . . . condition is fulfilled when the ceremony kupinza mukuwasha kumusha has taken place.¹⁰⁸

Similarly, with regard to handing over the woman, Suter argued that this was done normally during the kuperekedzwa ceremony, or during the kupinza mukuwasha kumusha in the case of elopement (*kutiza*).¹⁰⁹

Suter further argued that the customary union was "the only way how at present and in all likelihood in the near future the African people *express their marriage consent*,"¹¹⁰ and thus, a sine qua non for consent as opposed to an essential requirement

for marriage: “Any sanatio or convalidatio or any new marriage can only be arranged on the foundation of a customary union. Disregarding this foundation would inevitably bring about a vast number of invalid and doubtful marriages.”¹¹¹

Although Suter conceded Hughes’ point that unregistered marriages would not receive protection under the civil law, he disagreed that they were unstable unions. Citing the general interest on the part of both families to maintain the marriage as well as the tezvara’s reluctance to have a marriage dissolve because he would be obliged to return the lobola, Suter thought “This explains somehow the happy fact that the stability of customary unions and proper marriages among [the] African population in this country is remarkable.”

According to [African] customs no marriage is ever broken up against the will of at least one of the spouses. The vakuru never divorce a couple, they only accept the fact that two married people have rejected each other. . . . Comparing the efforts of the government to save endangered marriages by counselling or by its courts, I must say that the African customs are much better to iron out marriage difficulties. But if all efforts according to customs have failed, the marriage is simply taken as dissolved. No European court-ruling will make any difference. It can only confirm the de facto divorce or it will be ignored.¹¹²

While Suter thought it “highly desirable” for church marriages to have civil protection, he felt that if obtaining such protection proved “too cumbersome, it can be dispensed with.” because the stability of the marriage rested on the customary union, not the marriage registration certificate.¹¹³ Thus, he considered the customary union “essential for a valid consent [and] essential for the stability of marriage, and therefore indispensable.”¹¹⁴

Turning to the last of his three questions, Suter addressed the issue of why he thought African Catholics were not obtaining enabling certificates in order to marry in

the church. He took issue with Hughes' assertion that the vadzitezvara opposed church marriages because of their permanence. Suter argued to the contrary saying that the vadzitezvara would welcome stable, permanent marriages because if the marriage were to fail they would have to return lobola to the vakuwasha, and so the vadzitezvara frequently used the enabling certificate as a means to put pressure on the young couples to ensure that lobola would be forthcoming.

The reason for not marrying the couple in the [district commissioner's] office by the tezvara is to leave the couple somehow in a somehow awkward and often embarrassing situation, so that the couple realizes that to finish lobolo may be the lesser evil. . . .He wants by no means the marriage union to be broken. If that should happen, he would have lost the whole game, would be called a fool, who overreached himself, because he did not know when to give in. Be he uses the natural desire of the union to squeeze out the last of his lobolo claims.¹¹⁵

Suter countered Hughes' argument that the government would assist vadzitezvara to reclaim their daughters/wards if there were no civil protection, claiming that such a situation would be "certainly out of the question" for any African woman 21 years of age or older (the age of majority in English common law). Further, a tezvara couldn't take a mukuwasha to a European court for lobola if the marriage wasn't registered: in such a case they would have recourse to a chief's court unless a marriage certificate had been issued. In cases of last resort where the tezvara could demand the lobola of his daughter's daughter, this was permissible only in a situation where no permission to cohabit had been given, and thus no customary union existed. Suter opined that the reason for the sharp fall in canonical marriages resulted from a mutual mistrust of the younger and older generations of African Christians:

People experienced often that as soon as their son-in-law was married [sic] in the office or in Church, they did not feel any longer obliged to fulfil

their traditional duties. To my mind it is part and parcel of the deep-rooted mistrust of the old generation into the young generation. They do not understand each other nor do they trust each other. Where there is no trust, there is no credit or only very limited credit, i.e., the tezvara will not register the marriage till he has all.¹¹⁶

Given the relatively low wages of young African men in the face of lobola payments in the range of £100-250, Suter was not surprised that for many of them it was “impossible to complete lobola soon.” Nonetheless, poverty “should not be a reason to prevent the couple from the basic human right to marry,” and deserved the “sympathetic concern of the Church.”¹¹⁷

Responding to Hughes’ suggestion that the church should invoke civil laws against increasing amounts of lobola, Suter argued that within the contemporary VaShona cultural practice it was “simply impossible” for a mukuwasha to take a tezvara to a European magistrate because “The whole lobolo system is in spite of all something of a gentleman’s game. The enabling certificate cannot be forced in such a way.” The church, accordingly, had a responsibility to act “courageously” in proving the impossibility of a mukuwasha to pay lobola in full prior to marriage, and then either convalidate, sanate, or use the extraordinary form of Canon 1098 to regularize African marriages, particularly cases of *matrimonium in fieri*.¹¹⁸ Citing the work of Belgian Dominican theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, which referred to historical models of marriage practices in the church that were more sensitive to local cultural practices, Suter mused whether

the Council of Trent laid down the best form of marriage for African people in the 20th century [“Tametsi”]. Previous forms seem to fit much better into our situation. . . . In many respects we are somehow facing problems of the early Church, are in an extraordinary situation for which the Church provides the extraordinary form of marriage according to can.1098. . . . In our previous [marriage commission] meetings we discarded the solution with the remark: Exceptional cases. But these

exceptional cases have been the ordinary way for 1000 years. The argumentation against can.1098 was that it may open the way to clandestine marriages. But can.1098 is a public affair, only without the priest being present, but at least two witnesses are required *ad validitatem*, who together with the marriage partners are responsible, that the marriage be reported to the priest. . . .If kuperekedzwa ceremony were accepted as the time of applying can.1098, there should always be plenty of witnesses as it is a public affair.¹¹⁹

Hughes began his response to Suter with an extended point-by-point refutation of the Bethlehem missionary's recommendations, arguing essentially that while the elements that the commission proposed as constituting an African customary union were significant for determining the existence of such a union, they were unnecessary for canonical marriage in the church or as requirements for a marriage to be regularized. He reiterated his objection to the requirement of the *tezvara*'s consent for valid marriage, noting that Christian marriage was not a "group affair," as well as his position that *lobola* could not be considered a valid requirement for marriage.¹²⁰

What is most interesting in Hughes' lengthy second memorandum is the extended consideration he gave to Suter's suggestion to use the extraordinary form of marriage available in canon 1098. This was a rare instance in which Suter and Hughes agreed, and the latter's reflections amounted to a concrete practical application of the former's idea. As will be seen below, the commission gave serious thought to incorporating Hughes' recommendation into its final report.

After briefly summarizing and analyzing the developments that led to the inclusion canon 1098, as well as several of its interpretations by noted canonists, Hughes determined that the extraordinary form was "a potentially acceptable solution to the

problem of *matrimonium in fieri*,” and examined its ramifications on four levels: “in itself,” its consequences, applications, and limitations.¹²¹

Hughes first noted that the use of the extraordinary form would result in canonically valid marriages and that it could be used in situations where there was a civil impediment that the church didn’t recognize (e.g., the requirement of the tezvara’s consent or agreement over lobola for a valid customary union) or a lack of documents required by the civil authority (e.g., an enabling certificate or registration of the customary union). The great inconvenience to the priest was that he would be subject to a £500 fine and/or five years in jail for functioning “as a marriage officer to produce a civilly valid marriage.”¹²² The “grave moral inconvenience” to the couple was “automatic” if they wished to marry but “in the concrete circumstances” could not have a priest be present. “Hence the priest cannot be compelled to marry them: they cannot be *compelled* to remain unmarried.”¹²³

Reiterating the canonical validity of marriages effected according to canon 1098 as well as his opposition to the inclusion of the tezvara’s consent for a valid Christian marriage, Hughes argued that one of the consequences of the extraordinary form was that

there could be no absolute requirement that the man, *now validly and licitly married*, should continue to make lobola payments. . . . This does not mean that the newly married man may not pay lobola as long as he likes: but simply that the Church in these circumstances cannot support that there is a moral obligation to do so.¹²⁴

While the priest who would have been “the proper officiant” would be free from any penalties as he was not acting as a marriage officer, the “canonically valid and sacramental marriage” would be civilly invalid. Hughes thought that such a situation

could result in a tezvara either refusing permission to cohabit and/or refusing to receive the mukuwasha, or attempting to recover control over his daughter, which would be likely as the couple would not have any civil protection. This latter situation, in Hughes' opinion, would be proof that permission to cohabit was not permission to marry, but were the couple allowed to use the extraordinary form and to cohabit then the tezvara would effectively have little legal recourse except against his married daughter.¹²⁵

Hughes also saw as consequences of using canon 1098 potentially negative effects regarding the civil administration, specifically, that were a priest to become involved at any point in the process he could be accused of acting as a marriage officer or of marrying people without a declaration of intent or civil banns. More significantly, the invocation of the extraordinary form could result in complaints from vakuru that the church was treating couples as "fully married, permitting them the Sacraments," and that while that in and of itself would not be a problem for the government, "the disturbance of custom would," and could result in government intervention.¹²⁶

Turning to practical applications, Hughes stated that the local bishops would have to approve the general application of the extraordinary form, and grant permission to use it in every case. The regular canonical investigation "to ensure freedom to marry, absence of or dispensation from impediments, etc." would still be required, as would the careful instruction of the faithful to prevent "the danger of immense confusion," and "an explicit form of exchange of consent before witnesses who would record the fact and have the record transferred to the priest." Two "definite" witnesses would have to be commissioned to confirm the exchange of consent: "it would not be acceptable that a

crowd of guests should be asked to affirm the fact of consent exchanged.” Accordingly, Hughes suggested the development and use of a “definite formula printed in cautious terms.” The couple could receive no form or certificate that could give them the ground to say “The church married us.” This would result in government intervention because couples married by the extraordinary form would more than likely use such a form for civil purposes (e.g., obtaining married family housing in urban areas). A diocese would have to keep a “special book” for such marriages “most scrupulously.” The church would have to instruct the couple and families of the definitive effects of marriage in this form: they would have to determine if it were “prudent” to inform *vadzitezvara* of permission to cohabit plus canonical consent “in all cases” as doing so could decrease the frequency of permissions, and not informing them could result in “serious indignations.” The church would also have to educate people that extraordinary form was not permission for unmarried to go to sacraments: this was one of “gravest difficulties” of the scheme in Hughes’ opinion.¹²⁷

In Hughes’ opinion, the extraordinary form was applicable only to “suitable” marriages: there must be a provable genuine exchange of consent. He suggested the extraordinary form “plus registration” as best for “subsisting customary union *cohabitations*, i.e., those for which permission has been mainly obtained—but not always.” Where possible, Hughes preferred using the regular forms of marriage and validation, and he reiterated that the bishops would have to approve the general use of the extraordinary form because

it is quite unacceptable to suggest that where the circumstances are verified anyone can get married in this way [i.e., the extraordinary form]. Of itself it is true, but in the situation prevailing the duty of providing for

public order in remedying the situation is certainly theirs [i.e., the bishops]: this is not a case of an individual taking to himself his rights.¹²⁸

Any couple doing so “before witnesses in the required manner,” however, would be validly married “before God and the Church.” Thus it remained with the bishops to judge whether the circumstances warranted use of the extraordinary form, and if not, then “the ‘private’ exchange of consent would be quite invalid for defect of form.” It was in this context that Hughes raised the “frightening possibility” of “the dangers of clandestine marriages.”¹²⁹

Clearly, Suter and Hughes disagreed in their interpretations of canon law and its application to African marriage practices. The most significant difference was the possible inclusion of certain elements of an African customary union as prerequisites for the canonical validation of African Catholics’ marriages, or more specifically the incorporation—albeit very limited—of African marriage practices into those of the Catholic church. Suter favored such a move, whereas Hughes did not. Suter’s tone is much more pastoral, evoking a concern for the spiritual well-being of the African Catholics in his care, whereas Hughes’ writings are more juridical and seem more concerned with upholding the letter of the church’s law. Whereas Suter saw the extraordinary form primarily as a means to help Catholics put their marriages right in the eyes of the church—an expression of the church’s “sympathetic concern”—Hughes saw the use of canon 1098 primarily as a way for the church to confront “the whole complex of unjust demands occasioned by the present decadence of the lobola system,” as well as a means to stifle the criticism that the church “manufactured”

obstacles to Christian marriage. . . because those who wished to marry correctly by the extraordinary form would have it in their power to do so,

provided they were willing to join issue with the family difficulties which it might produce.”¹³⁰

Evidently the members of the marriage commission were favorably disposed to Hughes’ application of Suter’s idea to use the extraordinary form of marriage found in canon 1098 as they apparently asked the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops to request a legal opinion as to its repercussions with regard to the 1964 marriage act. The bishops’ counsel advised that

to avail oneself of the provision of Can.1098 would be to solemnise or to purport to solemnise marriage: the clergy who counselled, incited, or advised Catholics to follow this expedient would be in conspiracy and as *socii criminis* [friends of the crime] punishable as principals.¹³¹

This legal finding apparently terminated any further discussion of the possible use of the extraordinary form of marriage.

The marriage commission submitted its final report to the bishops’ conference in April 1970. Although the commission suggested that causes such as a “lack of real faith in God and in the Sacrament of Matrimony,” or a “lack of real mutual love,” or a “reluctance to commit oneself to an exclusive and permanent union,” or social and economic changes brought about by “the whole process of ‘westernization’” contributed to the low rate of canonical marriages within the church, “the main reason,” in its opinion, was “the present exorbitant demand” for lobola “which enables the guardians to prevent the young couple obtaining an Enabling Certificate” which was required by civil law.¹³² The commission held that customary unions meeting Suter’s definition of *matrimonium in fieri* (i.e., were free from canonical diriment impediments, monogamous, permanent, “contracted by a real and true consent,” and lacked an enabling certificate

from the tezvara) “are apt for convalidation by the Church and registration by the State.”¹³³ Further, the commission decided that it would be “disastrous” to marry African couples on the basis of canonical requirements alone, and regarded the triple consent of the woman, tezvara, and mukuwasha, the mutual agreement to pay and accept lobola, and the formal handing over of the woman by her family to her husband and his family as “essential requirements which establish the fact of a customary union” as expressed in either the kuperekedzwa ceremony, or—in the case of elopement—the kupinza mukuwasha kumusha ceremony.¹³⁴

The commission suggested that if the aforementioned “essential” elements were present, and if the couple met the requirements of canon law then they could “validly and lawfully contract a Church marriage,” although such a marriage while in accord with customary law would not have legal standing according to civil law, and the couple would therefore “forfeit certain rights and privileges attached to civil marriages.” In the commission’s estimation the benefits of such a policy would be to put Christian marriage “within reach of many more couples than formerly;” such marriages would be in accord with the requirements of canon law and customary law and would have the protection of customary law by virtue of their recognition by African communities. The disadvantages included depriving couples of “the civil effects which follow registration,” and the perception of the church acting contrary to public policy.¹³⁵ In order to implement the policy the commission recommended that “the priest who investigates such marriages should thoroughly understand the nature of the customary union” and be able to determine whether the conditions for a customary union existed, and that in order to

facilitate such investigations that a “customary union addendum” be added to the pre-nuptial forms.¹³⁶

Finally, the commission recommended amending the civil marriage legislation: to abolish the requirement of the enabling certificate, and “for the sake of clarity, [the civil law should] specifically state” that while the agreement to lobola is essential for marriage, “the actual details of the agreement and the payment or non payment of [lobola] have no effect in law on the validity of marriage.”¹³⁷

Although the marriage commission acknowledged Lachlan Hughes’ contributions to its deliberations, clearly its recommendations followed Joseph Suter’s line of interpretation. It is also possible, especially in light of the recommendations concerning the civil law, to posit that the commission in its deliberations and recommendations was engaging in a belated establishment of ecclesiastical “customary law”: the priests on the commission were willing to defer to African “custom” so long as it was in accord with the institutional church’s interests. As with the early BSAC and settler marriage legislation there were notable differences of opinion as to what constituted the church’s interests. Nevertheless, the commission’s deliberations represent an unprecedented openness to engage African culture positively, which was a significant departure from the Catholic church’s policies and practice concerning African marriages.

The Rhodesian Catholic Bishops’ Conference apparently adopted some of the marriage commission’s recommendations, as evidenced by the requirement of “a completed customary union addendum in those cases where the parties [don’t] possess a marriage certificate issued in terms of the Marriage Act of 1964.”¹³⁸ Despite this

significant step toward engaging African marriage practices, however, the situation did not improve significantly. This was more than likely due to the fact that the bishops decided that the preferred practice was still to ask the couple to go to the DC for an enabling certificate and for the priest to marry them according to the Marriage Act (1964) when they had got such a certificate.¹³⁹

Because the situation had worsened by 1972 (approximately 85% of African Catholics were not marrying in the church), the bishops established another commission in August of that year, to investigate the problem and recommend solutions.¹⁴⁰ There is no record of the second commission's final report or recommendations in the Jesuit archives. There is, however, a 1975 letter from the Rhodesian bishops to the cardinal prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (formerly Propaganda Fide) requesting

WITH THE GRAVE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION BEFORE US. .
.THAT THE FACULTY BE GRANTED BY THE HOLY SEE TO THIS
CONFERENCE [of bishops] WHEREBY INDIVIDUAL, SELECTED
CATHOLIC LAYMEN MAY BE APPOINTED BY LOCAL
ORDINARIES TO OFFICIALLY WITNESS AND RECORD
MARRIAGES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND
CONDITIONS OF THE INSTRUCTION "SACRAMENTALEM
INCOLEM."¹⁴¹

Apparently the bishops did not receive such permission from the Vatican, as evidenced by the absence of any discussion of the possibility of an African layperson presiding at a Catholic marriage ceremony in subsequent marriage regulations of the Archdiocese of Salisbury.¹⁴²

Throughout the colonial period the Catholic church did very little to engage African marriage practices in Zimbabwe. It took crisis proportions, 80 percent of African Catholics not marrying within the church—and thus not eligible to receive communion at

mass—to spur the bishops to establish a commission to investigate the problem in 1967. Although the commission eventually recommended recognizing African customary unions as the basis for marriage within the church, a significant departure from the hierarchy’s previous stance, and five years later the bishops went even further to request that select African laypersons be allowed to preside at wedding ceremonies, the situation did not improve appreciably. The commission’s deliberations can be likened to the process of the formation of African “customary” law decades earlier by the Southern Rhodesian colonial administrations: of taking selected elements of once fluid social practices and enshrining them into relatively inflexible legislation.

If colonial Africans tended to ignore civil marriage legislation where possible and continued their marriage practices slightly modified as a result of the marriage ordinances, then such was the case even more so where African Catholics were concerned. As will be seen, this pattern of ignoring or evading church authorities and policies carried over to other issues as well.

Notes

1. JAZ, Fr. Richartz Letter Book, 1896-1924 (Typescript), April 10, 1919.
2. Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1992); Diana Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Creation of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Michael F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 36-49. See also Dominique Meekers, "The Noble Custom of Roora: The Marriage Practices of the Shona of Zimbabwe," *Ethnology*, vol.32, 35-38; Jaison Andifasi, "An Analysis of Roora," Clive and Peggy Kileff, ed., *Shona Customs: Essays by African Writers*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1970), 28-32; Lydia Jahni, "Roora and Marriage," in *ibid.*, 33-41.
3. Andifasi, "An Analysis of Roora," 30; see also Jahni, "Roora and Marriage," 34.
4. See Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 30-31.
5. *ibid.*, 98-104.
6. *ibid.*, 220-21.
7. *ibid.*, 222.
8. See Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 106-8; Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 209-10. See also, Martin Chanock, *Law, Custom, and Social Order: The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
9. Cited in Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 107.
10. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 80; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 111.
11. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 80; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 112.
12. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 82.
13. *ibid.*, 82-85.
14. *ibid.*, 85-86.
15. JAZ, Box 451/2, Richard Sykes, S.J., *Native Marriages*, July 31, 1913. See also Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 115.
16. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 100.
17. See chapter 1 above.

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18. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 201-04.
 19. *ibid.*, 207; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 111.
 20. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 111-12.
 21. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 209-12.
 22. *ibid.*, 210; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 112.
 23. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 112.
 24. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 210.
 25. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 111.
 26. See Michael Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 45, note 48.
 27. JAZ, Box 312/2, Lachlan M. Hughes, S.J., Memorandum, "African Marriages: Comments on Report of Commission, 20th January 1968," February 2, 1968, 10, 13.
 28. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 46, note 51.
 29. JAZ, Box 312/1, 1964 Marriage Act and "Notes for the Guidance of Marriage Officers."
 30. JAZ, Box 312/1, Francis Markall, Ad Clerum letter, "The New Marriage Act," January, 1965.
 31. *ibid.*
 32. 1964 Marriage Act, Sections 12-18.
 33. *ibid.*, 1965 Marriage Regulations, No. 17.
 34. See Mark 10: 2-12; Matthew 19: 3-12.
 35. For concise histories of canon law see: A. Boudinhon, "Canon Law," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1910), Vol. 9, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09056a.htm>>; P. Leisching et al., "Canon Law. History of," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*. (1965). Vol. 3.
 36. See Boudinhon, "Canon Law," and Leisching et al., "Canon Law, History of,".
 37. See, Andrew B. Meehan, "Tametsi," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.14 (1912). <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14441b.htm>>; W. Van Ommeren, "Tametsi," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.13 (1965), 929 . For the full text of the decree,

“Tametsi” in English translation, see
<<http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent/ct24mar1.htm>>.

38. See W. Van Ommeren. “Ne Temere,” *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.10 (1965), 288.

39. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, (Rome: Vatican Press, 1918), 306; Stanislaus Woywod, O.F.M., *The New Canon Law: A Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law*, (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1929), 223. All subsequent references to specific canons are to the 1917 code unless noted otherwise.

40. See, W. Fanning, “Mixed Marriage,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.9 (1910), <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09698a.htm>>; Canons 1058-1080, especially Canon 1060.

41. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 95; cf. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 59-62.

42. JAZ, Box 452, Emil Schmitz to J.A. Halliday, December 29, 1905. Emphasis in original. See also Halliday to Schmitz, December 28 and 30, 1905.

43. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 11.

44. JAZ, Box 452, Edward Biehler to Charles Bert, October 23, 1906.

45. JAZ, Box 452, W.S. Taberer to Bert, November 13, 1907; NC Nesbitt to Bert, July 26, 1909.

46. See Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, 67; Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 16-18.

47. See Council of Trent, Decree on the Sacrament of Matrimony, Canon 10, <<http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent/ct24matt.htm>>; Canon 1142 in Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 233; William H.W. Fanning, “Widow,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.15 (1912), <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15617c.htm>>.

48. JAZ, Box 452, Taberer to Bert, November 13, 1907.

49. JAZ, Box 452, Nesbitt to Bert, July 26, 1909.

50. JAZ, Fr. Richartz Letter Book, 1896-1924 (Typescript). John Apel to Major Nesbitt (NC, Goromonzi), November 21, 1920.

51. JAZ, Box 452 contains copies of all marriage legislation from 1901 to 1929.

52. JAZ, Box 451/2, Richard Sykes, S.J., *Native Marriages*, July 31, 1913. Emphasis in original.

53. JAZ, Fr. Richartz Letter Book, 1896-1924 (Typescript), Apel to NC Mrewa, May 25, 1920.

54. "The marriage between a person baptized in the Catholic Church, or received into the Church from heresy or schism, and a non-baptized individual is null and void." See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 216-217.

55. There is very little information concerning St. Peter's parish in the Jesuit archives, despite the fact that the parish was founded by and remains under the administration of the Jesuits.

56. AAH, Box 670/C, Rev. S. Chifeya to Fr. McNamara, August 18, 1966.

57. *ibid.*; McNamara to Chifeya, August 23, 1966.

58. AAH, Box 670/C, Chifeya to McNamara, August 18, 1966.

59. AAH, Box 670/C, McNamara to Chifeya, August 23, 1966.

60. There more than likely are records documenting a conclusion to this case, but they would be found in the marriage files, which typically are sealed for at least 75 years.

61. AAH, Box 670/C, Henry Swift, S.J. to Bishop Aston Chichester, October 13, 1954.

62. See, Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891, which allowed for Catholics to join labor unions.

63. Canons 1060-1061. See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 214.

64. Canon 1120. See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 228.

65. See 1 Cor. 7:12-15.

66. Canon 1121. See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 228.

67. Canon 1138. See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 232.

68. JAZ, Box 312/2, S.J. Dunne, O.Carm., Circular Letter to All Priests, April 20, 1967. See also Lachlan M. Hughes, S.J. to Edward Ennis, S.J., May 31, 1968.

69. JAZ, Box 312/2, Dunne Circular Letter, April 20, 1967.

70. *ibid.*

71. JAZ, Box 312/2, Noel K. Kinnane, O.F.M., Circular Letter to All Priests, February 9, 1968. See also in *ibid.*, Lachlan Hughes Memo, "African Marriages: Comments on Report of Commission, 20th January 1968," February 2, 1968, 1; and Hughes to Ennis, May 31, 1968.

72. JAZ, Box 312/2, Hughes to Ennis, May 31, 1968.

73. JAZ, Box 312/2, Hughes, "African Marriages;" Joseph Suter, "Memorandum concerning Church-Marriage versus State-Law/Natural Marriage: Another Attempt," March 31, 1968 ("Another Attempt" hereafter); Hughes, "Memorandum II: on *African Marriages*: Being a Restatement largely on the basis of Memo I and Fr. Suter's 'Another Attempt,'" May 23, 1968; Hughes, "Marriage Commission," September 29, 1968.

74. *ibid.*, 6. The commission's preliminary report was not available in the Jesuit archives, thus its major recommendations were gleaned from Hughes' memorandum.

75. Hughes, "African Marriages," 1-2. The text of the recommendation reads: "This commission recognises the advisability of recognising the African customary union and recommends that [a] special Commission [sic] be appointed to discuss the canonical implications of such recognition." Cited in *ibid.*, 3.

76. *ibid.*, 4; see also JAZ, Box 312/2, Hughes to Ennis, May 31, 1968.

77. Conversation with Rev. John P. Beal, J.C.D., Department of Canon Law, Catholic University of America, May 30, 2001.

78. Hughes, "African Marriages," 3-4.

79. *ibid.*, 1-2.

80. *ibid.*, 6.

81. *ibid.*

82. *ibid.*, 7.

83. *ibid.*

84. *ibid.*, 7-9.

85. *ibid.*, 8.

86. *ibid.*, 8-9.

87. JAZ, Box 312/2, Hughes to Ennis, May 31, 1968.

88. Hughes, "African Marriages," 10.

89. *ibid.*

90. *ibid.*, 10-11.

91. *ibid.*, 11-12.

92. *ibid.*, 13.

93. *ibid.*, 13-14.

94. JAZ, Box 312/2, Joseph Suter, "Memorandum Concerning Church-Marriage versus State-Law/Natural Marriage: Another Attempt," 1. "Another Attempt" hereafter.

95. Canons 1067-1079 stipulated the following as diriment impediments: if a boy were under 16 years of age and/or a girl were under 14 years of age; "antecedent and perpetual impotency either on the part of the man or the woman;" if a person was "held by a previous marriage bond," with due respect to the Pauline privilege; marriage to a non-Christian; if a person were either a "cleric in major orders" or a member of a religious institute who had taken solemn vows; if a man had abducted or forcibly detained a woman and tried to marry her; if a married person committed adultery with the intent of marrying "the partner in adultery," or killed the spouse of the adulterer, or caused the death of his/her own spouse; if a person married "in the direct line of consanguinity" or within three degrees of collateral lines. See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 216-19.

96. Suter, "Another Attempt," 1-2.

97. *ibid.*, 2.

98. *ibid.*, 2.

99. *ibid.*, 3. Canon 1094 required that a couple had to exchange consent before a priest and two witnesses for a marriage to be valid. See Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 221.

100. Suter, "Another Attempt," 3.

101. Hughes, "African Marriages," 7; cited in Suter, "Another Attempt," 3.

102. See Canons 1138-1141 in Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 232-33.

103. Suter, "Another Attempt," 3.

104. See Canon 1098 in Woywod, *The New Canon Law*, 223.

105. See also Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, 42-43.

106. Suter, "Another Attempt," 3.

107. *ibid.*, 4.

108. *ibid.*, 4.

109. *ibid.*, 4.

110. *ibid.*, 4. Emphasis in original.

111. *ibid.*, 4.

112. *ibid.*, 4.

113. *ibid.*, 4.

114. *ibid.*, 5.

115. *ibid.*, 5.

116. *ibid.*, 5.

117. *ibid.*, 5-6.

118. *ibid.*, 6.

119. *ibid.*, 6-7.

120. JAZ, Box 312/2, Lachlan Hughes, "Memorandum II: On African Marriages," May 23, 1968, 1-11. "Memorandum II" hereafter.

121. *ibid.*, 11-13.

122. See 1964 Marriage Act, Section 10 (2).

123. "Memorandum II," 14-15. Emphasis in original.

124. *ibid.*, 15. Emphasis added.

125. *ibid.*, 15.

126. *ibid.*, 16.

127. *ibid.*, 16-17.

128. *ibid.*, 18.

129. *ibid.*, 17-18.

130. *ibid.*, 15, 16.

131. Cited in JAZ, Box 312/2, Lachlan Hughes, "Marriage Commission," September 29, 1968.

132. JAZ, Box 312/2, Marriage Commission Report, April 28, 1970, 2.

133. *ibid.*, 2-4. The commission defined "convalidation" as the renewal of consent in canonical form or *sanatio in radice*.

134. *ibid.*, 4-5.

135. *ibid.*, 5-6.

136. *ibid.*, 6-7; see also appendix: "Addendum to Prenuptial Statement: Customary Union."

137. *ibid.*, 7-8.

138. AAH, Box 670/G, Edward Ennis, S.J. to Anthony Bex, October 16, 1972.

139. Fr. Brendan Conway, AMC, "African Marriages Commission," *Pastoral Service*, December, 1973, 22.

140. *ibid.*, 23.

141. JAZ, Box 312/1, Rhodesian Catholic Bishops' Conference to Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, November 30, 1975. Emphasis in original.

142. JAZ, Box 312/1, Brendan Conway, "Some Notes on Canonical and Civil Regulations Affecting Marriage."

Chapter 8: “Thou Shalt Not Take My Name in Vain”: The Mwari Controversy, 1911-1961

I had a second letter from Fr. Apel: the last idea is, that Mwari means as much as: he, who is! is, qui est. Against stupidity even Gods fight in vain!

Andrew Hartmann, S.J. to Francis Richartz, S.J., July 26, 1921¹

Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi and his colleagues on an interdenominational team preparing a more recent and more accurate translation of the bible into ChiShona presented a theological explanation for the meaning of the name *Mwari*.² Claiming that of all the ChiShona names for God “‘Mwari’ alone does not seem to mean anything,”³ the biblical scholars proposed two possible meanings based on linguistic evidence. The first proposal held that *Mwari* was a contraction (and incorrect spelling) of *Muwari*, which is derived from the ChiShona verb *kuwara*, “to spread” (e.g., a blanket on grass). This rendering conveys the idea that *Muwari* “is the being that has put in the world everything we see, ‘Ndiye akawaridza zvose zvatinooona panyika.’”⁴ This implies that God is the creator of all that exists, and is akin to the ChiShona names *Musiki*, “creator,” or *Musikavanhu*, “creator of people.” Fr. Chidavaenzi and his colleagues, however, ultimately rejected *Muwari* as a possible origin of the meaning of the name of God because the tone patterns of “Muwari” and “Mwari” were different⁵— the former being low-low-low and the latter being low-high—and did not conform to ChiShona’s ordinary rules of contraction or patterns of sound change.⁶

The second proposal held that *Mwari* was a contraction of *Muari*, which is derived from the third person singular of the irregular verb “to be” in ChiShona. This rendering translates literally as “the one who is,” has the same tone pattern, and follows ChiShona rules for contraction and patterns of sound change, as well as rules for denoting

a personal agent.⁷ Similarly, in normal speech patterns there would be no significant aural difference between *Mwari* and *Muari*.⁸

The VaShona biblical scholars noted that “there exists a very interesting similarity between the name which God gives Himself in Exodus 3:14, and the name which the Shona people give to God.”⁹ In comparing the various names of God found in the bible with the various names of God in Chishona,¹⁰ they further noted that because “God is known by various names which convey to us some insight into the nature of God” in the bible,

Shona translators have to make an effort, therefore, to translate the various names of God by suitable and appropriate names in Shona. We would not be right, surely, if we translate two or three names by the same name or attribute.¹¹

Accordingly, Fr. Chidavaenzi and his colleagues recommended against changing the spelling of *Mwari* to *Muari* so as not to lose one of “the rich aspects” of “the name of God in Shona. . .namely, that God is the one who caused things to be—MUWARI—the Creator.”¹² Rather, they preferred to use both forms of spelling the name of God “to preserve the invaluable [sic] riches in both forms of the same name. We can use MWARI to translate ‘El’ and ‘Elohim’ which mean simply ‘God,’ and we can use MUARI to translate the unique and personal name of God, YAHWEH,” and *tenzi* to translate the Hebrew title *adonai* (Lord).¹³ The biblical scholars further maintained that

even if the reasons given for thinking that the word Mwari comes from the verb “to be” were not persuasive, we should still adopt MUARI to translate YAHWEH because if other languages go so far as to coin names which are not at all close to the meaning of God’s unique name we are more fortunate to have a name which is Shona in sound and form and can be explained to people and has the same meaning and explanation as the Hebrew name. Some of the translation committees in East Africa envy us for having even the possibility of such a name.¹⁴

The diametrically opposed views of Muari and Mwari—that of two German Jesuits in the 1920s and that of a MuShona biblical scholar writing in the latter years of the twentieth century—show the changes in Catholic understanding of the ChiShona name for the Christian god. Initially used by the first Jesuit missionaries in the 1890s, officially banned by the Jesuit superior of the Zambezi Mission in 1923, by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, Mwari had come full circle to be accepted as the name for the Christian god in the Catholic church. Historians, however, have shown that the name Mwari has a much longer history than its use by Western Christian missionaries. Within this context, what has come to be known as the Mwari controversy can be seen as the continuation of a debate between ChiShona-speaking Africans under a Christian guise.

Historical linguist George Fortune compared oral traditions from Kalanga-, Karanga-, and Venda-speakers on both sides of the Limpopo river, claiming that the “Venda appear to have had a historical relationship to Mwari similar to that of their counterparts north of the Limpopo, the Changamire Rozvi. In both cases Mwari was closely associated with the chieftainship. In the current traditions of both, he traveled with them from their place of origin, leading them to a new home.”¹⁵

Fortune further posited that the Rozvi adopted Kalanga after conquering the Torwa state centered at Khami in the late seventeenth century.¹⁶ The Torwa state/Khami culture succeeded Great Zimbabwe after circa 1450 and spread west, though evidence of Khami culture date to c.900 C.E. and Mwari oracular shrines were located “within its domain.” According to Fortune, the Kalanga language more than likely also dates to the tenth century and was still used at the Mwari shrines during the second *chimurenga*.¹⁷

Fortune claimed that the Mwari cult was a Torwa institution at the time of the Rozvi conquest, and not a Rozvi creation as Mwari cult “officials appear to have kept their independence vis-a-vis the *mambo* [i.e., the king] judging from the frequent mention of clashes of interest between them.”¹⁸ The location in the Matopos was “an ancient structural feature” of the cult.¹⁹

Fortune contended that the Mwari cult, working “through a regular system of messengers bringing tribute to the shrines and directives back to the people who have sent tribute,” was “mainly a Southern Shona religious institution.” At least twice in their history Zezuru- and Korekore-speaking VaShona were exposed to the cult of Mwari as a high god: “in a form determined by the political power it was associated with, Rozvi, and, possibly, Torwa,” and during “modern times in a Christian form.” Despite “these successive and prolonged influences,” northern VaShona seemed to be hesitant about “accepting the divine status of Mwari and agreeing that the name Mwari” is acceptable for the creator and/or high god. Fortune thought perhaps they were hesitant because “an alien power” brought the name and cult with them, or perhaps because the Zezuru believed Mwari “too particularized and concerned with things of the earth to qualify him [sic] to be God. He is a *mwea wepasi* [spirit of below], whereas the Supreme Spirit is *NyaDenga* [of heaven].”²⁰

According to Fortune, VaZezuru oral traditions “describe Mwari as a presence which guided various clans from their ancestral homes in Guruuswa [the land of the tall grass] into these lands (*nyika dzino*).” i.e., contemporary Zimbabwe, often associated with the ancestral spirit Tovele.²¹ “According to these traditions, then, the spirit Mwari,

because of local and particular historical relationships, is not the creator, and the name Mwari, on these considerations, is unsuitable as a traditional [sic] name for the Creator.”²² According to various Zezuru traditions, Mwari, or Tovela, was “either the first Rozvi, or the first human created whose spirit” accompanied the different VaShona groups from Guruuswa to the areas they chose to inhabit.

Tovela, or Mwari of the Rozvi, came with his people from Guruuswa on their way hither. His presence was manifested as a voice which led them on their journey through the forests and through the midst of wild beasts. The voice spoke of its own accord, using no human medium, and from whatever source it chose, the sky, a tree, grass, a rock, or a person. Its task was to guide the people on their travels and to warn them of dangers. Another of its concerns was to make the people observe the laws and avoidances of the land, of the earth (*pasi*: ancestral ordinances) and of the forests. As a result, the land and *pasi*. . . were settled and at peace with themselves. However, in time, the Rozvi offended Tovela, and tried to destroy him and extinguish his voice.²³

Whereupon, according to legend, the spirit left them and settled in the Matopos.²⁴

Fortune suggested that Western Christian missionaries chose Mwari as the name for God from among the many names and titles for a supreme being found in ChiShona, due to

the widespread acceptance by the Shona people of Mwari as Creator before the missionaries identified him as such. This belief may have been disseminated at the time when the cult of Mwari was associated with the Rozvi dynasty and, possibly that of the Torwa before them. But this belief existed somehow unreconciled with the more spiritual notions of the Central and Northern Shona.²⁵

Among the eastern Manyika- and Ndau-speaking VaShona, Anglican, Methodist, Catholic Mariannhill, and American Board Mission missionaries almost exclusively used Mwari for the name of the Christian god from as early as 1898. In the ChiZezuru-speaking areas, the different churches used a variety of different names for God: the

Lutherans from 1899 to 1912 employed *Mudzimu* (an ancestral spirit); from 1909 to 1941 the Dutch Reformed Church used *Wedenga* (of the sky/heaven), as did the Church of Sweden until they switched to Mwari in 1928. From the founding of Chishawasha mission in 1892, the Jesuits translated the name of God as *Yave*, being a rendering of the Hebrew Yahweh.²⁶

Fortune concluded by suggesting that Mwari may have been the name of a Shona ancestral or guardian spirit among the Kalanga-speaking kingdoms of southwest Zimbabwe, who, “with their successive rises to power,” may have become a national deity. This could have been accomplished by parallel political and religious processes: the former in which kings exerted political control over local chiefs, “shown by the installation of local rulers by the representatives of the central power, as we know to have happened under the Rozvi,” and local acceptance of that control expressed in the payment of tribute “and symbolic actions like the taking of new fire each year from the *zimbabwe*,” and the latter in which Mwari may have evolved “from a guardian spirit in the form of an oracle, through a priesthood which, accepting gifts and supplications made to a source of fertility, gave out promises and directives in his name,” and associated with the developing “system of organized traffic” to and from the Mwari shrines in the Matopos hills. Fortune further surmised that “these two parallel movements, of tribute to Mwari and to the *mambo*, and of directives of control outwards, were one and the same process, or at least closely linked.”²⁷

In an effort to determine “the original significance of the Mwari cult,” Terence Ranger used linguistic evidence and oral traditions from East, Central, and Southern

Africa to compare Mwari and other similar words, and argued that Mwari dates “from a very early period of cultic observance in south western Rhodesia,” and that “there is a connection between the widely distributed Mwari/initiation complex and the Kalanga High God.”²⁸

Citing historical linguists Malcolm Guthrie, who dated Mwari to c.4000 years ago in proto-Bantu reconstructions with a meaning of “a young person or initiate,” and Christopher Ehret, who traced Mwari’s derivation to Central Sudanic proto-linguistic forms and argued that it was the word for “sacrifice or sky god,” Ranger showed that Mwari and variants thereof was used widely in Central, Southern, and Eastern Bantu languages on either side of the Zambezi river to refer to initiation, especially female initiation.²⁹ Based on collected oral traditions, Ranger posited that there may have been initiation rites among the inhabitants of what is now western Zimbabwe prior to the fifteenth century, and that the BaVenda of the Northern Transvaal “still make the connection between the idea of Mwari as God and the idea of initiation.”³⁰:

Early Bantu societies in eastern and central Africa were agricultural societies; agriculture was performed mainly by women; social institutions were probably matrilineal. Early Bantu societies were familiar with the idea of initiation. The need for fertility of the soil was fundamental, and the link between this need and the ritual power of the women who cultivated the land was an obvious one. In a number of places the idea that female initiation was essential to agricultural prosperity developed. In a number of places, also, the idea of an active High God developed, and in such places it was natural to think in terms of spirit wives as the patronesses of female initiation. . . .[The liminal state of being an initiate] is a state upon which the manifestation of the High God can make an indelible and shaping impression, so that initiation at the High God shrine became crucial to social identity.³¹

He further suggested that as the Bantu spread across the continent, carrying with them “a body of common ideas,” the interaction of those ideas with particular circumstances in several places produced “a High God cult network which interacted with initiation:”

This early network was later overlaid, in complex ways, by the rise of patrilineality in some cases, by the development of cattle-keeping economies in others, by the development of chiefs and kings very generally. New ritual powers were asserted and new religious ideas developed. In the process old ritual titles were often captured and transformed in meaning.³²

Ranger argued that “it seems almost certain that the oracular [Mwari] cult has always been centred in the Matopos and also, until the modern period, in Vendaland.”³³

Analyzing collected Venda oral traditions, Ranger suggested three waves of influential Shona migration into/conquest of Vendaland:

the first wave [the Dziva totem]. . .brought with it ideas of matriliney [sic], of rain-making priestesses, of sacred pools, and of elaborate female initiation. The second wave [the Shoko totem]. . .brought with it ideas of patriliney [sic], of male initiation, and of a special relationship with Mwari. Both groups linked the High God with initiation, though in strikingly different ways. . . .[The] third wave consisted of groups of the Moyo totem and were related to the Rozvi kings, who dominated south-western Rhodesia from the seventeenth century. These new invaders also claimed a special relationship with Mwari, but there are plenty of stories of friction between them and the Mwari priests—including a story that in the end Mwari ceased to appear in Venda country so that his worshippers had to come to the Matopos to find Him.³⁴

From this reconstruction Ranger inferred similar patterns in southwestern Zimbabwe, with the significant difference that female and male initiation rites died out there, but remained strong among the Venda. He further suggested that VaShona followed matrilineal descent like their neighbors north of the Zambezi until relatively recently: it

was only with the introduction of cattle that they adopted bride-price payments, and patrilineal descent and residence.³⁵

In examining the roles of religious officials and their relations to the court of the Munhumutapa state, S.I.G. Mudenge focused the relationship between the *Dzivaguru* oracular cult and the *mhondoro* spirit medium cults of central and northeastern Zimbabwe during the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries.³⁶ According to Mudenge, the priests at the Mutapa court from circa the late seventeenth century were of the *Dzivaguru* cult and Tavara origin. The Vatapa (plural form of Mutapa) saw the Tavara as conquered autochthons of the Zambezi valley, and their need for peace with the Tavara—whose ancestral spirits were responsible for bringing rain—gave rise to the *Dzivaguru* cult's significance at court.³⁷ In discussing the relationship between the high god and ancestor spirits, Mudenge noted that it was unknown when specifically spirit possession and ancestor veneration began among the VaShona, but that written evidence of the Mutapa *mhondoro* cult dates to eighteenth century Portuguese records.³⁸

According to Mudenge, the Vatapa had recourse to the apical *mhondoro* spirits for “national issues” including war and peace, succession disputes, rain-making, and natural disasters, such as epidemics, locust invasions, or “nationwide famines.” Mhondoro mediums were consulted infrequently, exerting the power of the spirit only when possessed. Prior to 1900, *mhondoro* mediums were often involved in temporal as well as spiritual affairs. Their power was based on supernatural authority to punish defiance “by causing personal or general misfortunes,” and they frequently held views in

accord with “those held by the politically relevant majority, often including the Mutapas themselves.”³⁹

Mudenge argued that while the *mhondoro* had a strong hierarchical structure, they were not the most significant element of unity in the Mutapa empire, though they supported the Mutapa if they were given gifts and their authority was respected. Neither was the Mutapa the ultimate religious authority in the state. Rather, “[in] the Mutapa state, neither the royal *mhondoro* nor the *Dzivaguru-Karuva* cults were under the control of the Mutapas. Both cults claimed spiritual authority over the Mutapas and their subjects and in the case of the *Dzivaguru-Karuva* cult this was largely controlled by the conquered Tavara people and not by the Karangas of Mutapa.”⁴⁰

In analyzing mid-eighteenth century Portuguese records and several VaShona legends concerning Karuva, “a famous Tavara rain-maker of the *Nhari-Unendoro* clan,” Mudenge noted that Karuva was frequently identified as either *Chikara*, *Dzivaguru*, or *Murungu*, and that all three names were used to refer to either the name of the high god or as the name of his high priest. From this, Mudenge posited either “a subtle process of the deification of Karuva or the incarnation of *Chikara/Dzivaguru/Murungu* into the person of Karuva.”⁴¹ Mudenge suggested that Karuva’s apotheosis resulted from two interrelated parallel processes: first, following Karuva’s death by drowning his followers established a shrine to him as a center of the *Dzivaguru* cult, and Karuva, as a Tavara rainmaker and hero of resistance against the Korekore (northern ChiShona-speakers) conquest gradually transformed from a *mudzimu* interceding with *Dzivaguru* on behalf of people into either the son of *Dzivaguru* or *Dzivaguru* himself, hence the lack of

distinction between the names *Dzivaguru*, *Chikara*, and *Karuva*. Secondly, according to Mudenge, the rise of the royal *mhondoro* cult was “parallel to. . .and in a sense [abetted]” *Karuva*’s deification, in that

Through another similarly slow development, the descendants of Mutota, founder of the Mutapa state, began a process of rearranging the Shona spirit world to reflect their political domination of the temporal state. Under the umbrella of the High God, today better known as *Mwari*, or *Chikara*, or *Dzivaguru*, they created a spiritual hierarchy dominated by the spirit of Matope Nyanhewe, the conqueror of *Karuva*.⁴²

Mudenge further suggested that the result of these two processes was to conjoin *Karuva* and *Dzivaguru*, and to create “an ambiguity and imprecision of concepts”—a mixing of the human and the divine—that benefitted the Mutapa rulers and the Tavara clan.⁴³

According to Mudenge, the descendants of the Mutapa and the Mutapa *mhondoro* “concede, if grudgingly, the seniority of the *Dzivaguru/Chikara/Karuva* cult over the royal Mutapa cult.” This reflects their belief in the seniority of the autochthons over the invaders. The Korekore, however claim that the *mhondoro* cult is superior to the cult of *Karuva* because the latter, a rainmaker, brings water “as a wife fetches water for a man.”⁴⁴

Mudenge concluded that the *mhondoro* and *Dzivaguru* cults were not separate religions, but “merely [different] modes of approaching the one Supreme Being in whom all Shona believe,” but that in political terms their respective relations with the Mutapa state were unequal because the *mhondoro* were associated with the Mutapa lineage and their followers whereas the *Dzivaguru* cult was associated with the conquered Tavara, “i.e., the owners of the land in the northeast of the [Mutapa] state.”⁴⁵

What is clear from this brief review of the literature and their respective analyses is that the name Mwari is ancient among the VaShona, dating anywhere from one to three millennia (cf. Fortune vs. Ranger following Ehret); the oracular Mwari cult probably originated in but was definitely based in the Matopos hills of southwest Zimbabwe and exerted its influence through an extensive tributary network, and that amidst the extensive interactions between and among ChiShona-, (historical) Karanga-, Kalanaga-, and Korekore-speaking groups between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers theological categories and vocabulary seemed to be very fluid and highly adaptive, as shown by the extent of the territory in which Mwari's name came to be known as the high god, as well as the spread of the *mhondoro* cult system.

What is interesting is that Fortune, Ranger, and Mudenge all describe the religious changes associated with the Mwari cult as functions of larger socio-political changes, and not necessarily as a function of changes in African understandings of the sacred, or what would appear to be highly adaptive theological transformations. Whereas they treated religious change largely as a social phenomenon—or to give them the benefit of the doubt—they studied the social aspects of religious change, anthropologist David Lan provided a theological explanation of socio-religious changes that occurred in the *mhondoro* spirit cults during the colonial period and resulted in the transference of African peasant allegiance from chiefs appointed by the colonial state to spirit mediums during the war, and consequently greater support for the nationalist movements.⁴⁶

It is unclear how much of the foregoing that Francis Richartz and his Jesuit confreres who founded Chishawasha mission would have known or come into contact

with in the early 1890s. What is clear, however, is that Richartz and his fellow Jesuits at Chishawasha, in the north-central ChiZezuru-speaking area, had sufficient doubts as to whether Mwari referred to the one Christian god that they chose to translate the name of god into ChiShona as *Yave*, from the Hebrew name Yahweh found in the book of Exodus.⁴⁷

Reasons for *abolishing that heathen name* [Mwari]:

- 1) Our doubts *about the meaning* of that name *quite in the first years*—girls got *that name*. Natives honoured only vadzimu [ancestral spirits], Mwari was only asked for rain.
- 2) *The Natives had no clear idea about God* so we had to fear that with our keeping the name Mwari, they would join their wrong ideas with that name, in spite of instruction, as experience proved.
- 3) By introducing *Yave* the Natives were dependent on *our* explanation and were convinced that we gave the highest Being other qualities of which they had not heard before—like Creator, Preserver, Saviour, and especially an *almighty, eternal omniscient Judex* [judge]. . . . *Mwari has not been seen or is not being seen* except by the so-called vaMbuya (Mbuya=grandmother and woman who came from Mwari) *VaMbuya vanotaura kuti vanobva kwa Mwari* [VaMbuya speaks because she comes from Mwari]—they bring the orders of Mwari=uyai ne mombe kana nembudzi [come with cattle or goats]—(last year the people refused (3 months?) [sic] Bonga Mandara was sent to Mwari and became by and by “Vambuya”—some are called Mwari. Last year’s Mbuya was refused, people saying “We know you, you have been born in our country—(The VaMbuya, maintain to be made or created by Mwari).⁴⁸

It is significant to note that when Richartz wrote the foregoing in 1923, he had been assigned to the Jesuit mission at Gokomere, in the south of colonial Zimbabwe, an area dominated by ChiKaranga-speakers. Richartz was the founding superior of Chishawasha mission from 1892 through 1904, and superior again from 1909 to 1920, whereupon he was transferred to Gokomere. He more than likely encountered the women who served as Mwari shrine officials after his transfer.

Evidently, Richartz and his confreres tried to use the name Mwari to refer to the Christian god and only subsequently introduced Yave:

Soon after our arrival at this mission. . . we found that the heathen name Mwari had no definite meaning besides “Rainmaker” and we were in this important case, like in general, very much impressed by the sorcery, want of clearness and straightforwardness with which all actions of the natives were surrounded, especially everything that could be supposed to be in connection with “religious” ideas such as prayer, sacrifices, etc. and at occasions like childbirth, marriage, fieldwork, war, etc.

Most of all was our teaching hampered by using existing words and finding expressions for theological terms which occur in religious instruction.

The very doubtful meaning of Mwari forced us soon to avoid this dangerous word and replace it by another word which meant exactly the True God, and fitted well in the Native languages (Chizezuru and Chikalanga)—Yave.⁴⁹

Further, when the Mwari controversy reached its most critical and intense phase, Richartz wrote against “the *reintroduction* of the heathen name Mwari for God, which after due and long consideration and consultation, with the consent of our Superiors and the Christian part of our Natives, *was replaced* by the old and venerable name Jahweh, or Yave.”⁵⁰

Beginning in 1898 with the Anglicans, several Western Christian groups used the name *Mwari* to translate the name of God in their prayer books, hymnals, and bibles.⁵¹ Fortune suggested that they chose Mwari due to its long standing as god’s name. Richartz argued that beginning in 1900, the Jesuits at Chishawasha published several prayer books, catechisms, and dictionaries using Yave as the word for god.⁵² Fortune further noted that Jesuits Andrew Hartmann and Edward Biehler omitted Mwari in favor of Yave in their respective Shona-English dictionaries published in 1894 and 1898.⁵³

Opinions vary as to when what has come to be known as the Mwari controversy began. George Fortune referred to the period from 1921 to 1924 as the time when “there was a discussion in Roman Catholic missionary circles as to whether the Shona word *Mwari* should not replace *Yave*.”⁵⁴ Although Fortune cited Mariannhill Fr. F. Mayr’s *Katekismus re Makristo e Sangano Rekatolike*, published in 1910, as evidence of Catholic usage of Mwari in eastern colonial Zimbabwe,⁵⁵ he did not link it specifically to the controversy of the early 1920s. Furthermore, Fortune noted that “[t]here was a difference of opinion [among the Jesuits], and the majority favoured *Mwari*”; in his article, however, he only presented the arguments of the minority that preferred Yave and opposed Mwari.⁵⁶ Terence Ranger traced the beginning of the controversy to 1911, following the publication of Mayr’s catechism.⁵⁷ Ranger, however, placed his discussion of the Mwari controversy within the context of the formation of Manyika identity and presented the debate as one between the Mariannhillers, who supported the development and use of ChiManyika, and the Jesuits, who preferred and uniformly imposed the use of ChiZezuru.⁵⁸ Like Fortune, Ranger did not discuss the opinions of the pro-Mwari group, except insofar as they preferred the use of ChiManyika.⁵⁹ Neither Fortune nor Ranger gave a sense of the magnitude of the division between the Jesuit missionaries. The redactor of the Mwari Controversy Typescript in the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe, however, did so when he noted that “[t]he controversy split the [Zambezi] Mission into two groups, to the detriment of religious charity and unity.”⁶⁰

The documentary evidence in the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe shows that it is possible to trace the beginnings of the controversy to the publication of Mayr’s 1910

catechism. According to Francis Johanny, writing to the Jesuit father general in Rome, as de facto pro-prefect apostolic and superior of the Zambezi mission in May, 1922,⁶¹ Mayr's catechism, as well as subsequent books published by Mariannhill, "used the name MWARI to designate God."⁶² With time, and in part due to a drought, Catholic neophytes from the Mariannhill missions migrated to Salisbury,

bringing with them their prayer books and their use of the name, MWARI. Hence arose some confusion, and for parish priests in native townships a difficulty, since now some of their flock called the God of the Christians JAVE, and the God of the pagans, MWARI; others, taught by the Trappists [Mariannhillers], said that MWARI and JAVE were one and the same God.⁶³

According to Johanny, in 1918, amidst preparations to revise and publish a third edition of the Chishawasha Prayer Book,⁶⁴ the prefect apostolic, Richard Sykes,

gave to a committee of three Fathers the task of correcting and amending the book. These Fathers, who could not agree among themselves, were discharged from the duty [and a] fourth Father [John Apel] was chosen who was ordered to complete the work by himself. He weighed the diverse opinions on many points and especially as to the use of the name for God. The new editor tried to steer a middle course by keeping YAVE in the body of the book, but using MWARI, especially in the Appendix where extracts from the *Imitation of Christ* were translated into the Native language.⁶⁵

Sykes apparently submitted the book to be reviewed by censors, but clearly gave his imprimatur in 1919, allowing the book to use Mwari for the name of god, and be printed and published as *The Prayer Book Edited by the Fathers of the Society [of Jesus] in the Chishawasha Mission: The Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged*. Apel, however, was not named as editor, and this apparently infuriated Francis Richartz, then superior of Chishawasha mission, who "regretted the many innovations and especially the use of the name MWARI."⁶⁶

In the same year, Edward Parry succeeded Sykes as prefect apostolic, and in 1920, appointed a committee of four—chaired by Apel—“to review, write and amend the language used in the publications in the Native languages.” Also in 1920, Parry appointed Apel as superior of Chishawasha.⁶⁷ Apparently the other members of the committee disagreed with Apel, resigned from the committee, and proposed taking the matter to Rome.⁶⁸ Parry forbade the Jesuits gathered for a conference in Bulawayo in early 1922 to discuss the question,⁶⁹ and further decided not to approve the publication of any books until the question was resolved,⁷⁰ a policy which his successor, Robert Brown, apparently continued, as seen in a July, 1923 letter from Apel:

I am sending you a copy of the Child's Bible History in Chiswina [ChiShona]. The text as it stands was passed “cum laude” by four censors under the late Mgr. Parry. His Reverence however did not give the Imprimatur on account of the divergence of opinion about the word *Mwari*. Nor did he consent to allow it to be printed when I offered to put *Yave* instead, because the question of Yave vs. Mwari was to be decided elsewhere.⁷¹

As Parry's alleged response to Apel above implied, and Johanny's letter to Fr. Ledochowski clearly stated, Parry referred the matter to the Jesuit superior general. Ledochowski referred the question back to Robert Brown with instructions “to look into the matter with great care, taking into account the usage of missionaries in neighbouring Prefectures,” and gave him the authority either to decide to resolve the conflict himself or to refer it to Propaganda Fide.⁷² Brown decided to settle the matter without reference to Propaganda Fide. In August 1923 he posted a circular letter to all Catholic mission stations in Northern and Southern Rhodesia, which read, in part:

In recent years there has arisen a controversy amongst Ours [i.e., Jesuits] as to the Native name to be used for God. The matter was referred to Rome and Very Rev. Fr. General commissioned me to go into it and

decide the question. After much serious consideration and consultation with Ours of the different mission stations and with theologians in Rome, it has forced itself upon me that the introduction of the doubtful word "Mwari" is wrong, and that the word "Jahve," which has been in possession for so long is the better word to use. Hence, in future, the word to be used to express the name of the One True God is "Jahve."

In the revision of prayers and catechisms etc., care must be taken that the old terms be retained as far as possible, otherwise confusion and distrust will be caused in the minds of the Natives.⁷³

But the controversy did not end there. More than a year later, in September, 1924, Brown wrote to Bishop Adalbero Fleischer, the superior general of Mariannhill in Natal, South Africa, and to Fr. Ignatius Arnoz, the superior of Triashill mission, threatening to suspend Arnoz and to close Triashill "unless Mwari is eliminated and Jahve substituted."⁷⁴ Evidently Arnoz must have been particularly recalcitrant in his opposition as the aforementioned letter from Brown was apparently the second sent insisting on the change from Mwari to Yave. Additionally, Fleischer also sent Arnoz a letter "which mention[ed] the introduction of Yave," but Arnoz claimed that "Mwari had ceased already and that people are praying and singing better than we ourselves the new form of God."⁷⁵

As Fortune noted, the pro-Yave/anti-Mwari faction held a minority position. A document in the Mwari controversy files lists 11 Jesuits as being "for Mwari" and seven against (subsequent correspondence, however shows two others—Andrew Hartmann and Edward Biehler—who were not listed but also against Mwari, making the total nine).⁷⁶ Thus, the Jesuits of the Zambezi Mission were almost evenly split over the question. The document further noted that Monte Cassino mission (under the direction of Mariannhill) used both Mwari and Yave, and that Triashill, "all the Protestant denominations except

the Dutch Reformed Church, Victoria District, who use Wedenga [of the sky/heaven],” and “the people of Mashonaland [who] know only Mwari,” used Mwari for the name of god.⁷⁷

The preponderance of the documentary evidence supports the pro-Yave/anti-Mwari side (much of it written by Francis Richartz). The arguments generally fell into one of two categories: practical and theological.

Of the practical reasons for keeping Yave, the most frequently invoked was that Yave was “in possession,” i.e., that the Jesuits at Chishawasha had introduced the name in 1892, their African Christians had accepted it without complaint, and there was no reason to revert to Mwari after almost 30 years. Additionally, Richartz believed that making the switch would create a “bad impression” on those African Christians who were accustomed to using Yave in their prayers, as well as give “the sects” (i.e., Protestant churches) the impression of Catholic inconsistency on the matter and the idea that Catholics were “coming over” to their perspective. Furthermore, using Yave would make African Christians dependent on the Jesuits for an explanation of the name, whereas they would be able to infer pre- or non-Christian attributes associated with Mwari, thus Richartz’s categorization of Mwari as a “dangerous” word.⁷⁸

Richartz thought Mwari was dangerous theologically because in his estimation it was a “‘nomen Dei pollutum’ [polluted name of god] and as such to be avoided, if only because of scandal to little ones, to which class all our Natives belong!” According to Richartz, the first Jesuits at Chishawasha

did not refuse Mwari maintaining that it was no name for God—we left that question open and undecided (and we *want to prove* that he, Mwari, is the Deus Verus, the Eternal Judge of the living and the dead, and the

Rewarder—without which beliefs the knowledge of and belief in God is of no use to anybody). We explained always to our people that we chose the word Jave because we are *not* sure about the being Mwari. Further we had, and have still more, reasons to be sure that Mwari (even if originally a name of God, *which is not proved*) was and is a nomen Dei pollutum. . .by all the many superstitions, immoral and barbaric customs practised by the people who, though calling perhaps Mwari the Creator, all powerful Ruler of the Universe, etc., *do not care for him, do not pray to him (Gabriel and Peter, etc.), have only a hazy idea about him, where he comes from and absolutely no idea about an eternal existence and his relation to mankind as Omniscient Judge, who after the death of men and on the General Judgement Day, rewards the good and punishes the wicked for all eternity.*

Yet this is essential for the notion of God required of those who receive baptism. “Without faith it is impossible to please God. One must believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who seek him.” Heb[rews] 11:6.⁷⁹

Thus Richartz followed “the Holy Writ [that] says: ‘Dii gentium daemonia.’” [The gods of the nations are demons].⁸⁰ Although he didn’t state it definitively, he certainly implied that he believed Mwari was a false god. Yet, the theological pollution that he attributed to Mwari was rooted in what he and his confreres perceived as VaShona (Christian and non-Christian alike) moral and theological degeneracy:

The important truth, that we do not appreciate enough the deep and low state in which *our* Natives live with regard to religious ideas, not to speak of supernatural knowledge, impressed me very much whilst repeating the parts of theology (de Deo Vero, Aeterno, Remuneratore, etc.).⁸¹

If the people bring limbo, sadza, doro, even cattle and girls to Mwari. . .they do not see him, but they hand his presents to a representative of Mwari called Mungai [sic] we Mwari (a man) who also pretends to have the same powers as Mwari, and even to be Mwari. Also women, especially widows (from another country prudently) pose as Mwari’s, are called Mbuya, wife or wives and also daughters, of Mwari. They go about the country, are solemnly revered, and know how to get out of the people what they want. A special kind of asking questions. . .is used to get prophecies out of the Mwari’s.

Those men or women pretending to work for or with or as Mwari—swindlers, of course—tell people what Mwari has said, or that he has received the presents, eaten the food, drunk the beer, etc. and the stupid Natives believe all that. They ask as a rule only material help, rain,

crops, health, etc. The Mwari says, “He will think,” and the people do not have to ask why, e.g., no rain is coming, etc.—they are afraid and believe that he is still thinking.⁸²

On the practical level, the pro-Mwari/anti-Yave faction replied to the argument that Yave was “in possession” that “In Chishawasha books, yes; in St. Triashill books, which are more numerous than ours [Chishawasha Jesuit books], no; in the country generally both pagan and protestant, no, Mwari is in possession.”⁸³ Similarly, they felt that switching to Mwari from Yave would be a positive change because it would foster unity with the Mariannhill missions, as well as with the Protestant churches and “pagan” Africans.⁸⁴ Additionally, they argued that because Ignatius Gartlan and Richard Sykes, as prefects apostolic, had given their respective imprimatur to books published using Mwari, “The conclusion seems to be that we may lawfully use either—unless it can be proved that Mwari is not the equivalent for God.”⁸⁵ Further, they argued that if Yave were retained, then other errors in translation would have to be retained as well:

The argument applies equally well to all the other errors which were unavoidably made 25 years ago for lack of dictionaries and teachers who understood English. If its conclusion is to stand we must go on baptizing: “In the name of the Father and of the *Boy* and of the Holy Ghost,” and saying, “Thou art prayed to the woman,” in the Hail Mary; “You not killing,” or “(If) you do not kill,” “You not stealing,” etc. in the Commandments; “Jesus Christ is in the *pictures* of bread and wine” in the definition of the Holy Eucharist, etc.⁸⁶

At the theological level, they argued that Mwari was preferable because African Christians frequently had “no idea of the meaning of Yave whilst they know Mwari quite well”; that Yave was a foreign name for god (although they argued that Mwari might have been the Shona translation of Allah or Ali, coming from commerce with Arab traders on the east African coast prior to the imposition of European colonial rule⁸⁷); and

that VaShona “all over the country speak of Mwari as the Creator, All-powerful and the Ruler of the Universe. To them he is the Lord who made heaven and earth.”⁸⁸

A significant point in the theological debate concerned differing opinions of what was correct missiological practice within the context of the Catholic church’s tradition. The pro-Yave/anti-Mwari side argued that no “civilized” (i.e., Christian) nation used an indigenous word for the name of the supreme being, and cited the example of Francis Xavier refusing to use a Japanese name for god while evangelizing Japan.⁸⁹:

I feel the strongest point against Mwari is that (as far as I know) not one civilized people used a word of their own language for “God.” Dieu, Dios from Deus, Deus from Greek and I do not know the Greek from where. Is that accidentally or intentionally? . . . Did all the Romanic people not have a word in their language for the highest being? Why did they all choose “Deus” or a variety [of it] and why not the word from their own language? Was the church against it? It looks like [it].⁹⁰

This line of argument found its way into Richartz’s extended reply to Apel, as well as Johanny’s letter to Fr. General Ledochowsky:

The big nations which used these names [Theos, Deus, Gott, God], knew and believed at least that those names designated the highest Lord among many Dii and Gods, and so it was relatively easy for the first preachers of the Gospel, after doing away with the latter (Gods) to explain to those civilized nations the nature of the One God, Deus, and that He was designate with the same name. . . . What the missionaries all over Africa do is their business—let them mind it. Are all African tribes alike, or in such a low state as our people?⁹¹

In such a matter it is not the sound of the word that matters, but the mental concept that accompanies the word. But it is clear to all that in the words Deus and [Theos] there is no connotation at all unworthy of God, as there is in some Native words, as has often been vehemently asserted by the experts in the Native languages; which are rightly suspected to exist in the name MWARI; further, the names Deus and [Theos] signified and were understood to mean, by the more cultured Romans and Greeks, and the philosophers, the Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, wholly distinct from the minor gods imagined by the pagans, such as Jove, Apollo, Venus, etc.

The same could hardly be maintained of our Natives, untaught, ignorant, immersed in superstition. They would not have that concept, free of all crudity and elements alien to the Godhead, when they used the name MWARI.⁹²

Ledochowski sent Robert Brown correspondence from the White Fathers (a.k.a., Missionaries of Africa) supporting this position. According to Fr. Delpuch, the White Fathers in Nyasaland (colonial Malawi) introduced the KiSwahili name for the Christian god, Mulungu, “even though the language, Ki-Swahili, was not spoken in Nyassa.”⁹³

The pro-Mwari/anti-Yave faction, however, argued that it was long established Catholic tradition to use an indigenous word for the name of god, and that Francis Xavier’s example, however much revered by his brother Jesuits, was more an exception than the rule:

From St. Peter & St. Paul down to modern African missionaries there seem[s] to be no instance on record of any mission using Yave, except Chishawasha. St. Peter found “Deus” used by pagans as a generic name for all pagan gods and he adopted it; St. Paul did the same with “[Theos]”; the apostles of England, Germany, Spain etc. all adopted the name for pagan gods; in Natal they use Unkulunkulu, in the Cape uTixo, Basutoland Modimo, Matabeleland Umlimo, Batongaland Reza, Zambesi & Nyasaland Mulungu, Congo Nzambi & Nyambi, Sud-Sansibar [sic] Mungu.

As far as the MaKaranga [sic] are concerned Mwari has never been used to denote pagan gods, though of course He has been the object of pagan worship. So it seems to have a better claim than many other names of God, including Deus and [Theos]. . . It appears that the Japanese had many “local names for God,” the VaKaranga have only one, Mwari. Had the Japanese a name for the true God as the VaKaranga certainly have? The practice of our greatest missionary in this matter looks singularly exceptional & suggests that circumstances also must have been singularly exceptional.⁹⁴

This line of argument found its way into Apel’s letter to Richartz, which the redactor of the Mwari Controversy Typescript described as “a key letter in this controversy.”⁹⁵

Significantly, there was no similar controversy among the Jesuit missionaries who worked in the missions among AmaNdebele Christians in western Zimbabwe.⁹⁶

There is very limited documentary record of African perspective on the Mwari controversy. African Christians, however, played significant roles, principally as the translators of the works that sparked the controversy in the first place.

Terence Ranger noted that the Mariannhill missionaries consulted with their African catechists and teachers in developing “missionary Manyika,” and that “the Jesuit critics of Triashill objected precisely to such consultations and to the indigenous input into the formulation of Manyika.”⁹⁷ Yet, Ranger did not include the African participation in the preparation of the controversial Jesuit text:

At present we are giving the last touches to the new translation [of the third edition of the Chishawasha catechism]. Emmanuel made the translation in the first instance. Then he and Fr. Daignault [pro-Mwari] went over it together. Then it was revised by the outschool teachers in conjunction with Fr. Daignault last October [1920]. After that, Fr. Marconnes [pro-Mwari] took it in hand. Finally, Lorenzo Sawada corrected it at Empandeni. It should soon be ready for the printer.⁹⁸

Thus, African Christians had a hand in almost every phase of the preparation of the revised catechism—from initial translation to final editorial corrections—subject to the approval of Jesuit oversight and approval, which evidently was forthcoming.

Both sides of the debate cited African support for their respective positions. Richartz claimed that “all” of the African Christians at Chishawasha and other Jesuit missions preferred the second edition—which used Yave—to the revised edition that used Mwari.⁹⁹ He further argued that reintroducing Mwari “did great harm to our Native Christians. . .so much so that they wrote to me, ‘did you teach us wrong?’ and ‘The

present vafundisi use the language of the sects!.”¹⁰⁰ The anonymous author of the “Notes on Mwari” made the counter claim that

Intelligent native Christians are well aware of many glaring mistakes in our books. A clever and good teacher stated in a letter dated 2/10/1912: “All the books translated are all wrong. They want to be collected (sic) again.”; and he went on to give examples that fully proved his statement. . We may reasonably hope that the satisfaction produced by the correction of our many glaring mistakes will go a long way towards reconciling our native Christians to Mwari and to help them to overcome a certain feeling of repugnance that some of them may have at first. This hope is based on the hearty approval which they show on hearing the new version of the catechism with Mwari in it read to them; a hearty approval manifested in remarks such as the following: “Pa ka naka pesel!”, “It’s all good”; “Ma zwahi aya a no baya”, “these words cut to the quick”; “Catekisimo iyi ino tahura yega,” “This catechism speaks itself” i.e., is quite clear. “Chi swina kwa cho ichi”, “This is real chi swina”. This being the case no serious difficulty should arise from the part of our native Christians in the making of necessary corrections and changes.¹⁰¹

More significantly, oral evidence suggests that while African Christians prayed to Yave at mass and in public prayers with the Jesuits present, in private and in personal prayers many people prayed to Mwari.¹⁰² This indicates the probable presence of a hidden transcript favoring Mwari on the part of African Christians at Chishawasha, the ostensible bastion of the Yave camp.

Official church approbation of Mwari appears to have begun in the Gwelo diocese (among predominantly ChiKaranga-speakers) under the guidance of the Swiss Bethlehem missionaries. On May 19, 1961, Bishop Aloysius Haene “permitted the use of the word Mwari.”¹⁰³ The reversal was apparently part of a process to “clear the catechism and devotional texts of Latinisms.” The changes in terminology were based on discussions with African teachers and catechists, and eventually led to the first ChiShona mass in Southern Rhodesia being said in the Gwelo diocese.¹⁰⁴ There is no documentary evidence of approval of the change more broadly in colonial Zimbabwe in either the archives of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference or the Archdiocese of Harare. George Fortune, based on personal communication with Jesuit Fr. Michael Hannan, noted that

The chief reason for the change was that the African clergy thought that there was an implied discrimination in not using a traditional [sic] African name for God, a practice that had been allowed to pagans of the past who had their own names applied to the Christian God, for example Zeus in Greek, Deus in Latin and the Romance languages, and Gott in German and related languages; also the use of African names, such as *Mulungu* in Nyanja and *Leza* in Tonga, had become an accepted practice long before the 1960s.¹⁰⁵

Although Hannan suggested to Fortune that the change from Yave to Mwari took place around 1966,¹⁰⁶ Jesuit Fr. Oscar Wermter recalled that the use of Mwari was widespread

on his arrival in Southern Rhodesia in 1963,¹⁰⁷ prior to the promulgation of the decrees and other documents of the Second Vatican Council.

Rather than attempt to ascribe blame or responsibility for the Mwari controversy, an answer to which would leave the discussion at the level of a debate between European missionaries—albeit a serious and intense one, it appears to be far more useful to examine the debate within the broader context of African religious developments. Fortune and Ranger both suggested the antiquity of the use of the name Mwari among ChiShona-speakers dating back from one to three thousand years. Fortune further noted that Mwari never really gained acceptance as the name of the supreme being among speakers of the ChiZezuru dialect of ChiShona on the central plateau between the Zambezi and the Limpopo rivers, whereas it did in other areas of what eventually became colonial Zimbabwe.

When Francis Richarts and his confreres arrived at Chishawasha—at the heart of the ChiZezuru-speaking area—in 1892, regardless of the Jesuits' apprehensions as to whether Mwari was a “*nomen Dei pollutum*,” it should not be surprising that the VaShona who became Christians and resided on the Jesuits' mission farms would not be averse to the introduction of Yave for the name of the Christian god, given their purported hesitance concerning Mwari. The Mariannhill missionaries established their missions in the east, among ChiManyika-speakers, where Mwari evidently was accepted as a name for the high god. Thus, it seems logical that there would be little complaint from African converts to Christianity about using Mwari to identify the Christian god. Within this context, then, the Mwari controversy was not merely a bitter debate between and among European missionaries, rather it appears to have been the manifestation in

modern Christian form of a millennia-old debate between and among ChiShona-speaking Africans as to what names are appropriate for the supreme being/creator god. This highlights the need for a geography of missions, as suggested by Herbert Chimhundu in his study of Western missionary involvement in configuring the modern ethnolinguistic map of Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁸

Notes

1. JAZ, Box 260/1, Andrew Hartmann, S.J. to Francis Richartz, S.J., July 26, 1921. I am grateful to Fr. Karl-Ferdinand Schmidt, S.J. for translating this passage from the original German.
2. Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi et al., "What Does the Name 'Mwari' Mean?" I am grateful to Dr. Paul Gundani of the Department of Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Classics of the University of Zimbabwe for providing a copy of this unpublished article. According to the date of an early draft of this essay the translation project was in progress as of October 1986 and as of May, 2000 was still on-going when I interviewed Fr. Chidavaenzi.
3. Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi et al., "What Does the Name 'Mwari' Mean?", unpublished essay, 2.
4. *ibid.*, 4. The ChiShona may be translated "[Muwari] was the one who spreads out all the things that we see in the world."
5. ChiShona, like most Bantu languages, is a tonal language.
6. Chidavaenzi et al., "What Does the Name 'Mwari' Mean?", 4.
7. *ibid.*, 4-5.
8. *ibid.*, 5.
9. *ibid.*, 6.
10. *ibid.*, 6-9.
11. *ibid.*, 8.
12. *ibid.*, 10.
13. *ibid.*, 10. Emphasis in original.
14. *ibid.*, 11. Emphasis in original.
15. George Fortune, "Who Was Mwari?", *Rhodesian History*, 1973 (4), 1-20; quote from page 2.
16. See S.I.G. Mudenge, "An Identification of the Rozvi and its Implication for the History of the Karanga," *Rhodesian History*, 1974 (5), 19-31, in which Mudenge argued that the Rozvi were historical Karanga and the Changamire state rose to power c.1684-1695 under Changamire Dombo I.
17. Fortune, "Who Was Mwari?", 3.

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18. *ibid.*, 4.
 19. *ibid.*, 5.
 20. *ibid.*, 5.
 21. *ibid.*, 13.
 22. *ibid.*, 14.
 23. *ibid.*, 14-15.
 24. *ibid.*, 15.
 25. *ibid.*, 10.
 26. *ibid.*, 6-8.
 27. *ibid.*, 19.
 28. T.O. Ranger, "The Meaning of Mwari," *Rhodesian History*, 1974 (5), 5, 6, 9.
 29. *ibid.*, 6-8.
 30. *ibid.*, 12.
 31. *ibid.*, 11.
 32. *ibid.*, 11.
 33. *ibid.*, 13. Cf. Fortune above who argued that the Mwari cult was based only in the Matopos and that the Venda went to the Matopos to offer tribute and supplications.
 34. *ibid.*, 14.
 35. *ibid.*, 14-15.
 36. S.I.G. Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988).
 37. *ibid.*, 95-96. Cf. Lan. *Guns and Rain*.
 38. *ibid.*, 122-25.
 39. *ibid.*, 126.
 40. *ibid.*, 127.

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41. *ibid.*, 128.
42. *ibid.*, 129-30.
43. *ibid.*, 130.
44. *ibid.*, 132-33.
45. *ibid.*, 133.
46. See David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (London: James Curry Ltd., 1985).
47. See, e.g., Francis Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question and Other Changes in Our Original Expressions in the Catechism and Prayer Book at Chishawasha," June, 1923, JAZ, Box 260/2, also in Mwari Controversy Typescript (MCT hereafter), 55-60. The original documents for MCT pp. 1-32 are in Box 260/1, and MCT pp. 33ff. are in Box 260/2.
48. JAZ, Box 260/2, Francis Richartz, "Reasons against Mwari," n.d., c. August, 1923. Emphasis in original.
49. Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question," JAZ, MCT, 55.
50. Richartz to John Apel, S.J., June 20, 1921, JAZ, MCT, 17. Emphasis added.
51. Fortune, "Who Was Mwari?", 5-10.
52. Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question," JAZ, MCT, 55.
53. Fortune, "Who Was Mwari?", 6-7.
54. *ibid.*, 8.
55. *ibid.*, 7, footnote 30.
56. *ibid.*, 8-9.
57. Terence Ranger, "Missionaries, Migrants, and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe," in Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1988), 135.
58. *ibid.*, 134-37.
59. *ibid.*, 136.
60. JAZ, MCT, Frontpage.

61. The prefect apostolic of the Zambezi mission, Edward Parry, appointed Johanny pro-prefect prior to his (Parry's) departure from Salisbury to visit the Jesuit missions in Northern Rhodesia. Parry died in colonial Zambia on May 21, 1922, but Johanny did not receive the news until June 3. Thus he remained acting superior of the mission until the appointment and arrival of Robert Brown as prefect later in the year. See Editor's note, MCT, 46.

62. JAZ, MCT, Francis Johanny to Fr. General, May 31, 1922, 33-48. Quotation on p.33. Emphasis in original.

63. *ibid.*, 34. Emphasis in original. In 1909, the Religious Missionaries of Mariannhill split from the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, or Trappists.

64. First edition published in 1900, second edition published in 1913.

65. JAZ, MCT, Johanny to Fr. General, May 31, 1922, 34-35.

66. *ibid.*, 35. Cf. Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question," JAZ, MCT, 56-57.

67. Johanny to Fr. General, May 31, 1922, 35. Cf. Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question," 56-57.

68. Johanny to Fr. General, May 31, 1922, 35. See also JAZ, MCT, Charles Bert to Johanny, July 15, 1922, 53.

69. Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question," 57.

70. Johanny to Fr. General, May 31, 1922, 35. See also Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question," 57.

71. JAZ, Box 100/3, John Apel to Robert Brown, July 2, 1923.

72. JAZ, MCT, M. Ledochowski to Robert Brown, December 22, 1922.

73. JAZ, Box 13, [Robert] Brown file, Circular Letter, August 25, 1923. Also in MCT, 68.

74. JAZ, MCT, 69, Brown to Johanny, September 23, 1924.

75. JAZ, MCT, 70, Fr. Ignatius Arnoz, RMM to Brown, October 12, 1924.

76. JAZ, MCT, 1, "For and Against Mwari," For Mwari: Frs. Withnell, Hornig, Gardner, Marconness, O'Neil, Burbridge, Torrend, Daignault, Apel, Bontemps, Quin. Against Mwari: Frs. Richartz, Johanny, Bert, Loubiere, Kaibach, Schmitz, Seed.

77. *ibid.*

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78. JAZ, MCT, 17-25, Richartz to Apel, June 20, 1921.
79. *ibid.*, 21. Emphasis in original.
80. *ibid.*, 20.
81. JAZ, MCT, 26, Richartz to Parry, June 24, 1921.
82. JAZ, MCT, 22, Richartz to Apel, June 20, 1921.
83. JAZ, MCT, 7, Anonymous, "Notes on Mwari," n.d. (attributed to Fr. William O'Neil, S.J.).
84. *ibid.*, 6.
85. JAZ, MCT, 12-13, John Apel to Francis Richartz, May 19, 1921.
86. JAZ, MCT, "Notes on Mwari," 9. Emphasis in original.
87. *ibid.*, 7; JAZ, Box 260/1, Andrew Hartmann to Francis Richartz, July 26, 1921. I am grateful to Fr. Karl-Ferdinand Schmidt, S.J. for translating this passage from the original German.
88. JAZ, MCT, 13, Apel to Richartz, May 19, 1921.
89. For the reference to Francis Xavier, see JAZ, MCT, 8, "Notes on Mwari"; JAZ, MCT, 38, Francis Johanny to Fr. General, May 31, 1922.
90. JAZ, Box 260/1, Emil Schmitz, S.J. to Richartz, June 10, 1921.
91. JAZ, MCT, 23-24, Richartz to Apel, June 20, 1921.
92. JAZ, MCT, 43-44, Johanny to Ledochowsky, May 31, 1922.
93. JAZ, MCT, 54, Fr. General Ledochowski to Brown, December 20, 1922; JAZ, MCT, 61-62, Letter of A. Delpuch, M.Afr., November 21, 1922.
94. JAZ, MCT, 5-6, 8, "Notes on Mwari."
95. JAZ, MCT, 12-13, Apel to Richartz, May 19, 1921.
96. Telephone interview with Rev. Bernard Ndlovu, Bulawayo, May 11, 2000.
97. Terence Ranger, "Missionaries, Migrants, and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe," 136.
98. JAZ, MCT, 12, Apel to Richartz, May 19, 1921.

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99. JAZ, MCT, 51, Remarks of F.J. Richartz redacted by Francis Johanny, May 17, 1922.
100. JAZ, MCT, 58, Francis Richartz, "Some Remarks about the Mwari Question and Others [sic] Changes in our Original Expressions in the Catechism and Prayer Book at Chishawasha," 1923.
101. JAZ, MCT, 9-10, "Notes on Mwari."
102. Interview with C.L. Muringayi, Chishawasha Mission, July 31, 2000.
103. Conversation with Fr. Albert Plangger, SMB, Mambo House, Harare, May 16, 2000.
104. *ibid.*
105. Fortune, "Who Was Mwari?", 9, footnote #39.
106. *ibid.*
107. Conversation with Fr. Oscar Wermter, S.J., Africa Synod House, Harare, March 6, 2000.
108. See Herbert Chimhundu, "Early Missionaries and the Ethnolinguistic Factor During the 'Invention of Tribalism' in Zimbabwe," *Journal of African History*, 33/1 (1992), 87-109.

Chapter 9: Bread and Wine or Beer and Meat?: The Kurova Guva Rites Controversy

September 20, 1931: Mass. No communions, no Benediction, no procession, [or] Stations of the Cross because of two cases of *Kurova Guva* with all their incidental heathenism.

Chishwasha *Historia Domus*¹

This chapter addresses the debate surrounding the adaptation of VaShona cultural practices of honoring the spirits of the dead, or *kurova guva*, to Catholic religious practices, and in many ways is the obverse side of the story presented in the previous chapter. Initially banned by Catholic missionaries shortly after their arrival in Southern Rhodesia in the early 1890s, the ritual persisted clandestinely on mission farms throughout the twentieth century. Largely at the urging of the Catholic Association and with the support of the growing African clergy, discussions began about lifting the ban and adapting *kurova guva* to the church.. The discussions culminated in approval of a modified form of the rite, called *kuchenura munhu*, by the Catholic bishops in 1978, which subsequently received approval from the Vatican on an experimental basis in 1981. In the late 1990s, however, several African bishops and priests renewed the debate about the validity of the *kuchenura munhu* rite.

It is important to note at the outset that this chapter differs significantly from the previous chapters on marriage practices and the Mwari controversy. Because the practice of *kurova guva* was banned, VaShona Catholics had to perform it secretly, thus there is very little documentary evidence of its practice in the Jesuit Archives of Zimbabwe or the Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare. Access to the deliberations and reports of the various committees and commissions established by the bishops as well as the minutes of the bishops' own deliberations was severely restricted. Additionally, political violence in

the wake of the defeat of the constitutional referendum of February 2000, made it virtually impossible to conduct oral research at the various mission stations on which archival materials had been gathered. Accordingly, the narrative of the process by which the *kuchenura munhu* rite was developed and approved is taken largely from Dr. Paul Gundani's article, "The Roman Catholic Church and the *Kurova Guva* Ritual in Zimbabwe,"² for which access to the bishops' conference materials was evidently given. This is supplemented where possible by documentary evidence from Chishawasha mission, as well as by a brief analysis of the most academically rigorous contribution to the current debate over *kuchenura munhu*.

According to the literature,³ VaShona theology holds that when a person dies the spirit leaves the body and the homestead (*musha*) in which the person lived. This is sometimes referred to as wandering in the forest. *Kurova guva* is performed to bring the spirit of the deceased back to the homestead so that it can take its place among the ancestral spirits (*midzimu* or *vadzimu*, singular: *mudzimu*), and assist in protecting the living from evil. Prior to the ceremony, which is performed roughly six months to a year after the person's death (usually during the dry season, i.e., May-October), the family of the deceased will often consult a *n'ganga* (healer/diviner) to determine the cause of death, specifically whether an evil spirit (*ngozi*) was responsible. The ceremony is also associated with the final dissolution of the person's property (*nhaka*). The rite usually involves slaughtering an animal (ox or goat), and offering the meat and/or millet beer to the spirit, and sometimes the libation of the animal's blood on the deceased's grave. The remainder of the meat and beer is consumed in a feast welcoming the spirit home.

Michael Gelfand described the significance of *kurova guva* as follows:

The purpose of *kurova guva* is to bring back the spirit of the deceased from the grave to his hut to be in the midst of his descendants. . . . This ceremony illustrates the close bond which exists between the living and the dead in Shona family life. The proximity of the grave to the living quarters and the bringing back of the spirit to the home continually reminds the family of the dead man [sic]. They felt his presence amongst them and since the spirit is endowed with supernatural powers of protection, it is evident how strong a hold he and the other ancestral spirits must have in the daily activities and actions of the family. Nothing is more serious than to forget the *vadzimu* for this will provoke them to anger and retribution must surely follow. As the *vadzimu* keep a watchful eye on their descendants, the latter must be very careful to carry out all that is prescribed.⁴

From the beginning of the Catholic mission in colonial Zimbabwe, the Jesuits decided that *kurova guva* violated the first commandment by offering sacrifices to false gods.⁵

With regard to *kurova guva*, the early [Jesuit] missionaries taught that to take part in it was a grave sin. Taking part in the ceremonies was understood to be participation in “ancestral worship” and therefore contrary to the first commandment.⁶

According to Gundani, despite the prohibition on performing *kurova guva*, “the practice continued unabated. Such a lapse into the non-Christian (‘pagan’) habits was met with austere measures such as expulsion from sacraments, prohibition from entering the church during mass, or relegation to the back of the church when admitted. The strongest disciplinary measure taken against those who did not obey the mission regulations was eviction from the Mission farm.”⁷

Gundani claimed that many African Catholics saw the missionary ban on *kurova guva* “as the negation of the very essence of their (Shona) understanding of the spiritual world.”⁸ Accordingly, their resistance took a variety of “subtle secretive forms.”

including: “compromise rituals which were held publicly, camouflaged by new rites, commonly called ‘*musande*,’” in which the priest would lead “a service of Christian prayers, mostly extemporaneous, and hymns” as well as “bless the grain for the beer which was to be brewed for the participants’ consumption” at a feast to honor the spirit of the deceased; and the practice of *kutora mudzimu* (to take the spirit of the deceased), that is, rather than perform *kurova guva* on the mission farm, the family took some soil from the decedent’s grave in the mission cemetery to the African communal areas, killed a goat and severed its head, then buried the head with the soil from the mission cemetery.⁹ According to Gundani, prior to the arrival of the Christian missionaries this ritual was performed by VaShona emigrants:

The idea was to have their ancestors emigrate with them to the new place where they were going to settle. . . .the ritual was a sign that the [family] members still cherished the ancestor’s protection. Taking away the spirit from the mission cemetery to their original homes for a second burial enabled Catholics on the mission farms to honour their dead without incurring the wrath of the missionary priests, which invariably led to eviction. The *kurova guva* ceremony would take place in the communal lands over the weekend and the priests at the mission were left in the dark regarding the ceremony.¹⁰

That *kurova guva* and the practice of *bira*, or the invocation of a senior ancestral spirit to possess a medium (*svikiro*) continued,¹¹ is supported by documentary evidence from the Jesuit archives and oral testimonies from current and former residents of various Jesuit mission farms. The frequent references to “beer drinks” etc. refer to *bira*, which is usually held at night until dawn the following morning.

In the middle of the night there was an obscene dance at the house of Theo. . . .and so the boys, at the order of Fr. Richartz, totally destroyed the house.¹²

Seven Mt. Darwin boys, hitherto most trustworthy, returned tonight from a kraal dead drunk and fighting. We spent some time in clearing them out of their sleeping quarters and putting them elsewhere—a revolting task. They are to kneel at the church doors and abstain from the sacraments and do other penances until further notice. Half the men of the congregation were drunk this morning after a big beer drink (a *kurova kwe guva*); further investigation to be made. . . .Fr. Seed went off and overturned the rest of the beer. The police made two arrests yesterday. [Fr. Seed went] to Gormonzi. . . .Discussed yesterday's affairs with the Police and discovered the two Police boys [African policemen] had arrested seven, two strangers only being liable for punishment. These two got away before arriving at Goromonzi—the two Police boys were also somewhat fuddled. The Police took a statement from Fr. Seed. Patrol Knill arrived to obtain witnesses re drinking by the Police boys. Apparently the law forbids natives to brew beer without permission from their master.¹³

Evidently, the Jesuits were not necessarily opposed to the brewing of beer or dancing in and of themselves, rather they were opposed to beer brewing and dancing associated with the midzimu:

Celebrations for the name day of Fr. Richartz. 36 baptisms by Fr. Sykes. . .at 9:30, the whole parish congratulated Fr. Richartz; great parade; boys, young men, married men followed 112 women and girls carrying on their heads big pots of beer; also some 700 non-Christian adults, not counting the children.¹⁴

The boys put on a fantastic dance [for the visiting Chief Native Commissioner].¹⁵

Two eldest children (John and Cecilia) of Simon Taoneyi married Nuptial mass. Great jubilation at Nazareth. [Jesuit] Community invited there for tea in afternoon. We went. Big crowd. They ate an ox and four bags of mealies [corn meal]. How much was drunk is not known.¹⁶

December 25, 1931: No midnight mass—punishment for the prevalence of drink and immorality. Midnight mass for the Sisters, Candidates, and Brothers in the Convent.¹⁷

According to C.L. Muringayi, a life-long resident of Chishawasha, priests didn't try to stop beer drinking or brewing, but the midzimu and *kurova guva* were forbidden. If anyone were found out s/he would be expelled. In the early 1920s or 1930s, Michael

Shambare's *baba mudiki* (father's younger brother) was expelled for invoking the midzimu. According to Muringayi, people would tell the missionaries. He further claimed that Shambare's mother was a svikiro, and "when she was possessed she said that the midzimu didn't want him to become a priest."¹⁸

In one instance the priests at Chishawasha had "all the chiefs" in and around the mission "summoned" by the local native commissioner and "detained for three weeks" for "dealings with a witch-doctor" [n'ganga].¹⁹ In another, allegations of activity involving spirits resulted in the Jesuits keeping a watchful eye on one specific resident:

Fr. Schmitz hear from *all* sides that the wife of Goto Marege has a *shave* [healing spirit] and that pagans and Christians visit her, and this is going on for many years. Goto and his wife deny everything. . . . [Four years later] Last night Frs. Seed and Gits made a raid on Goto Marengi's kraal where much drinking was in progress. Took the names of many drunkards from other kraals—caught one of the teachers (undergoing the [teacher training] course, here) on the veld with another man's wife—both drunk.²⁰

Similarly, oral evidence testifies to the Jesuits' opposition to kurova guva. One Jesuit brother stated that his maternal grandfather invoked the midzimu, "and he got chased out of there. There were lots [of people who did so]. Not only him."²¹ Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL said many people at a Catholic mission near her home in Mutambara in Mukoni district both engaged in Christian rites and practiced bira. She claimed that the priests knew, and recalled an incident in which a priest "covered himself and participated [in bira] one night. The next Sunday he forbade the participants to receive communion."²²

Even residents at Kutama mission, famous for the Christian village founded by Jean-Baptiste Loubière ("the enclosure," according to one resident), admitted that African

Christians performed kurova guva, though they were apparently few in number. According to Boniface Gumbo, the Jesuits “had to be cautious with tribal [sic] dances and rituals. The church didn’t want to hear of this.” Because of church opposition to VaShona rites, which “slowed [evangelizing] penetration into the elders, [the Jesuits] established the Christian village: Christians in and non-Christians out.” Missionaries set policy and African lay leaders, such as Joseph Dambaza Chikerema, implemented it. Gumbo admitted that his father

snuck off to beer drinks. . .[but] not many snuck out because there was a lot of intimidation. [Fr. Jerome] O’Hea would go out and fight if he heard drums, etc. [People] couldn’t expose themselves easily. . . .There was freedom, there was beer, music, and dancing, but they couldn’t expose themselves as people speaking out.²³

Teresa Joe similarly acknowledged that “some [residents in the Christian village at Kutama] used beer and the midzimu privately,” though she wasn’t sure how many. Because “Kurova guva wasn’t allowed,” the residents “had a big dinner and a mass. [The body] was taken to the church [for a] whole night wake [during which] there was the rosary and singing hymns. This was followed by burial the next day.” One of the changes in the Christian village implemented by Fr. Jerome O’Hea following Loubière’s death in 1930 was to allow people to brew beer openly. Despite this relative relaxation of discipline within the Christian village, there are “few Christians doing kurova guva or using the midzimu [at Kutama] even today.”²⁴

As Boniface Gumbo noted, the Jesuits in colonial Zimbabwe were “cautious” with regard to African rituals and their willingness to adapt them to church practices. While feelings of Western cultural superiority more than likely figured prominently in

their thinking, rituals dealing with ancestors and incorporation of local practices were the same issues in China and India from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (known as the Chinese rites and Malabar rites controversies respectively) that contributed significantly to Pope Clement XIV's decision to suppress the Society of Jesus in 1773. The Chinese rites controversy, in particular, centered on whether Christian converts could participate in rituals honoring Confucius and ancestral spirits. Jesuits such as Mateo Ricci claimed that because they were civil ceremonies, Chinese Christians could participate without fear of violating the first commandment. Others in the church, including the Dominican fathers, argued that the ceremonies were religious and constituted sacrifice to a false deity.²⁵ The suppression of the Society for over forty years clearly indicates that the Jesuits had chosen the losing side of the debate, and this figured prominently in the long corporate memory of the Jesuits in Southern Rhodesia.

Writing to Edward Parry, the prefect of the Zambezi Mission, concerning a debate among the missionaries about "encouraging wicked pagan customs" in February 1920, Fr. Francis Johanny suggested a careful study of the question and invoked the specter of the Chinese rites controversy:

Frs. Casset, Daignault, and Loubière may be right, and yet even then obviously Frs. Moreau, Richartz, and Hess are not encouraging wicked pagan customs, because obviously also these customs, *in their eyes* and *in their opinion* are neither wicked in themselves nor of pagan significance. If the point of view of Frs. M[oreau], R[ichartz], and H[esse] is right then Frs. C[asset], D[aignault], and L[oubière] are wrong; but the latter's contention would be precisely that these customs are tainted with pagan superstition and therefore wicked. That precisely is the question which needs looking into. In fact, I think we are here face to face with a question which, because of the divergent, even opposite, views held by the Missionaries about it, and because of the warmth of feeling its discussion is apt to develop, will require at no distant date, a close and minute study by a competent, impartial, third party. The reason in plain: opposition of

views in these matters will lead to difference of action (where uniformity is essential) and to confusion of the Natives' mind. Hence I should consider it a most regrettable thing if Your Reverence who, of course, will have to act as arbiter and judge, happened to let either party feel or suspect that you side with the other, on that subject of pagan customs. . .

The question appears to me most interesting because it affords a parallel case with the question of the Malabar and Chinese Rites. The latter especially has points not unlike those which vex our missionaries—e.g., honours paid to ancestor spirits, the name used for God, etc. And the history of the Society [of Jesus] throws a light on the cautious course we should follow. For, as Your Reverence will remember, though our missionaries were almost unanimous in their view that those rites were purely civil ceremonies and that they had no religious significance—what Fr. Moreau would maintain of Tonga customs—and though the men who held these views were eminent for learning and holiness, yet others, Dominicans, Bishops, etc. held the opposite view and in the end Rome's decision, both through its Legate, Cardinal Tournon, and through the Popes themselves, went against us.

For obviously, though condescension to Native weakness may be adopted up to a certain point, Rome will value and maintain above all things the unity of the Faith, and therefore one cannot a priori lay down any rule until the matter has been thoroughly sifted, to make sure that the superstitious practices are not really carried out by our Christians.²⁶

Although the memory of the Chinese and Malabar rites figured in the minds of members of the Zambezi Mission, curiously they did not seem to have taken note of either of the documents that formally ended the controversies by allowing for the adaptation and admission of local customs to church practice in 1935,²⁷ nor of a similar 1938 letter to the apostolic delegate in the Belgian Congo allowing for the adaptation of local funerary practices.²⁸ The cardinals at the head of Propaganda Fide decided to leave approbation of adapted rites to the discretion of the apostolic delegate and the local ordinaries.

As with the Mwari controversy, Jesuits were split over the practices in which African Christians engaged. That the debate erupted among Jesuits points yet again to the

fact that Christians living on the mission farms were very selective as to which parts of the Christian message they accepted, which parts they adapted, and which parts they rejected. Also, as with the Mwari controversy, not all African Christians accepted and practiced *kurova guva*. The example of Joseph Munyongani Mutoko, the first convert at Chishawasha clearly demonstrates this:

[Munyongani's first wife] Maria took ill in childbirth. The [Jesuit] Fathers tried to help her and had her brought in to Harare hospital. She gave birth to the child without trouble. But on the way back to Chishawasha Maria died. . . then the child died, too, just as the sun was coming up.

Maria had a fine funeral, with the people at the Mass, which was the first Mass for the Dead at Chishawasha. . . .

When on his deathbed, "Finally the father [Munyongani] addressed his children: 'You must continue to behave well as you did when I was alive. No quarrelling or grumbling. And see to it that your own children get married, just as you did for my sake.

'I warn you, I do not want the "*kurova guva*" ceremony done for me. If you do, I shall hold it against you. Nor are you to go (to the witchdoctor) [n'ganga] to find out what (or who) killed me. Can you not see, my years on this earth are at an end?'"²⁹

As noted in chapter six above, the bishops' decision to establish a commission of inquiry resulted from the request of the territorial council of the Catholic Association to study the possibility of adapting *kurova guva*. Paul Gundani noted that several African priests, most notably Fr. Joseph Kumbirai of the Gwelo diocese, took the lead in promoting adaptation and experimentation.³⁰

In 1968, the bishops conference established an inter-diocesan committee to investigate the issue further. The following year, the committee presented a report that "argued that *kurova guva* and similar ancestral rites were to be understood in the context of the fourth Commandment ('Honour thy father and mother') rather than the first (against false gods). Hence such practices were not idolatrous nor against the Catholic

faith. The committee therefore recommended the lifting of the ban on *kurova guva* for pastoral reasons.”³¹ Fr. Emmanuel Mavudzi of the Salisbury archdiocese, however, submitted a minority report “reject[ing] *kurova guva* and ancestor veneration in general. [Fr. Mavudzi] called upon Catholic members and their relatives to engage in a simple ceremony of comforting the bereaved—*nyaradzo*.”³²

The conflicting reports led the bishops to recommend further study, and to highlight the need for general instruction of the laity concerning the significance of inculturation in the wake of Vatican II. Accordingly, no further progress was made until after the establishment of the National Association of Diocesan Clergy (NADC) in 1973, when the African priests “supported the recommendation of the majority report by the inter-diocesan committee to lift the ban on *kurova guva*” The following June, 1974, the bishops accepted the recommendations of the inter-diocesan committee and the NADC to remove the ban on *kurova guva*, and tasked a new theological commission to develop “a theological argument” for the rite while also considering Fr. Mavudzi’s minority report.³³

According to Gundani, the majority of the theological commission defined sacrifice as “a special act of external worship by which something can be perceived by the senses, is legitimately offered to God. . .the action of offering involving a certain change in the thing being offered—to show recognition of His supreme majesty,” and argued that performing *kurova guva* was “doing one’s duty to the departed spirit and fulfilling one’s family obligation.”³⁴ Further, they contended that in this light, the ox and goat “should not be viewed as sacrifice in the theological sense but as food for the invited

guests and all participants and that it symbolized the honour and respect paid to the deceased."³⁵

As with the inter-diocesan committee, a single priest submitted a minority opinion. Fr. Bernard Ndhlovu contended that VaShona, AmaNdebele, and VaKalanga practices of reinstating the dead "was at best a form of religious sacrificial act. . . .directed to the spirit of the deceased and not to God," and that the ceremony contravened the first commandment.³⁶ He further argued that "people performed the ceremony out of fear based on the assumption that the spirit of the deceased had power over the living if they did not perform the rite. If the overall motive then was to pacify the spirit, Fr. Ndhlovu argued, then the practice was not only evil, but incongruous with the Christian faith."³⁷

According to Gundani, the theological commission saw kurova guva and other practices related to the midzimu as compatible with Christianity. The majority of the commission

endorsed the Inter-diocesan Committee's position that kurova guva and the overall Shona belief in communing with and depending on the ancestors provided fertile soil for the church's teaching and belief in the communion of Saints. The Church teaches that Saints have communion with the living and intercede on behalf of the living to God. The majority members therefore viewed the status of ancestors as comparable to that of the Saints since the spirit brought back home to protect the family is also expected to intercede to the senior family ancestors (*madzitateguru*).³⁸

Evidently Fr. Ndhlovu also raised a concern regarding the status of the spirit after death and before reinstatement. The majority took the position that the VaShona understanding of purification associated with kurova guva was also compatible with the Catholic doctrine concerning purgatory. According to the church, the souls of those who

retain the effects of unrepented sin must be purified before attaining salvation. They require the prayers of the living faithful to help them in the process of purification. Similarly, according to VaShona belief, death “inflict[ed] a ‘black spell’ on the spirit of the deceased” necessitating purification. The “duty and responsibility of the living to the dead performed in the hope that the spirit would be given a place in the other world” was an integral part of this belief.³⁹

Accordingly, the commission recommended that the bishops not only lift the ban on kurova guva, but “that it be Christianized for liturgical purposes.” The bishops then referred the matter to Bishop Patrick Chakaipa, the recently appointed first African bishop, to consult with the National Association of Diocesan Clergy. The NADC held meetings in 1977 and 1978, and ultimately: decided that Christianizing kurova guva was a matter of urgency; approved the offering of grain, beer, and animal victims; and rejected the role of the diviner (*n'ganga*) in determining the cause of death (*gata*) and the singing of war songs (*ngondo*) when returning from the grave to the homestead.⁴⁰ They submitted their report to the bishops in March, 1978, and in June the bishops asked the NADC to develop a catechism for the new rite—to be called *kuchenura munhu* (to purify the person). After extensive grass roots consultations, the NADC committee submitted its draft of the catechism on kuchenura munhu to the Commission for Christian Formation and Worship, which then forwarded it to the bishops for adoption in early 1980. The bishops, in turn, sent the catechism and rite to Rome, and on April 9, 1981 received approbation *ad experimentum* for three years. Mambo Press published the rite with the catechism “for use by all members of the Church” in 1982.⁴¹

Paul Gundani attributes the Zimbabwean Catholic hierarchy's adaptation of kurova guva rites "as official liturgy" to the radicalization of the Catholic Association caused by "the growing consciousness expressed in African nationalism" and the support of "the few Black clergy" who "became a force to [be] reckon[ed] with in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, from 1972 when they formed" the NADC. He further argued that kurova guva represents a "classic case" of inculturation, and that "the process of change which resulted in the new liturgy was unique in the 'historical' churches" because it sprang up from the grassroots, not from the top down.⁴² The development of the kuchenura munhu rite, while highlighting the roles that the Catholic Association and the African clergy played (coupled with the new theological dispensation of the Second Vatican Council) in opening discursive space in which to discuss adaptation of kurova guva to a form acceptable to Catholic belief and practice, also clearly demonstrates African Christians' ability to discern their own interests, and not only negotiate successfully the contested bounds of Catholic theological discourse, but to expand them to include distinctly African forms of Christian belief and practice into the universal church's doctrinal and liturgical corpora.

Kuchenura Munhu Reconsidered

In December, 1997, the issue of the nature of kurova guva, specifically whether it was a sacrifice that derogated from the worship due to God alone, came to the fore of Zimbabwean Catholic theological discourse.⁴³ One of the bishops called for a renewed investigation of the kuchenura munhu rites (which were still approved *ad experimentum*) when allegedly several of his priests claimed that they were "confused" regarding the

theology surrounding the rites.⁴⁴ This touched off a flurry of articles in the Catholic press.⁴⁵ Notably, Emmanuel Mavudzi restated his opposition to the Christianized form of *kurova guva*.⁴⁶

In a series of three articles, Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi of the Diocese of Chinoyi examined the questions of whether *kurova guva* was a sacrifice, and whether there was anything theologically objectionable associated with the *kuchenura munhu* rite.⁴⁷ Fr. Chidavaenzi took issue with the assertion in the catechesis of the *kuchenura munhu* ritual that *kupira* (offering) is “a purely symbolic gesture without sacrificial connotations in the theological sense,”⁴⁸ and argued that *kurova guva* was a sacrifice akin to devil or angel worship, and that because sacrifice was a form of divine worship that ought to be reserved only for God (i.e., *latreia*), it was not possible to inculturate *kurova guva*, only to retain “what is good in *Kurova guva*. . .to enhance our faith.”⁴⁹ At no point in any of his articles, however, did Fr. Chidavaenzi ever state what he thought was “good in *Kurova guva*.”

The elements of *kuchenura munhu* that Fr. Chidavaenzi found “objectionable” included: the use of blood in animal slaughter; libation of blood or beer; the offering of animals, beer, tobacco, or other goods to the spirit of the deceased rather than directly to God; what he perceived as the divinization of ancestor spirits (i.e., the ascription of divine attributes to the spirits) in the *kuchenura munhu* rite; and the performance of the ritual only for married adults. According to the MuShona theologian, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and its re-enactment “in the Eucharist” (i.e., the mass) replaced “all these sacrifices (goats and cattle), offerings (beer and tobacco), [and] the libation (of

blood and beer).⁵⁰ Following the arguments of Frs. Ndhlovu and Mavudzi, Fr. Chidavaenzi also criticized the alleged fear that motivated people to perform either kurova guva or kuchenura munhu.⁵¹

At the back of the mind lingers the feeling that this ceremony is not really necessary for salvation but we must inculturate it because whether we inculturate it or not people will not relinquish it, not because of their love for the dead but because of the fear connected with not performing this ritual for their dead. . . . The whole ritual [kuchenura munhu] smacks [of] double allegiance in a bad sense to the spirits of the dead and [to] Jesus Christ. One has to remember, though, that God is a jealous God."⁵²

The "ray of hope" that Fr. Chidavaenzi thought "the best way to adopt as a way of Kuchenura [purification] centered on the Eucharist" was "the practice of unveiling the Tomb Stone" because it was performed for all people ("adults, teenagers, married, and the unmarried") by "all cultures in Zimbabwe" and by "all the churches"; the n'ganga had no role; there was no sacrifice associated with it, but there was a ceremony which "makes people feel they have done something for the dead relative."⁵³ The only alternative, according to Chidavaenzi, was

to modify drastically the Shona ritual by removing all objectionable aspects of the present Rite (the sacrificial animals, the beer, tobacco, libation, and the implied consultation of the n'ganga and the fear attached to the non-performance of the Rite and centralise this ritual on Jesus Christ the Saviour and the Eucharist.⁵⁴

Fr. Chidavaenzi, although a Catholic theologian, does not write like one with regard to kurova guva and kuchenura munhu. His interpretation of scriptures is very narrow and literalistic. He provides his reader no sense of the historical development of Catholic tradition, and how that development bears on the theological point in question: he draws his examples and supporting evidence from the Hebrew scriptures (particularly

dealing with Mosaic law and the ancient kingdom of Israel), and Christian scriptures, and compares these directly with VaShona examples from Zimbabwe, but he does not provide any temporal specificity (i.e., does he refer to contemporary VaShona practices, those of the colonial period—whether earlier or later, or the practices prior to the British conquest?). He provides no sense of historicization or religious (or more broadly cultural) change either as Christianity was adapted to Western cultures in Europe over two thousand years, or of cultural and/or religious change in Zimbabwe. For example, in “The Sacrificial Aspects of Kurova Guva,” Fr. Chidavaenzi asserted that

in spite of the fact that *kurova guva* is held as very very important among us Shona Africans, no clan or tribe has as yet written a traditional ritual for themselves. When people perform the ritual, it is done according to the knowledge and memory of those who are present on that occasion. This, of course, explains why there are so many variations of the same ceremony, with differing understanding on what one tribe would think important and essential to the ceremony. To take on this method of doing things with regard to the inculturation of *kurova guva* is, again, unwise and will produce a chaotic situation in the Church like that recorded by the book of Judges which says, “In those days there was no king in Israel, and everyone did as he saw fit. (Jg. 21.25).⁵⁵

Fr. Chidavaenzi does not take into account the variations of the written Catholic mass that occur within a single country, e.g., Zimbabwe: compare the different styles of worship in a church that uses an organ in which the congregation sings English hymns with those of a church that uses drums and *hosho*, and the congregation sings Shona hymns. Nor does Fr. Chidavaenzi consider the changes in the mass, even though written, from the now-defunct pre-Vatican II Tridentine rite to the contemporary vernacular liturgies. Further, his gratuitous reference to pre-monarchial ancient Israel as a time of chaos does not consider that God perceived the establishment of the monarchy as a

rejection of his authority: “Grant the people’s every request. It is not you [Samuel, the last of the judges] they reject, they are rejecting me [God] as their king.”⁵⁶ Additionally, he does not consider the fact that the biblical stories were transmitted orally through time for centuries before they were written, thus they—like VaShona rituals—are the products of oral traditions (consider, for example, the multiple creation stories in the book of Genesis, the alleged three authors of the book of Isaiah, or the various sources of the four Christian gospels) and their redaction into “seamless” written narratives. Most significantly, Fr. Chidavaenzi doesn’t address the fact that the kinds of uniformity and standardization that he espouses are relatively late developments in the history of the Catholic church in Europe, most notably associated with the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century and the reactionary conservatism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries associated with the reign Pius IX (e.g., the index of forbidden books, and the First Vatican Council—which bequeathed the doctrine of papal infallibility), the promotion of Thomistic philosophy as the standard for clerical formation, and the promulgation of a unified code of canon law for the entire Catholic church throughout the world in 1917.

While this is not the appropriate venue in which to present a theological response to Fr. Chidavaenzi, his writings raise several questions for Catholic theologians and pastors of the church with regard to *kurova guva* specifically, and the inculturation of the church more broadly. First, if the trinitarian position (i.e., three persons in one god) is correct, then the postulation that Jesus Christ (God the Son) mediates between God (presumably the Father) and humanity is problematic because Jesus Christ died/was

sacrificed for the expiation of human sin, but does he (God the Son) continue to mediate between God the Father and humanity, as Fr. Chidavaenzi claims? If so, what of God the Holy Spirit (i.e., why were the Ascension of Jesus Christ and Pentecost—the descent of the Holy Spirit—necessary [see Acts 1:5-11; 2: 1-36])? Thus, either no mediation is necessary and/or possible as humanity has direct recourse to the persons of the trinity (i.e., God), or mediation is necessary and possible in the forms of Mary (mother of Jesus), saints, angels, and other humans (e.g., sacrament of reconciliation in which the priest is the conduit of grace upon the penitent).

If Fr. Chidavaenzi's definition of sacrifice and offering—"the alienation of human goods by way of destruction (sacrifice) or simple renunciation (offering) vis-a-vis the invisible powers according to purpose and in function of needs or concerns which differ from culture to culture"⁵⁷ are correct, then is the monetary offering associated with requesting a mass for the dead in the Catholic church exceeding "the limit [of] *douleia*"⁵⁸ (deep veneration)? Is the money offered directly to God or to his agents on earth (i.e., priests and/or parish administrators)? On behalf of the dead? Does it constitute a sacrifice, and if so, to whom?

Fr. Chidavaenzi rails against "the fear connected with not performing [kurova guva or kuchenura munhu] for the dead."⁵⁹ Yet is not fear of the Lord one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit according to Catholic tradition? Similarly, what if a Catholic doesn't participate in the sacrifice of the mass? Or didn't receive the sacrament of reconciliation (i.e., confession)? Or didn't obey the dictates of canon law? Shouldn't that person fear retribution from the "just" God (i.e., fear the loss of one's immortal soul)? Is

there any difference between the fear of the midzimu and the fear of the Lord? Does not Jesus say “You will live in my love if you keep my commandments.” (John 15:10)?

Fr. Chidavaenzi is very critical of the fact that kurova guva is only performed for VaShona adults who were married, as well as the notion that the ritual is intended to bring the spirit of the deceased home:

One wonders whether this ceremony is really necessary for people who have died. It seems only the previously married people need to be purified. It is not performed for teenagers nor for the religious (priests, sisters, and brothers), some of whom die as very old people. It is not done for people from other cultures. All these people are neither purified nor brought home. If purification is really needed for the dead, then it is needed for every body except, perhaps, for the babies.⁶⁰

The possible exclusion of babies is most curious in light of the church’s teaching that the souls of children who die before they receive baptism go to limbo. More significant, however, is Fr. Chidavaenzi’s description of worship as a service in which “the gods had to be washed, clothed, fed, and treated like kings.”⁶¹ If so, then perhaps it is possible to explain the necessity for bringing home the spirit of the deceased, the ritual slaughter of animals, and the exclusion of those who were neither married nor adults with the ChiShona concept of *unhu*, that is, “humaneness or the human spirit, or broadly defined as the essence of being human. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that one’s humanity is bound up in others, for we can only be human together.”⁶² One of “the consequences [of *unhu* is that] respect is defined not by your birth (say royalty), but by your character.”⁶³ Implicit in this is that the greater one’s *unhu*, the more prominent and respected one becomes. Thus, in recognizing *unhu* in another person, an individual will show the respect that is appropriate to the person’s proper station and character, including

giving appropriate gifts and forms of respect: e.g., compare respect due to a “king” (*mambo*) versus respect due to a “chief” (*ishe*) versus respect due to an “elder” (*sekuru*, *ambuya*, *baba*, *amai*) versus respect due to a visitor (*muendi*). What is significant is to show respect, to recognize another person’s humanity: would a person refuse to offer a visitor food or water after a long journey? (cf. “Would one of you hand his son a stone if he asks for a loaf; or a poisonous snake when he asks for a fish?”)⁶⁴

Accordingly, if worship entails treating God like a king, then that which is reserved for God must not be offered to lesser spirits, and vice versa. Throughout his writings, Fr. Chidavaenzi said that the Christian god has chosen the sacrifice of the mass as his preferred offering. The midzimu prefer offerings of beer and meat. The forms of honoring God (e.g., mass), Mary mother of Jesus (e.g., rosary), angels (e.g., novena prayers), canonized saints (e.g., prayers of petition), and souls of the deceased (e.g., prayer cards and votive candles) vary within the Catholic church based on the differing station of the person in question: God receives *latreia*, saints receive *douleia*, Mary receives *hyperdouleia*. Further, just as only people who lead very holy lives on earth and adhered to the tenets of the Catholic faith can be considered for canonical sainthood in the church, and only those men who remained unmarried can be considered for priesthood in the church,⁶⁵ so only can those who married become ancestors and be purified according to the rites appropriate to someone of their status.

Lastly, it appears that Fr. Chidavaenzi goes to great lengths to show that *kuchenura munhu* is a form of sacrifice offered directly to the spirit of the deceased, rather than to Jesus Christ or God the Father.⁶⁶ The prayers of the ritual, however, clearly

show that where any sacrifice made it is offered to God *via* the ancestor spirits *on behalf* of the deceased in much the same way that Western Catholics bring prayers of supplication or petition to God via the communion of saints:

The presentation of the animal (nhevedzo) [The beast killed for burial ceremony.]

This animal is presented to the dead person, that he presents it to the ancestors who present it to God with this prayer:

Presenter: [Name of Ancestor], tell also [name of ancestor], who tells too [name of ancestor], you tell each other until it reaches Christ, who himself brings to God, the Creator, that this animal is the one which enables your child, [name of deceased], to go, we are presenting him to you and his ancestors, that they may present him to you, the Creator. We have sprinkled this animal in your name and that of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

He sprinkles with holy water.

Presenter: All you midzimu of his lineage, guide him to Jesus who opens to people the courtyard of his Father. It is he, who is the bridge we cross, when we go to the new country full of saints and angels. . . .

For those who pour beer at the grave

Presenter: You [name of deceased], tell [name of ancestor], who tells [name of ancestor], which goes like that until to Christ. He brings it to the Father too, that we pour this beer at your grave, that we are united with you, as the unity which was achieved for us by the blood of Christ.

The Presenter pours the beer saying:

Presenter: We do this in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.⁶⁷

Compare the extract of the kuchenura munhu ritual above with the following extracts from Catholic novena prayers to Mary (Our Lady of Lourdes) and St. Raphael (guardian/archangel):

Ever Immaculate Virgin, Mother of mercy, heath of the sick, refuge of sinners, comfort of the afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings. Deign to cast on me a look of mercy.

By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes [in southern France in 1858], you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, from which you dispense favors; and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. I come, therefore, with the most unbounded confidence to implore your maternal intercession.

Obtain, O loving Mother, the granting of my requests. Through gratitude for your favors, I will endeavor to imitate your virtues that I may one day share your glory.

Through your loving compassion shown to thousands of pilgrims who come to your shrine at Lourdes, and through your special love for your devoted client Bernadette, I ask you for this grace if it be the Will of God: (*Mention your request*).

Our Lady of Lourdes, aid me through your prayers with your Divine Son, to be a true child of yours, as Bernadette was, and to grow daily into your likeness.⁶⁸

Holy Archangel Raphael, standing so close to the throne of God and offering Him our prayers, I venerate you as God's special Friend and Messenger. I choose you as my Patron and wish to love and obey you as young Tobiah did. I consecrate to you my body and soul, all my work, and my whole life. I want you to be my Guide and Counselor in all the dangerous and difficult problems and decisions of my life.

Remember, dearest Saint Raphael, that the grace of God preserved you with the good Angels when the proud ones were cast into hell. I entreat you, therefore, to help me in my struggle against the world, the spirit of impurity, and the devil. Defend me from all dangers and every occasion of sin. Direct me always in the way of peace, safety, and salvation. Offer my prayers to God as you offered those of Tobiah, so that through your intercession I may obtain the graces necessary for the salvation of my soul. I ask you to pray that God grant me this favor if it be His holy Will: (*Mention your request*).⁶⁹

Clearly, it seems that if Fr. Chidavaenzi's criteria for the abolition (or significant modification) of *kuchenura munhu* were applied more broadly, would raise questions as to the validity of many orthodox Catholic traditions, to say nothing of the admission or adaptation of meaningful non-Christian cultural symbols. He uses a narrow interpretation of chapters nine and ten of the letter to the Hebrews to argue that Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and its re-enactment in the mass replaced all other forms of sacrifice for the expiation of human sin.⁷⁰ The implication is that not only is it not necessary to inculturate *kurova guva*, but it is not possible to do so, and thus there is no need for the *kuchenura munhu* ritual within the church. More broadly applied, Fr. Chidavaenzi's method and conclusions imply no need for inculturation at all.

At no point, however, does the catechesis of the *kuchenura munhu* ritual claim expiation of sin as its intent. Rather it is "a continual reminder of the peoples['] sins,"⁷¹ and as such a vehicle to ask for God's grace. "Unveiling a tomb stone" is not a historically culturally significant symbol for honoring the dead in VaShona culture.⁷²

Further, from a functionalist anthropological perspective, it is clear that theology, like secular law,⁷³ develops from practice in order to approve or proscribe specific social practices and provide justificatory explanations for the approval or proscription. From a theological perspective that views theology as the interpretation of divine revelation, however, the inculturation of *kurova guva* as *kuchenura munhu* represents a new human understanding of the divine will:

There is a sense of "homecoming" that symbolizes the journey that the deceased makes to God's kingdom, the "real home" of the departed Christian; home is no longer conceived in terms of the traditional "*Nyikadzimu*" (the land of the ancestors). Traditionally, *Nyikadzimu* did not refer to God's kingdom, but in these rituals God's kingdom

accommodates all the righteous ancestors of the deceased and is the eternal home that the deceased aspired to since baptism. This change comes about because of the transposition of Christian eschatological views on traditional Shona eschatological views. The “homecoming” rituals dramatize a new religious phenomenon—the solidarity of the living and the departed as well as the enhancement of life in Christ, “the first born from the dead.” (Col[ossians] 1:18). By virtue of being the firstborn, Christ becomes the eldest ancestor of all families. He becomes the reference point in all relationships with God because of his proximity to Him [God]. It is Christ who should be called “*Mudzimu mukuru*” (the greatest ancestor), not God the Father, because He cannot be likened to a human ancestor.⁷⁴

Thus, from a functionalist anthropological view, abolishing *kuchenura munhu* would return the Catholic church in Zimbabwe to a time when “people are bound to lead two lives: that demanded by the church and that by reason of the beliefs and ideas developed and fostered through culture for centuries.”⁷⁵ From a Catholic theological standpoint, however, to retreat from the inculturated ritual would be to admit that either God the Holy Spirit failed to protect the church from error or that the people of God in Zimbabwe, their priests, and their bishops—with the explicit approval of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome—knowingly and willingly chose to err and to embrace heresy.

Notes

1. JAZ, Chishwasha *Historia Domus* (Typescript).
2. Paul Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and the *Kurova Guva* Ritual in Zimbabwe," *Zambezia*, 21/2 (1994), 123-46.
3. See, e.g., M.F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987), 199-223. For excellent, concise descriptions of the kurova guva ceremony see Michael Gelfand, *Shona Ritual*, (Cape Town: Juta Books, 1959), 184-98; idem, "A Description of the Ceremony of Kurova Guva: Escorting the Spirit from the Grave to the Home," *Zambezia*, 2/1 (December, 1971), 71-74. Paul Gundani provides a brief overview of the function, theology, and different parts of the VaShona kurova guva ritual, and the opposition of the mission churches to "traditional" African religious practices: "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 124-27.
4. Gelfand, "A Description of the Ceremony of Kurova Guva," 71, 73-74.
5. See Dachs & Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1979), 9; Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 123.
6. Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 127. The First Commandment states: "I, the Lord, am your God. . . You shall not have other gods besides me. You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or worship them." See Exodus 20: 2-6.
7. Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 127.
8. Citation taken from Rev. Raymond Kapito, "Report on *Kuchenura Munhu* Catechism." available in the ZCBC Gen/Sec File Kg 78FMM.2. Access to the files of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference was extremely limited in 1999-2000.
9. Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 128-29.
10. *ibid.*, 129.
11. See David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, (London: James Currey, 1985).
12. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus* (Typescript), April 7-8, 1902. Ellipsis in original text.
13. *ibid.*, September 7-9, 1930.
14. *ibid.*, October 6, 1902.
15. *ibid.*, November 30, 1902.

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16. *ibid.*, December 2, 1944.
17. *ibid.*, December 25, 1931.
18. Interview with C.L. Muringayi, Chishawasha Mission, July 31, 2000.
19. JAZ, Chishawasha *Historia Domus* (Typescript), January 17, 1904 and February 7, 1904.
20. *ibid.*, March 6, 1926 and November 10, 1930. Emphasis in original.
21. Interview with Br. Herman Toma, SJ, Old St. Peter's Church, Mbare, Harare, May 13, 2000.
22. Interview with Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, LCBL, May 23, 2000.
23. Interview with Boniface Mariwa Gumbo, Kutama Mission, July 28, 2000.
24. Interview with Teresa Joe, Kutama Mission, July 28, 2000.
25. For more on the Chinese rites controversy, see Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*.
26. JAZ, Box 134/2, Francis Johanny to Edward Parry, February 15, 1920. Emphasis in original.
27. Cardinal Peter Fumasoni Biondi (Prefect of Propaganda Fide) to Augustus Gaspais (Vicar Apostolic of Kirin), May 28, 1935, in *Sylloge Praecipuorum Documentorum. . . de Propaganda Fide*, (Vatican City: Polyglot Printer, 1939), 479-82. Attached to the letter were several statute norms recommended by the nascent hierarchy in China which formed the basis for Vatican approval. See also Fumasoni Biondi to Archbishop Paul Marella (Apostolic Delegate to Japan), May 26, 1936 in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, (Vatican City: Polyglot Printer, 1936), 406-9. There may be correspondence on the part of Bishop Chichester addressing the issue, but if it does exist, it was not available in the unrestricted general correspondence in the JAZ or the AAH.
28. Fumasoni Biondi to Giovanna Delle Piane, July 14, 1938, in *Sylloge Praecipuorum Documentorum*, 576-78. I am grateful to Dr. Tommaso Astarita, Department of History, Georgetown University for translating this letter from the original Italian.
29. JAZ, Box 357/2, "The Man Called Joseph Munyongani," English translations typescript, 3, 10.
30. See also Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 133-34; J.C. Kumbirai, "The Place of the Midzimu in Christian Worship," *Moto*, October, 1969, 8; *idem*, "Kurova Guva and Christianity," in M.F.C. Bourdillon, ed., *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, vol.2 (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), 123-30.

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31. Gundani, "The Roman Catholic Church and *Kurova Guva*," 134.
32. *ibid.*, 135.
33. *ibid.*, 135-37.
34. *ibid.*, 137-38. Ellipsis in original.
35. *ibid.*, 138.
36. *ibid.*, 137.
37. *ibid.*, 137.
38. *ibid.*, 138.
39. *ibid.*, 138.
40. *ibid.*, 139-40.
41. *ibid.*, 141-43.
42. *ibid.*, 141-43.
43. Emmanuel Mavudzi, "*Kurova Guva, Kugadzira, Kuchenura Munhu*: A second look at the rites," *Crossroads*, 164 (Christmas, 1998), 15.
44. Obiter dicta conversation with several Zimbabwean priests, 1999-2000. Given the sensitive nature of these on-going discussions, and the respective positions of several of these priests I have chosen not to identify the sources of these comments.
45. E.g., Emmanuel Mavudzi, "Communion of the Living and the Dead," *Crossroads*, 161 (Pentecost) 1998, 7; *idem*, "*Kurova Guva, Kugadzira, Kuchenura Munhu*: A second look at the rites," *Crossroads*, 164 (Christmas, 1998), 15-16; Marko M. Mkandla, "High God and Ancestors: A Critical Analysis of the Relationship Between Ancestral Spirits (Amadlozi) and the Supreme Being in Ndebele Religion," *Crossroads*, 164 (Christmas, 1998), 17-18; Tadzungaira A. Dzadagu, "Inculturation and Religious Images," *Catholic Church News*, January/February 1999, 15; S.B. Muchemwa, "Ancestor-Veneration and the Value of Communalism," *Crossroads*, 165 (Lent/Easter, 1999), 14-15; Kyrán Murphy, "Inculturation—Where are we?" *Crossroads*, 165 (Lent/Easter, 1999), 15-17; Ignatius Chidavaenzi, "Is there Anything Objectionable about *Kuchenura Munhu* or *Kurova Guva*? A Critical look at some aspects of the ritual," *Crossroads*, 166 (Pentecost 1999), 16-19; Stanislaus S.P. Matindike, "*Kurova guva, kugadzira, kuchenura munhu*: A layman's look at the rites," *Crossroads*, 166 (Pentecost 1999), 19-20; Canisius Mwandayi, "Restless Spirits," *Crossroads*, 166 (Pentecost 1999), 20; Josef Elsener, "Catholic Beliefs and Our Relations to the Living Dead," *Crossroads*, 167 (August 1999), 21; Tony Bex, "Reflections by a mere European on 'Kuchenura Munhu,'" *Crossroads*, 167 (August

1999), 22; C.T. Mashonganyika, "Christ and Ancestors play different roles: Response to Fr. Mavhudi's [sic] Article on 'A Theology of African Culture,'" *Crossroads*, 167 (August 1999), 23-24; idem, "Response to Fr. Mavhudzi: 'Theology of African Culture,'" *Crossroads* 168 (October 1999), 7-9; Oskar Niederberger, "Respect for the Action of the Spirit in Man [sic]: Reflections on Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi's Objections to the 'Kuchenura Munhu' Ritual," *Crossroads* 168 (October 1999), 9-11; [Editorial] "Comment," *Crossroads* 168 (October 1999), 12.

46. Emmanuel Mavudzi, "Communion of the Living and the Dead," *Crossroads*, 161 (Pentecost) 1998, 7; idem, "*Kurova Guva, Kugadzira, Kuchenura Munhu*: A second look at the rites," *Crossroads*, 164 (Christmas, 1998), 15-16.

47. Ignatius Chidavaenzi, "Kuchenura Munhu Ritual or Kurova Guva (Is There Anything Objectionable?)," this was published as "Is there Anything Objectionable about *Kuchenura Munhu* or *Kurova Guva*?: A Critical look at some aspects of the ritual," *Crossroads* (Pentecost 1999), 16-19;" "The Sacrificial Aspects of Kurova Guva (Is Kurova Guva a Sacrifice or not?);" "Kurova Guva Sacrifices: Latreia or Douleia? (Divine Worship or Deep Veneration?)."

48. Cited in Chidavaenzi, "Kuchenura Munhu Ritual or Kurova Guva (Is There Anything Objectionable?)," 2. "Is There Anything Objectionable?" hereafter.

49. Chidavaenzi, "The Sacrificial Aspect of Kurova Guva," 12.

50. Chidavaenzi, "Is There Anything Objectionable?," 4-6. For divinization of ancestors, see "Kurova Guva Sacrifices: Latreia or Douleia? (Divine Worship or Deep Veneration?)." "Kurova Guva Sacrifices" hereafter.

51. Chidavaenzi, "Is There Anything Objectionable?," 7-9.

52. *ibid.*, 2,6.

53. *ibid.*, 9.

54. *ibid.*, 9-10.

55. Chidavaenzi, "The Sacrificial Aspect of Kurova Guva,"2.

56. 1 Samuel, 8:7. See the entirety of chapter 8 for the full context.

57. Chidavaenzi, "Is There Anything Objectionable?,"4-5.

58. Chidavaenzi, "Kurova Guva Sacrifices," 11.

59. Chidavaenzi, "Is There Anything Objectionable?," 2.

60. *ibid.*, 7.

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61. *ibid.*, 5.
62. Dr. Manelisi Genge, Communication with author, April 24, 1999.
63. Dr. Tawanda Gumbo, Communication with author, April 30, 2001.
64. Mt. 7:9.
65. Notable exceptions to this are priests of the eastern churches in communion with Rome outside the United States and Poland. There is also the historical fact of a married clergy with the Latin rite prior to the twelfth century.
66. See especially, Chidavaenzi, "The Sacrificial Aspect of Kurova Guva."
67. Karl Herrmann, "Shona Ritual Kuchenura Munhu: An Encounter Between Shona Religion and Christian Faith: Inculturation or Conversion?," Dissertation, Hekima College, Nairobi, Kenya, 1997, Appendix, "Shona Ritual: The Rite of Installation of the Spirit of a Deceased Person," 10-11. Copy in JAZ. I am grateful to Fr. Karl-Ferdinand Schmidt, S.J. for making this dissertation available.
68. from "Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes," in Lawrence G. Lovasik, *Treasury of Novenas*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1986), 158-59. Emphasis in original. For more on the story of the Marian apparitions to Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, France, see Thérèse Taylor, *Bernadette of Lourdes: Her Life, Death, and Visions* (New York: Burns & Oates, 2003).
69. "Novena to St. Raphael," in *ibid.*, 279-80. Emphasis in original. For more on the story of Raphael and Tobiah, see the Book of Tobit.
70. See Chidavaenzi, "Is There Anything Objectionable?," 6.
71. Commentary on Hebrews 10, *The New American Bible*, (New York: Nelson Publishers, 1970), 1303.
72. There is no mention of this practice in the anthropological literature written by Bourdillon, Gelfand, Lan, or Murphree, nor in the historical literature by Beach or Mudenge.
73. See, e.g., chapter 7 on marriage above.
74. Paul Gundani, "Eschatology in Death Rituals Among Shona Catholics," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiae*, 21/1 (1995), 35-36.
75. Adam Mkosana, "Church must adopt good Customs," *Moto*, December 2, 1970, 2.

Conclusion: The Great Disappointment and Taking the Sacred Seriously

The Great Disappointment: A Case Against Inculturation in Zimbabwe

In 1962, the Southern Rhodesian Catholic bishops appointed a commission to investigate the mission of the Catholic Association and its relationship to other Catholic organizations in the colony.¹ The organization had petitioned the bishops to delete the word “African” from its title and establish it as the “territorial administrative body for all Catholic Action within [Southern] Rhodesia.”² While CAA leaders at all levels “always show[ed] good will, a readiness to cooperate and to accept guidance,” many felt “frustrated” by the lack of interest and support shown by the clergy.³ The bishops approved the name change with the proviso that it not “be implied that [the CA] is to be the parent body of all Catholic Action.”⁴ The bishops included the condition, which directly contradicted the will of the African lay leadership, because of their hesitation about requiring European organizations to affiliate with the CA “as the parent-body of all Catholic Action.”⁵ The confusion caused by this contradiction resulted in the bishops calling the commission to investigate the CA.

During the inquiry commission’s deliberations concerning the CA’s mission and “what a good Catholic is supposed to do,” one of the seven priests in attendance noted that “a practicing witch-doctor” had been elected as a CA officer, contrary to a rule that forbade the election of non-Catholics.⁶ Although it is not clear whether “the witch-doctor” or *n’ganga*, was elected to a local executive or the territorial council, this instance raises the issue of perspective, and different understandings of “what a good Catholic is supposed to do.” Obviously the Jesuit missionary on the board of inquiry didn’t consider the *n’ganga* a good Catholic. But evidently, the *n’ganga* considered

himself to be a good Catholic, and—more importantly—his peers in the CA must have thought him a good Catholic as well. This, then, raises the issue of inculturation.

Catholic theologians in the last forty-five years have developed the relatively new term “inculturation” to discuss the old problem of adapting the church universal to specific local cultures. The problem with these theologians’ conception of inculturation is that they claim inculturation is a dialogue between Christianity (the church) and culture,⁷ but then go on to say that there are certain non-negotiable elements of Christianity that cannot be compromised, and that as the church enters a culture, it is supposed to purify that culture of its imperfections, and once that has been accomplished the church can then implant itself and develop within the culture.

Inculturation is not only *meeting the people where they are*, but also *leading them to where they must be*. Inculturation then deals with the permanent dialogue between a local culture and the Christian Religion. The christian local church becomes actively involved as people strive to make Christianity their only religion in such a way that they do not fall back to idolatry and to the errors of “paganism”. This effort ferments a culture that will be christian and eventually become the culture of the community. This fermentation is gradual and does not presuppose the total disappearance of the traditional religion until the whole community has been converted. The degree of disappearance must reflect the rate of successful evangelisation and therefore of inculturation.⁸

The culture is evangelised when it transcends its limitations which are imposed by its particularity. This takes place when the culture recognizes those practices which impede human development, trample on human dignity and close one society from another. However, in those areas in which there is nothing fundamentally opposed to the gospel, culture can be helped to refine itself. Thus if inculturation takes place properly, culture continues to develop according to the gospel and its best values are confirmed by the gospel.⁹

Unfortunately, neither of these models—both of which were proposed by African Catholic theologians—is one of dialogue, but rather they appear to be forms of

ecclesiastical imperialism, especially when one considers the church's practice of incorporating non-Christian symbols and practices and reinvesting them with meanings different from those found in the host cultures.¹⁰

If inculturation is a dialogue between the church and culture, then people with appropriate knowledge of the culture in question must be in place before the dialogue can occur. To that end, this study shows that the inculturation of people at Jesuit missions in colonial Zimbabwe was far more successful than the inculturation of ideas. Chapters four through six clearly show African Christians taking the initiative to work their way up to the highest levels of the church's hierarchy in the colony. African women, first by asking to become nuns, pushed European missionaries to establish orders for them, and eventually took charge of them, as was the case for the LCBL Sisters in 1965. As African men—many of whom received their early educations from African nuns—entered the seminary at Chishwasha, they began the process of incorporating themselves into the Catholic hierarchy, first as priests and, from 1973, as bishops. As women religious, bishops, priests, and religious brothers, Africans stood with equal footing in the church's hierarchy as any other sister, brother, priest, or bishop in the church throughout the world. Similarly, the African laity organized itself into a significant body that expressed its concerns and interests to the (gradually) Africanizing hierarchy, pushing successfully for the adaptation of *kurova guva* as *kuchenura munhu* within the church. And they did so amidst a glaring apathy on the part of many missionaries, as well as unrelenting clerical domination from those missionaries that took the time to work with them. To that end, their struggle as lay people working against clerical domination is more typical of

hierarchy-laity relations within the Catholic church more broadly throughout the world at various points in time.

By contrast, the last three chapters show the struggles that VaShona Catholics had to endure in order to bring elements of their culture into “dialogue” with the Catholic church as mediated, primarily, by the Jesuits. These chapters show that even with African personnel in place to represent the church in the “dialogue” of inculturation, integration of culture into the church’s corpus of symbols and ideas is not given. Despite the bishops’ acknowledging and incorporating the *tezvara*’s (father of the woman) consent and the requirement to pay *lobola* as part of the marriage process, relatively few Africans married according to canonical form. For forty years, the Jesuits banned the use of *Mwari* in Catholic books and liturgies, yet many African Catholics apparently ignored the prohibition when Jesuits were not physically present. Only in the 1960s was *Mwari* quietly “baptized” and accepted as a legitimate name for the Christian god. Similarly, honoring ancestor spirits with *kurova guva* was forbidden throughout the colonial period, and only after almost two decades of debate did the adapted rite of *kuchenura munhu* receive approbation, first from the Zimbabwean bishops, and then from Rome.

David Newbury contrasted African acknowledgment of European power over them with their lack of recognition of European authority during the colonial period.¹¹ In this case, VaShona Catholics generally ignored the authority of the Catholic hierarchy and continued to marry according to “customary” law, to pray to *Mwari*, and to honor the spirits of their ancestors. If, as Catholic theologians presume, there are certain non-negotiable elements of Christianity that cannot be compromised in the “dialogue” of

inculturation, then these facts would indicate that there are also certain non-negotiable elements of VaShona culture that cannot be—and have not been—compromised, including the payment of lobola and the tezvara's consent for marriage, and the appropriate recognition and honoring of Mwari and ancestor spirits. Or, to borrow from James C. Scott, there existed several “hidden transcripts” among VaShona Catholics at Jesuit missions.

If inculturation is to be a dialogue—that is, a conversation between equals—then not only must the church recognize that there are certain non-negotiable elements of culture that cannot be compromised, but similarly, that adherents of a given cultural group must have not only the right not to receive the gospel message,¹² but also the right to purify the Christian message, that is, to select those aspects of the corpus of the entirety of 2000 years of Christian traditions and adapt them to their culture. Clearly, missionaries did not impart to Africans all of the Christian traditions that developed across the world over two millennia.¹³ Rather, they selected those elements which they believed to be central and expected local cultures to adapt themselves to those elements (e.g., belief in one God, monogamous marriage, denial of ancestral spirits, etc.). If inculturation is to be a dialogue, there must be parity between church and culture that the church thus far has not allowed to exist. Or to put it in Eugene Hillman's words, the church—particularly in Rome—must overcome its fear of innovation at the grassroots level. Consequently, many of the innovations and adaptations that developed did so in the occult, and away from ecclesiastical approbation, which would indicate some merit in

Humphrey Fisher's contention that African independent churches point to "mixing" in an African context.

At one level, it could be argued that the three case studies presented show that the Catholic church's efforts at inculturation were fairly successful: VaShona marriage "customs" were incorporated into church practices; Mwari has been recognized as the name of the Christian god for forty years; and kurova guva has been adapted and received temporary approbation from the Zimbabwean bishops and the Vatican as *kuchenura munhu*.

These developments, however, along with the translation of liturgies and prayer books into ChiShona and the incorporation of VaShona musical forms (including the use of the *mbira* in the Gweru and Masvingo dioceses) and prayer postures into Catholic liturgies still represent what Eugene Hillman called the "literal and literalistic transliteration" of Catholic Christianity in a Zimbabwean context. The only notable exception to this is the *kuchenura munhu* rite. That it has not yet received definitive (i.e., permanent) approbation—especially from African bishops—speaks to the weakness of the inculturation of ideas that prevailed at Jesuit missions during the colonial era in Zimbabwe. Ironically, this can be attributed to the Jesuits' all too successful inculturation of themselves into the dominant White Rhodesian culture.

Among the ideas that the Jesuits adapted and incorporated into their practice was a belief in the inferiority of African culture. Further, as the 1926 survey of Zambezi Mission personnel indicated, several Jesuits also believed in the inherent incapacity of Africans to begin—much less complete—the requisite studies necessary for seminary

training and ordination. Consequently, they provided an inferior education to their African students, part of which included maintaining the ban on kurova guva. Recall that Christopher Gardiner felt it necessary to leave Chishawasha in order to receive adequate academic training at St. John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria, and that Chishawasha seminary staff thought that they were training “simple parish priests” (e.g., African students were told not to engage in-depth philosophical questions). Because it apparently never occurred to the Jesuits that they would have future bishops in their charge, it should come as no surprise that many of the men who eventually were ordained to the episcopacy did not indulge in the intellectual curiosity that is a necessary first step for the “dialogue” of inculturation. The lack of intellectual curiosity and rigor combined with the Jesuits’ highly clerical understanding of Catholic Action and generally negative view of African cultures more than likely accounts for the relative unwillingness of the African clergy and bishops to take the inculturation “dialogue” beyond a superficial level.

Further, consider the implications of Jesuit failure to implement Vatican directives, such as *Maximum Illud*, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, and the 1938 Propaganda Fide directives on death rites in the Belgian Congo: had Chichester and his religious brothers considered listening to African Christians and applying the contents of the 1938 letter, quite possibly adaptations of kurova guva may well have been developed and approved prior to the 1970s. That more than half of the clergy in Zimbabwe today are foreign missionaries speaks to the failure of the Jesuits to inculturate the church adequately, and the long-term consequences of their having ignored directives from Rome, and violating their spirit, if not necessarily their letter.

Consequently, it is possible to argue that the consciousness of some of the African Catholic clergy and episcopacy in Zimbabwe has been colonized. A more appropriate understanding of the situation, however, would be to consider the superficial inculturation of the Catholic church in Zimbabwe as a partial decolonization of the church in much the same way that political independence has only effected a partial decolonization of Zimbabwean society more broadly.¹⁴ Power and authority have been transferred to local leaders, but they lack the ability to change the global institutions controlled in the West that ultimately dictate the parameters of the center-periphery relationship. Or, to put it another way, the archbishop of Harare has about as much influence on the policies of the Vatican curia as the president of Zimbabwe has on the policies of the International Monetary Fund. Thus, the Catholic church in Zimbabwe finds itself living in a decidedly post-colonial situation.

It remains to be seen whether inculturation as a dialogue between church and culture—as espoused by Catholic theologians—can be successful as a dialogue between equals. This is not to say that it has not been tried more successfully in Zimbabwe in ecclesiastical jurisdictions that developed under orders that held more positive views of African culture, such as the Mariannhill or Bethlehem missionaries, or in other parts of the African continent, or in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, those efforts and purported successes lie beyond the purview of this study. What is clear from the evidence presented herein, however, is that at missions entrusted to the care of the Society of Jesus in Zimbabwe during the colonial era inculturation was less a dialogue of equals than a lecture (or sermon) replete with admonitions that the audience/congregation heard,

listening to some parts and ignoring others. Or, in other words—referring back to Robin Horton and Lamin Sanneh—VaShona Catholics were consciously selective in receiving and incorporating elements of the Christian message from Western missionaries. The elements they chose to receive and incorporate made sense to them within the context of their historically developed and lived/living cultures.

Inculturation as a dialogue of equals between the church and culture requires the boldness and broadness of vision of Paul of Tarsus, who preached the Christian message among first century gentiles (pagans?) of the Mediterranean basin; or Pope Gregory I (“the Great”), who instructed Augustine of Canterbury to allow the continued use of early seventh century pagan English temples (after their cleansing with holy water) and feasts—including the slaughter of cattle—provided that they were offered to the Christian god;¹⁵ or Jesuit Mateo Ricci who adapted the Christian message to Confucian philosophy and succeeded in preaching the Catholic understanding of the Christian faith to the imperial court and in the city of Peking in early seventeenth century China; or Vincent Donovan, who attempted to preach the Christian message to Maasai during the twentieth century in Kenya and Tanzania without the accretions of two millennia of Western culture.

Nigerian historian O. U. Kalu was skeptical about the possibility of synthesizing Christianity and African culture. In 1980, he edited *The History of Christianity in West Africa*. In his introductions as well as in the articles he contributed, Kalu argued that all efforts at inculturation have been failures, and that Christianity in Africa remains essentially European and imperialistic. He described African independent churches as “a religious reaction to Western Christianity[.]. . .an attempt to contextualize the Christian

gospel.”¹⁶ Kalu further credited European missionaries for having underdeveloped Christianity in Africa:

The predicament of the modern Church in Africa is that the missionary enterprise produced a Church without theology, without its own liturgy, and even polity. It is a serious indictment considering the blood and sweat which zealots, both European and African, have poured into the labour. Yet it is true that although Christianity has spread enormously in Africa, the resultant Church is basically a weak one.

In recent years Africans have woken up to the task of finding a solution to the predicament. They have re-examined the pattern of relationships back to the metropolitan home bases of missions, and they have analysed modes of indigenising the Church. Unfortunately, these analyses have produced little more than hot air by way of results. . . some pursued the indigenisation problem by searching for ingredients of African culture which could be baptised and utilised for evangelisation. Of course, such tinkering does not provide viable solutions. Besides, ingredients of a culture tend to receive their meaning largely within the context of that culture.¹⁷

According to Kalu, European missionaries failed to equip African churches adequately in spite of the combined efforts of European and African Christians for over a century. In spite of this failure, Christianity spread widely throughout the continent. The Christian faith, however, bore very shallow roots in Kalu's estimation. He further implied that African efforts to develop a stronger African form of Christianity have failed because Christianity and African cultures are fundamentally different: “ingredients of [African] culture” apparently cannot “receive meaning” beyond their context. That is, broader Christian culture renders them meaningless.

Within the Catholic context, a two thousand year history points to moments when Christianity was more tolerant and willing to adapt and/or incorporate different cultural symbols. The mark of catholicity ostensibly and ideally allows for local cultures to influence the church universal by taking elements of broader Christian culture and

incorporating them into their respective cultural contexts, while simultaneously offering their respective symbols to enrich the Christian context. The nature and terms of such an exchange ought to be the stuff of the dialogue between Christianity and culture. Again, within the Catholic context, Rome has unfortunately taken up the model of a top-down monologue (see Hillman), as symbolized by the decision to move the 1994 meeting of the synod of African bishops to Rome rather than allow it to take place on the African continent.

Perhaps, then, it is necessary to put inculturation—as Jacques Derrida would say—“under erasure,” and develop a more appropriate model in which to study and understand the interaction between Christianity and African cultures. Or, perhaps, the model of dialogue between church and culture is a useful one, and the only element necessary to make it effective is the will to respect culture as an equal partner in the dialogue on the part of church leaders. It was this lack of will, which closed the possibility of expressing Christianity in an African idiom, that led the Jesuits to ban the practice of *kurova guva* over 100 years ago, and that now inspires members of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference—who were trained by the Jesuits at the one major seminary in Zimbabwe—to reexamine the approbation of the *kuchenura munhu* rites. Thus, the bishops, in discussing the possible revocation of one of the few inculturated Catholic liturgies in Zimbabwe, show the need for theologians to reevaluate and rethink the meaning, methods, and implications of inculturation. Perhaps, then, this is an instance where John Thornton’s model of divine revelation as the basis of religious knowledge could be useful to Catholic theologians.

Thornton's model of the interaction between African Christians and European missionaries as "a complex examination of revelations" conducted by both African and European Christians that was neither "a meshing of cosmologies" (i.e., syncretism) nor simply "an intellectual enterprise" at once takes the reality of religious faith seriously and presumes a relative equality of both parties involved in the dialogue: both believe in a series of divine revelations; both examine the respective contents of the other's beliefs; and both are free to accept and/or reject elements of the other's beliefs as valid revelations of the divine on the human (material) plane. Additionally, because Thornton's model was developed from actual historical case studies, it is extremely valuable for church theologians because it pushes them to consider the respective historical contexts in which Christianity was adapted to various local cultures across the globe prior to the centralization of ecclesiastical power in Rome during the nineteenth century, amidst an efflorescent European ethnocentric imperialism.

Taking the Sacred Seriously

The institutional church's failure at the ideological/theological level does not negate the depth or strength of Zimbabwean Christians' religious faith. Clearly, they knew what issues were at stake when they demanded entry into religious communities of women and the seminary; or when they performed kurova guva and later asked the Catholic hierarchy to adapt the ritual; or when they ignored canonical marriage requirements and opted to marry according to "customary law;" or when they continued to use the name Mwari to refer to the Christian god. They were not suffering from a case of false consciousness. They certainly did not have their (collective) consciousness

colonized, as Jean and John Comaroff would argue. The experiences of Catholic Christians in Zimbabwe show the Comaroff's model of the colonization of consciousness to be wholly inadequate and inappropriate for the study of Christianity in an African context for several reasons, not least of which because they base their model on Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony.

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist who, while imprisoned by Mussolini, endeavored to understand why the Italian peasantry opted for Fascist capitalism and not for radical revolution as had their counterparts in Russia. In a series of notebooks, Gramsci expostulated his well-known and much misunderstood theory of hegemony. Central to understanding hegemony is the distinction between civil society and political society (i.e. the state), and the role of intellectuals therein.

According to Gramsci, civil society is composed of private institutions in a given society, such as religious institutions or voluntary associations. The dominant group uses these institutions to exert the consent of the masses. The masses give their spontaneous consent because the prestige and power of the dominant group causes them to do so. The dominant group establishes the state (or political society) to enforce compliance to its will of those groups who do not give their consent. The state is established in anticipation of the failure of social hegemony. The role of the intellectual is to connect the state and civil society, and implement the will of the dominant group.¹⁸

Gramsci's model of the state and civil society is problematic for the study African history for several reasons. First, Gramsci not only implied, but explicitly stated that intellectuals are not autonomous, but are merely the tools of a given social class,

especially the elite.¹⁹ As such, intellectuals are not capable of wielding the “directive and organizational,” i.e., the “educative and intellectual” function that he reserved to the political party.²⁰

This raises a further problem: Gramsci posited that the political party is composed of three parts: the central committee, the mass element, and organic intellectuals of the proletariat who mediate between the former two parts. According to Gramsci the political party is the mechanism within civil society that exercises the same function as the state within political society, i.e., to enforce discipline when hegemony fails, or more specifically to enforce the will of the central committee.²¹ Furthermore, the masses’ participation “takes the form of discipline and loyalty, rather than any creative spirit or organizational ability.”²²

In essence, then, revolutionary “counter-hegemony” is a hegemony that merely substitutes the central committee for the elite or dominant group. Intellectuals merely associate themselves with the party and do its bidding. The masses maintain their discipline and give their loyalty to the party, eschewing all capacity for original thought, action, or leadership.

Gramsci left unanswered the question of why the dominant group would encourage the development of the intellectual capacity of the individual, especially amongst the masses as this would seem contrary to its interests. Also, if one accepts Gramsci’s concept of the organic intellectual, it is unclear why the proletarian intellectuals need to mediate between the party vanguard and the masses. Logically, their organic intellectuals should be able to exercise the required intellectual functions, or why,

for that matter, they must they remain subordinate to the party vanguard.²³ The Gramscian paradigm implies the incapacity of the masses to think or act on their own behalf or for their own liberation. There seems to be no possibility of revolution without the party vanguard, which will ultimately use its position and authority to exercise counter-hegemony over the masses.

According to Gramsci, the consent of the masses is not an acceptance of the socio-political order, rather, it is a psychological phenomenon. Rather than consenting out of fear punishment, or from blindly following social dictates, hegemony impels the masses to assent by means of a conscious attachment to the society.²⁴ If this is so, Gramsci seemed to be positing that hegemony creates a social consensus that transcends all class divisions and conflicts. This is a significant contradiction of a key Marxist tenet. The conscious attachment to the society on the part of the masses, and their supporting the interests the dominant classes is what Gramsci called false consciousness, and is the result of their submission and intellectual subordination.²⁵

Another significant problem with Gramsci's theory is its implicit Western hubris, and the logical implications that stem from it. Gramsci posited that it is possible to gauge the complexity of a society by measuring the number of its schools and the number of levels of schooling. The greater the the number—both spatially and “vertically”—the more complex is “the cultural world, the civilization, of a particular state.”²⁶ This presumes technology to be the basis for social or cultural advancement, and logically implies the more technology a given society possesses, the more advanced it is and the more power it has, and therefore, the greater capacity to dominate less advanced societies

and eliminate resistance from the latter. If so, how does he account for resistance, especially within a colonial context?

Walter Adamson suggested that Gramsci's program for the political education of the masses required the mediation of the organic intellectuals because the central committee would be

continually preoccupied with coordinating national strategy and international diplomacy from a "political-military" point of view. . .he seems to have perceived that if one left the elite side of the political education dialectic to the central committee, there might be very little political education at all. . .Internal party democracy and the political education which supports its growth require mutual rapport between "elements" and the close, continual interaction which can alone foster that rapport.²⁷

This model of education, or formation of "organic intellectuals," fails to consider the efficacy of "informal" methods of education, i.e., the mass-based efforts at community conscientization of Paulo Freire where intellectuals exercise a "preferential option for the poor" and live a life in common with the people whom they educate.²⁸

Turning specifically to Africa, Gramsci's theory also suffers from what can at best be described as a paternalistically racialized view of Africans and peoples of African descent, or at worst, a racist perspective. After having discussed the history of the development of traditional intellectuals in Europe and the United States from the Roman empire to the 20th century,²⁹ Gramsci noted that there was a "surprising" number of African American intellectuals in the United States who had "absorbed American culture and technology." He believed that these intellectuals could bear an indirect influence "on the backward masses in Africa," and possibly a direct influence if either American "expansionists" used African Americans as agents for the conquest of African markets

and the extension of American civilization, or the struggle for the unification of the American people resulted in a mass exodus of African Americans returning to the continent. He then pointed to Liberia as having the potential to become "an African Piedmont" in the possible unification of Africa.³⁰

Gramsci then extrapolated from the experiences of various nations in Europe and imposed historical processes at work there on other parts of the non-European world: Developments in Central and South America were reduced to functions of processes in Spain and Portugal; developments in Japan were likened to those in Germany and England; China and India followed religious patterns similar to cleavages between Catholics and Protestants.³¹

Clearly, the implications from such ideas raise serious questions as to the applicability of Gramsci's thought to the study of non-European peoples in general, and Africans specifically. Any theory that contains such explicitly Eurocentrist views ought to be held highly suspect. Gramsci should also be held suspect for what can only be characterized as imposing a European paradigm on the rest of the world. His theories deny agency to the masses, as well as the possibility for any unique historical developments in their own right, exclusive of any reference to Europe.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony is flawed in two significant ways. Firstly, it implies that domination is ultimately psychological, which would indicate the inability of the dominated to think for themselves, maintain a degree of intellectual development and freedom, or know their own interests. Secondly, hegemony theory does not allow for

resistance to the dominant group by the dominated, that is, there is no possibility for power from below.

The Comaroffs defined hegemony as

that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies—drawn from a historically situated cultural field—that comes to be taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it. It consists. . . of things that go without saying because, being axiomatic, they come without saying; things that, being presumptively shared, are not normally the subject of explication or argument. . . . it is rarely contested directly. . . . For once its internal contradictions are revealed, when what seemed natural becomes negotiable, when the ineffable is put into words—then hegemony becomes something other than itself. It turns into ideology and counterideology. . . . More commonly, however, such struggles remain clashes of symbols, the practical iconoclasm that is produced when tensions within the hegemonic—or between the grains of habit and habitat—chafe for immediate resolution.³²

In short, following Gramsci, hegemony for the Comaroffs is the largely unconscious form of domination that the ruling class uses to maintain its power over the subordinate classes. The Comaroffs place ideology at the opposite end of the spectrum of domination from hegemony, defining it as

“an articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as [the] ‘worldview’” of any social grouping. Borne in explicit manifestos and everyday practices, self-conscious texts and spontaneous images, popular styles and political platforms, this worldview may be more or less internally systematic, more or less assertively coherent in its outward forms. But, as long as it exists, it provides an organizing scheme (a master narrative?) for collective symbolic production. . . . [The] regnant ideology of any period or place will be that of the dominant group.³³

The Comaroffs characterize the relationship between hegemony and ideology as one of “reciprocal interdependence”:

[hegemony] is that part of a dominant worldview which has been naturalized and, having hidden itself in orthodoxy, no more appears as

ideology at all. Inversely, the ideologies of the subordinate may give expression to discordant but hitherto voiceless experience of contradictions that a prevailing hegemony can no longer conceal. Self-evidently, the hegemonic proportion of any dominant ideology may be greater or lesser. It will never be total. . . .The manner in which some of the acts and axioms of a sectarian worldview actually come to be naturalized, or how critical reactions grow from the invisible roots that anchor inequality, is always a historically specific issue. . . .Typically, however, the making of hegemony involves the assertion of control over various modes of symbolic production: over such things as educational and ritual processes, patterns of socialization, political and legal procedures, canons of style and self-representation, public communication, health and bodily discipline, and so on. That control, however, . . .must be sustained over time and in such a way that it becomes, to all intents and purposes, invisible.³⁴

Although it is possible criticize the Comaroffs for the ahistorical treatment of “the long conversation” (despite claiming to produce a study in historical anthropology, their method is clearly not historical), the backward-looking teleology of the imposition of Western colonialism on the BaTswana (or the inevitable “colonization of their consciousness” at the hands of Western non-conformist missionaries), and the superimposition of Western categories and processes on African ones, this has already been done by other scholars elsewhere.³⁵ What is most problematic for a study that purports to take the theological seriously is the Comaroff’s failure to engage a discussion of the nature of divine or supernatural revelation in their work, the title of the magnum opus and its ostensible focus on a Western missionary encounter with an African culture notwithstanding. The subject of divine revelation—and by extension religion as more than a social phenomenon—was apparently so insignificant to the Comaroffs that “revelation” did not merit listing in the indices of either volume of *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Given this glaring omission, it is not surprising that they implied that

revelation/religion was a form of domination that was closer to hegemony than ideology.³⁶ This is further suggested by the Comaroff's curious use religious vocabulary to discuss hegemony: its internal contradictions "are revealed;" it becomes something other than itself when its ineffability "is put into words." The struggles between "ideology and counterideology" are "clashes of symbols," or a "practical iconoclasm."

In Volume I, the Comaroffs claimed to discuss the content of the missionaries' message (i.e., the message of Jesus Christ to humanity):

Here we explore the work of conversion in the terms that the missionaries themselves used to speak about it; that is, as an exercise in the persuasive telling of a truth which the Southern Tswana were free to accept or reject. *In contrast to earlier parts of the chapter, we consider not the media of the long conversation but its message, a new ideology to be impressed on black consciousness. . . .* We shall allow the Nonconformists to tell their own story, aware all the while that their verbal exchanges were never really independent of the other, less audible transactions of the colonial encounter.³⁷

Regrettably, the remainder of the chapter addressed the methods that the missionaries used to spread the Christian message, not its content:

The pioneer generation of Nonconformists in South Africa had to evolve their own techniques of conversion; their weak training in theology and evangelical practice gave them very few guidelines with which to begin. . . . Following the command to "preach the gospel to every living creature," they took the sacred text as their manual, liturgical orthodoxy as their yardstick of piety. The holy narrative, for these purposes, was the New Testament. [Robert] Moffat had called the Acts of the Apostles a "missionary book," . . . While the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, the Ten Commandments, and various catechisms were among the earliest texts to be rendered into Setswana by both the LMS and WMMS, Moffat began his illustrious career as translator of the scriptures with the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew, his versions soon becoming standard throughout the Tswana field. . . . [It] was the story of Christ that was most widely told, first by the European churchmen and then by mimetic local preachers.

The Nonconformists arrived in the field impatient to tell the "Good News" to the heathen. Hardly had they parked their wagons when they

began to preach from them in a gesture that became emblematic of the early mission at large; their faith in the persuasive power of the Word was so literal that they paid no attention, at first, to the manner in which their orations were being translated and understood.³⁸

Despite discussing missionaries' methods of preaching, starting schools for BaTswana, emphasizing literacy, and "the regular round of Sabbath observances as their most significant evangelical activity," the Comaroffs provided little more than passing references to the content of missionary preaching. Similarly, the Comaroffs were dismissive of any spiritual/theological reasons that the BaTswana may have had to reject the missionaries' message, focusing instead on material matters:

In light of what we now know of the methods of the missionaries, it should not surprise us that their message was less than enthusiastically received. The first reaction of the Southern Tswana to the Christian Word, it seems, was one of utter bemusement. Moroka, the Seleka-Rolong chief, for example said to Broadbent that "the things [the churchmen] told him were great things; but that he, and many others, "could not comprehend them all." Likewise, Edwards, who concluded that his preaching was "incomprehensible to the . . . unsophisticated minds" of the heathen, noted that they described it, dismissively, as "talking."

It is indeed difficult to assess just what the Nonconformists message might have meant to early Tswana listeners. Most seem to have interpreted the admonitions and promises of the mission in highly literal, immediate terms—this being characteristic of the response of many nonwestern peoples to millennial Christianity. The evangelists were graphic in their accounts of the wages of sin and the fruits of redemption, eliciting reactions which suggest that the Tlhaping and Rolong took the Protestant deity to be a pragmatic being, different from their otiose *modimo*.³⁹

The doctrine borne by the Word was explicit in its attack on the entire edifice of customary practice. Once the divine light of truth had fallen on it, savage innocence became original sin, its ways to be loudly condemned as the path to death and damnation. Royals were most directly threatened by such moral tirades, seeing the onslaught on rainmaking, initiation, and polygyny as a serious challenge to their sovereignty. Nonetheless, while Southern Tswana elites . . . flatly refused to hear the gospel, they continued to converse with the church, not least for strategic puposes. . . . The strategic benefits of the church were not inconsiderable. Nor were they

underestimated. The physical security offered by LMS and WMMS stations in the unsettled interior ensured that by the early 1830's they were usually surrounded by sizeable populations, even when peripatetic chiefs moved their seats elsewhere.⁴⁰

Further, not surprisingly, the Comaroffs chose to emphasize the material motives of early African converts to Christianity:

The first converts would appear to have been made sensitive to the Protestant message by their very marginality; the promise of equality before the Lord, of an unfettered moral economy, must have appealed to those who had long been treated as less than human. However, a second category of people, peripheral in a quite different sense, soon showed itself susceptible to evangelism. Both among the Tlhaping and the Rolong there were junior royals who drew close to the mission and availed themselves of its knowledge and resources. . . . These men were more securely rooted in their communities than were the first catechumens. But their exclusion from positions of authority by virtue of rank, age, and prevailing power relations seems to have attracted them to Christianity. Apart from all else, the church presented itself as an alternative, and an altogether new, source of meaning, control, and influence.⁴¹

Additionally, the Comaroffs' focus on the material led them to characterize the theological perspectives of both the Western missionaries and the Africans who received them as "pragmatic," that is, directed toward divine manifestations on the material plane:

[The evangelical movement's] message was disseminated, first and foremost, by the act of preaching. . . . This bespeaks the pragmatic orientation of the Revival, of its vision of truth, representation, and the religious subject. The evangelicals were concerned, above all, to give voice to the living word: to make evident the revealed power of God in the here and now, so that the listener might be moved to seize the control of his or her own destiny. . . . Conviction, the fruit of inner reflection, was a matter of "feeling"; not of abstract reason or physical excitation, but of knowledge acquired through the senses, upon which human beings could exercise will. Wesley's skepticism of the role in conversion of "visions and voices, . . . fits and convulsions" was shared by most Nonconformists in the mission field—which, in turn, had consequences for the kind of "devotional self" they found acceptable and looked for in their converts.

Tswana spiritual life was also pragmatically oriented, of course. . . . But not in the same way. The difference turned on a fundamental contrast in their understanding of religious being. . . . For Southern Tswana. .

.divinity was rooted in an axiomatic yet tangible awareness of spiritual presence—this being reflected in the fact that direct communication between humans and the superhuman occurred more in deeds than in words. Deities did not require to be spoken to or spoken about, to make their reality felt. It was only when they seemed to have withdrawn that these beings were called upon at all.⁴²

The Comaroffs' overemphasis of the material in their pseudo-theological analysis belies a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of divine revelation in African religious experience. Theological dialogue had to stem from different understandings of divine revelation, that is, the supernatural or divine revealing or manifesting itself to humanity. The Comaroffs' focus on the "pragmatic" negates the dynamic notion of what John Thornton called continuous revelation in African theology, and the associated idea that religious specialists need to validate revelation with a manifestation of divine presence in the material realm.

The Comaroffs' "primary emphasis on pragmatic ritual" distorts understanding the nature and complexity of the negotiation and/or mediation and interpretation of divine cosmologies that occurred in the dialogues between Western missionaries and African Christians. They focus more on the means of disseminating the message of divine revelation—i.e., preaching—rather than the content of the message, and African/BaTswana responses to preaching rather than examining the underlying source of the message. The African complaint that missionaries were "just talking" doesn't address the issue of how they received what the missionaries were talking *about*. Following Thornton's model, BaTswana were more than likely less inclined to accept the Non-Conformist Protestants' message because by "just talking" they failed to validate the divinity of the revelations about which they spoke. John Thornton posited that Africans

(specifically in eighteenth century Angola) believed in continuous revelations of the divine and that religious practitioners had to validate those revelations with miracles. In light of Thornton's analysis of revelation as the basis of religious knowledge, therefore, the Comaroffs have very little to say regarding African religion. Rather, they used religion merely as the lens through which to analyze social relations broadly, not as a subject of study in its own right.

In a similar fashion, social scientist James L. Cox distorted accurate understanding of African religious experiences more broadly.⁴³ Following J.G. Platvoet, Cox characterized African indigenous religions as:

—“co-extensive with their societies;”

—an “undifferentiated part of social life, [which] includes not only the living, but also what the community understands to be a variety of spiritual forces, foremost the ancestors;”

—“complex due to the multi-stranded nature of thought,” i.e., “it consists of ideas, feelings, norms and symbolic representations which have been formed in past interaction processes into complex patterns which for members of the society are unsystematic and for Westerners unanalytical;”

—“pragmatic,” i.e., “They perform rituals and seek explanations to deal with what Platvoet calls ‘tangible salvific goods in this life only.’ Another way of putting it is that African indigenous religions concern themselves with means of providing benefits which are largely material and which promote the harmony of society. Communication with the spirits in rituals is intended to achieve this end.”

—reciprocal “between the community and the spirits,” i.e., “this means that the community must provide gifts to the spirits, often in the form of sacrificed animals or through the pouring of libations, as a sign of respect and remembrance. In return, the spirits provide protection and material beneficence for the community.

— “Beliefs are not articulated, but remain implicit. Hence, there are no doctrines, theologies, claims to truth or factional disputes between sects. African indigenous religions are non-missionary in their intent.”

—“adoptive and adaptive,” i.e., “they have an open mind towards other religions and import the deities and practices of other peoples readily, integrating them into their own complex systems.”⁴⁴ Cox ultimately concluded that

the purpose of [spirit] possession has nothing to do with revealing knowledge of the other world nor with constructing a systematic diagram of the relationships between ancestor spirits. In other words, the religious experience [the medium] displayed was not undertaken to reinforce religious doctrines, nor to translate structural hierarchies of spirits into a kind of African systematic theology. The purpose of possession is entirely practical, the aims of which are to resolve specific problems facing people. The ancestor speaks through [the medium], not to tell others of the nature of the afterlife, but to alter directly the balance of the community’s experience in favour [sic] of health and well-being.”⁴⁵

Cox (and Platvoet) is (are) correct in claiming that African religious systems are more adaptive (presumably) than Western religions. Elsewhere in the article, however, Cox made a passing reference to the Mwari cult, which certainly exemplifies the adaptive nature of African religion generally.⁴⁶ Works by Ranger, Fortune, Daneel, and Bourdillon, as well as the chapter above concerning the Mwari controversy, however, clearly show that the Mwari cult has transcended and continues to transcend specific cultures, that is, it is recognized and practiced among VaShona, AmaNdebele, and

BaVenda ethnic groups.⁴⁷ Further, as Ranger and Fortune noted, the name Mwari/Mwali is used extensively throughout Bantu language-speaking groups across East, Central, and Southern Africa. Thus, Cox (and Platvoet) was (were) incorrect to assert that African religion[s] were “co-extensive with their societies.”

With regard to Cox’s claims concerning the “pragmatic” and “reciprocal” nature of African religion, one could easily make similar arguments about Western Christianity.⁴⁸ Are not Western Christian prayers of petition—whether they be made to God the Father, to Jesus Christ directly, or via Mary and/or the communion of saints—requests for “tangible good in this life,” whether they be for health in mind or body, peace on earth (“[promotion of] the harmony of [global] society”), rain for good harvests, strength of character to endure suffering, success on an impending exam, or safe deliverance from the battlefield? Cox does not address instances in African religion where prayers are made for immaterial reasons, such as the prayers of petition associated with the performance of *kurova guva*: the people implore the ancestor spirits to receive the spirit of the recently deceased person into their realm. The people are communicating with the spirit world for a decidedly immaterial, spiritual end. This is analogous to Catholic Christians praying to God on behalf of souls in Purgatory. Similarly, Catholic Christians in the West—and throughout the world (not just in Sub-Saharan Africa)—are required to make sacrificial offerings of bread and wine during the liturgy of the Eucharist, sometimes referred to as the “holy sacrifice of the mass.”⁴⁹ Further, an example the so-called reciprocity that Cox ascribed to African religion can be found in the Christian gospels:

Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.* By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. *If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.*⁵⁰

Thus, by virtue of Christ's command at the Last Supper to "do this in memory of me," the Christian community "must provide gifts to the [Holy Spirit],. . . in the form of [a sacrificial victim—i.e., Jesus Christ], as a sign of respect and remembrance. In return, the [Holy Spirit] provide[s] protection and material beneficence for the community." Cox, therefore, must either revise his argument to claim that all religion—Western religion included—is "reciprocal" as Platvoet defined it, in which case reciprocity is not a distinctive feature of African religion, or he must take up Max Weber's argument that Catholicism is not in fact a form of Christianity.⁵¹

By arguing that religion is an "undifferentiated part of [African] social life [which] includes not only the living, but also what the community understands to be a variety of spiritual forces," Cox implied that such was not the case in (presumably) Western religion, and betrays a general misunderstanding of the latter. According to orthodox Catholic teaching, awareness of the Divine presence should suffuse a Christian's consciousness. The Jesuit practices of *examen* (or the examination of consciousness) and the discernment of spirits, for example, require an individual to see all things and events in one's daily life as gifts of grace and moments at which both

divine and diabolical forces are at work respectively. Because forces of Evil are just as real and present in the material world, one must discern whether s/he is responding to or being acted upon by them or by forces of Good. Ideally, one's faith in Christ's teachings (and understanding of the interpretations thereof by the Magisterium, or the teaching authority of the church) should guide one's actions constantly, thus causing a person to live an explicitly and intentional Christian lifestyle, that is, one in which prayer, attending liturgies, or going to work or school are not necessarily seen as separate spheres of existence, but rather different moments in which to experience God's salvific presence in this world. Differentiation, therefore, is not only ostensibly absent from African religions, but also from forms of ("modern?") Western religious thought and practice as well.

Cox's arguments that African religion is "multi-stranded," inarticulate (i.e., implied), unsystematic, and non-analytical, are equally as problematic as his other characterizations of African religious systems because he imposed Western ideologies and epistemologies on African religious realities.⁵² The work of scholars such as Philip M. Peek⁵³ is significant for its understanding of African divination systems: Peek first critiqued Western anthropologists for failing to distinguish divination from African religion, and for their characterizing divination as irrational. More importantly, he argued that African divination systems are based on valid bodies of knowledge and are "often the primary institutional means of articulating the epistemology of a people."⁵⁴ Further arguing that the Western "scientific tradition is but one way of knowing and that we can gain much from other systems proven effective over the centuries," Peek noted that African divination systems frequently combine "'logical-analytical' and 'intuitive-

synthetical' modes of thinking" whereas Western traditions rigidly separate these cognitive processes.⁵⁵ Most importantly, Peek argued that these systems operate according to an inherent logic within the context of the culture in which the divination process functions, and that these systems "stand on their own and [are] not simply representations of social structures."⁵⁶ In other words, it is necessary to evaluate divination for itself on its own merit or in its own terms, not as a reflection of its Western counterpart. Accordingly, African divinations systems—as John W. Burton argued—can be considered as valid sources for African philosophy.⁵⁷

It is fairly safe to presume that at different times at different places in different African societies someone must have asked questions such as: "Where do we (humans) come from?" "Why are we here?" "Who are we?" "What is good/bad?" "What is right/wrong conduct?" "What makes us (humans) different from (other?) animals or spirits?", and that different African groups developed different answers at different times to these questions. Therefore, to the extent they answer (or try to answer) them, there is African philosophy. Just as African divination systems are valid sources of African philosophy, "the ordinary languages of different African peoples" are as much the sources of African philosophy just as the ordinary languages of Western peoples are the sources of Western philosophy. The specific philosophical vocabularies were developed by specific intellectuals to analyze and evaluate human experience(s).⁵⁸ Thus, African intellectuals expostulate philosophical systems and categories based on the concrete experiences of African historical agents.

Similarly, Christian theologian John Mbiti's argued that God—or for the present purposes, the divine/supernatural more broadly—reveals himself (itself) to different people in different places at different times in different ways. This implies multiple dynamic and on-going, temporally bound revelation processes.⁵⁹ Taking the Augustinian definition of theology as faith seeking understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*), this implies the existence of multiple African *theologies*, or reflections upon the experiences of interactions between the divine/supernatural and humanity.

Nineteenth century Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge discussed the nature of the relationship between the bible and systematic theology as follows:

The Bible is no more a system of theology, than nature is a system of chemistry or of mechanics. We find in nature the facts which the chemist or the mechanical philosopher has to examine, and from them to ascertain the laws by which they are determined. So the Bible contains the truths which the theologian has to collect, authenticate, arrange, and exhibit in their internal relation to each other. This constitutes the difference between biblical and systematic theology. The office of the former is to ascertain and state the facts of Scripture. *The office of the latter is to take those facts, determine their relation to each other and to other cognate truths, as well as to vindicate them and show their harmony and consistency.* This is not an easy task, or one of slight importance.⁶⁰

Similarly, Catholic theologian G.F. Van Ackeren discussed the relationship between positive theology and speculative theology:

Whereas positive theology is concerned with understanding the connection or relation between the present dogmatic-theological context and its origins in revelation, speculative theology [i.e., systematic theology] is concerned with this context in relation to its goal of understanding, namely, a comprehensive understanding of the truths of revelation in an ordered synthesis. It pursues this goal (1) by comparing the mysteries of things, laws, and relationships that are naturally known and with which the mysteries have a certain similarity or proportion (*analogia*); (2) by comparing the mysteries among themselves in order to understand better their interrelationship, coherence, and order; and (3) by reflecting on the connection of the various mysteries and their implications with the

supernatural end of man [sic]. . . .The synthesis envisaged here is a comprehensive, scientific synthesis of revealed truths. It should be noted, however, that the theological syntheses, which are nothing but intelligible patterns of understanding, can be and have been achieved in categories other than those of scientific speculative theology.⁶¹

Thus, presuming the insights of scholars such as Peek and Burton concerning African divination systems (i.e., that the epistemological systems that different African cultural groups developed are significantly different from Western epistemic systems and possess respective logics inherent within them), it is possible to posit that African religious systems similarly have different ways of taking theological “facts, determin[ing] their relation to each other and to other cognate truths, as well as [vindicating] them and show[ing] their harmony and consistency.” In other words, contrary to Cox’s arguments, African religious systems are systematic and analytical, and their beliefs are articulated and not only implied. Further, they possess doctrines and make claims to truth. As the chapter concerning the Mwari controversy, the Mwari cult and its relation to the Mhondoro spirit systems clearly demonstrates, there were certainly factional disputes between different groups, if not necessarily sects as defined in Western thought. Just because beliefs aren’t written doesn’t mean they aren’t articulated.⁶² Similarly, just because doctrine isn’t formally promulgated by an established religious authority doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. This argument contains implicit Western hubris and perspective that privilege the written, and therefore, static forms of revelation over non-literate and/or dynamic forms of revelation, particularly those found in a variety of African religious systems. If Cox is unable to find African systematic theology it is because he looks at African theology with Western, secular social scientific lenses. To borrow Oyeronke

Oyewumi's insightful observation regarding Western gender discourse and African realities, theology, like gender, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

Thus, the Comaroffs and James L. Cox represent the perils and problems within the (Western?) academy that come from either imposing Western intellectual constructs on non-Western realities or viewing non-Western realities through distinctly Western lenses. Western post-modern theories have been useful in clearing space for the inclusion of distinctly non-Western voices within the discourse on a given subject, and in calling scholars and cultures to critical self-reflection. If one presumes an equality of subjective voices within the (Western?) academy, that is, per Derrida and Spivak, we can no longer privilege Western perspectives and practices over non-Western ones,⁶³ then African and other non-Western voices have a right to be heard within intellectual discourses and a responsibility to represent themselves within intellectual discourses. Consequently, owing to that responsibility, they must develop distinctively and explicitly African and/or non-Western categories of intellectual inquiry (see, for example, *Subaltern Studies*, a predominantly Indian/South Asian effort thereat). Thus, African scholars need to take advantage of academic and intellectual spaces that post-modern cultural studies theorists have opened to introduce African intellectual developments to be rationalized as explicitly African reflections upon the specific experiences of African historical agents.

Western philosophers and intellectuals have found ways to communicate with each other over time across languages (e.g., Derrida's critique of Husserl; English, French, Russian, and American allies' ability to communicate with each other during two world wars). Similarly, Africans have found ways to communicate with each other over

time and across languages (e.g., the presence San clicks in Nguni languages in Southern Africa, or KiSwahili in East Africa). African intellectuals, therefore, have the ability to communicate with one another.

This places onus on Westerners to learn African languages and cultures to understand African intellectual concepts. Again, Derrida's idea of reversal is useful to de-center the privilege of Western languages. Westerners must learn African linguistic and cultural vocabularies before they are able to understand African intellectual systems. Kenyan literary artist and critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o discussed the significance of language in developing his concept of "language as culture:"

Language as culture also has three important aspects. *Culture is a product of the history which it in turn reflects.* Culture in other words is a product and a reflection of human beings communicating with one another in the very struggle to create wealth and to control it. But culture does not merely reflect that history, or rather, it does so by actually forming images or pictures of the world of nature and nurture. Thus the second aspect of language as culture is *an image-forming agent in the mind of a child.* Our whole conception of ourselves as a people, individually and collectively, is based on those pictures and images which may or may not correctly correspond to the actual reality of the struggles with nature and nurture which produced them in the first place. But our own capacity to confront the world creatively is dependent on how those images correspond or not to that reality, how they distort or clarify the reality of our struggles. Language as culture is thus mediating between me and my own self; between my own self and other selves; between me and nature. Language is mediating in my very being. And this brings us to the third aspect of language as culture. *Culture transmits or imparts those images of the world and reality through the spoken and the written language, that is through a specific language.* In other words, the capacity to speak, the capacity to order sounds in a manner that makes for mutual comprehension between human beings is universal. This is the universality of language, a quality specific to human beings. . . . But the particularity of the sounds, the words, the word order into phrases and sentences, and the specific manner, or laws, of their ordering is what distinguishes one language from another. Thus a specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history. Written literature and orature

are the main means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries.

Language as communication and as a culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.⁶⁴

Thus, the need to decolonize the academy.

Intellectuals (especially African scholars) ought to view African history and/or experience as a seamless garment, that is, as a broad continuum. I would argue that we need to forget the idea of “permanent forces:” there are no “historical forces,” only concrete actions by specific human agents in specific historical situations (or contexts), in this case by specific *African* agents. African (and Western) scholars need to de-center the colonial experience in African history: it is *not* a turning point in African history any more than the development of agriculture, the domestication of cattle, the rise and development of slavery within African societies, the Bantu migrations, the introduction and spread of Christianity and Islam, etc. The extent to which African intellectuals centralize the colonial and post-colonial experiences is the extent to which Africans will be and continue to be marginalized.

The implications for western scholars are significant: we need to be more than minimally fluent or functional in local languages or local cultures. Beyond that, we must live with and develop a sense of solidarity with the people about whom we write. It is a very dangerous and dehumanizing thing to consider people as “subjects” of research.

This is the kind of enterprise that takes a lifetime to achieve and do right and well, and even then it's not guaranteed. But it is an ideal, and one toward which scholars western and non-western must strive if we take the values of equality, democracy, and subjectivity in academia seriously.

Notes

1. Archives of the Archdiocese of Harare (AAH hereafter), Box 412, File C (412/C hereafter), Minutes of the "Committee appointed by the Hierarchy to investigate the Catholic Association and its relationship to other Catholic Associations," March 27, 1962 (Inquiry Commission hereafter).
2. AAH, Box 412/B, Territorial Council Executive Committee minutes, January 4, 1961.
3. *ibid.*
4. AAH, Box 412/B, Archbishop Francis Markall, S.J. to Rev. Michael Hannan, S.J., May 25, 1961.
5. Inquiry Commission, 8.
6. *ibid.*, 9-10.
7. Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988), 10-12.
8. Oliver Alozie Onwubiko, *Theory and Practice of Inculturation (An African Perspective)*, (Enugu: SNAAP Press, 1992), 40. Emphasis in original.
9. Xolile Keteyi, *Inculturation as a Strategy for Liberation*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1998), 37.
10. See Onwubiko, *Theory and Practice of Inculturation*, 23-24.
11. David Newbury, "Missionary Arrival in a Fragile Polity: Rwanda, 1900-1926." Paper presented at the American Catholic Historical Association Spring Meeting, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA, March 2003.
12. See Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*.
13. See M.F.C. Bourdillon, *Where Are the Ancestors?: Changing Culture in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 1993)
14. See, e.g., Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1991) and Amilcar Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture," *Unity and Struggle*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), 138-54.
15. See Bede the Venerable, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Book I, Chapter 30.
16. O. U. Kalu, ed., *The History of Christianity in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1980) 269.

17. Ibid., 333-34.

18. Quinton Hoare & G.N. Smith, ed., *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (New York: International Publishers, 1992).

19. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 10, 14.

20. ibid., 15-16.

21. ibid., 15; Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 212.

22. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, 212.

23. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 10.

24. Joseph Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981), p.38. Femia hereafter.

25. ibid., 42-43.

26. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 9-10.

27. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, 213.

28. See Paulo Freire, *A Pedagogia dos Oprimidos; Política e Educação* (São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1993); Peter McLaren & Peter Leonard, ed., *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*, (New York: Routledge, 1993).

29. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 17-21.

30. ibid., 21.

31. ibid., 21-23.

32. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Volume I), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 23-24.

33. ibid., 24.

34. ibid., 25.

35. See, e.g., Paul Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), especially xv-xxii; idem, "Hegemony and History in Jean and John L. Comaroff's *Of Revelation and*

Revolution,” *Africa* 70/3 (2000), 501-19; Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross, ed., *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: Witswatersrand University Press, 1995), 5.

36. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Volume I), 314.

37. *ibid.*, 230. Emphasis added.

38. *ibid.*, 231.

39. *ibid.*, 236.

40. *ibid.*, 238.

41. *ibid.*, 240.

42. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Volume II), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 65-66.

43. James L. Cox, “Characteristics of African indigenous religions in contemporary Zimbabwe,” in Graham Harvey, ed., *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, (London and New York: Cassell, 2000), 230-42.

44. *ibid.*, 231-32.

45. *ibid.*, 236.

46. *ibid.*, 236.

47. George Fortune, “Who was Mwari?,” *Rhodesian History*, 1973 (4), 1-20; T.O. Ranger, “The Meaning of Mwari,” 1974 (5); M.L. Daneel, *The God of the Matopo Hills: An Essay on the Mwari Cult in Rhodesia*, (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1970); M.F.C. Bourdillon, *Where are the Ancestors?: Changing Culture in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1993).

48. Specifically Catholic examples employed here are meant to be illustrative of Western traditions of Christianity, and should not be taken to be equated with the entirety of Western Christianity.

49. According to the doctrine of transubstantiation, the gifts of bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ who is sacramentally and really present in the form of the bread and wine, thus in reality it is the body and blood of Jesus that is sacrificed and received by the people.

50. John 15: 4-10 Emphasis added.

51. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

52. Compare, for example, Paul Landau's critique of the imposition of Western religious categories on African "religion" and Oyeronke Oyewumi's critique of Western feminist and gender discourses on African realities. Paul Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), xv-xxviii; Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Gender Discourse*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

53. See Philip M. Peek, ed., *African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991).

54. *ibid.*, 2.

55. *ibid.*, 3.

56. *ibid.*, 11.

57. See John W. Burton, "Nilotic Cosmology and the Divination of Atuot Philosophy," in Peek, *African Divination Systems*, 41-52.

58. Ivan Karp & D.A. Masolo, *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2000), 12.

59. See John Mbiti, "The Encounter of Christian Faith and African Religion," in Deane William Fernald, ed., *Third World Liberation Theologies: A Reader*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986), 199-204.

60. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), Volume 1, 1-2. Emphasis added.

61. G.F. Van Ackeren, "Theology," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (2nd edition), (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2003), Volume 13, 898.

62. See, e.g., Ernesto Cardenal, *The Gospel in Solentiname*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976).

63. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

64. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997), 15-16. Emphasis added.

APPENDIX

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa, Chancery, Archdiocese of Harare, May 5, 2000
Archbishop Pius Ncube, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000
Fr. Bernard Ndlovu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000
Fr. Charles Mafurutu, Chancery, Archdiocese of Bulawayo, May 10, 2000
Fr. Hebron Wilson, St. Patrick's Church, Bulawayo, May 11, 2000
Fr. Nigel Johnson, S.J., Private Residence, Bulawayo, May 11, 2000
Br. Herman Toma, S.J., Old St. Peter's Church, Harare, May 13, 2000
Fr. Walter Nyatsanza, Africa Synod House, Harare May 15 & 18, 2000
Sr. Hyacinth Gerbecks, O.P., Africa Synod House, Harare, May 15, 2000
Fr. Francis McKeown, S.J., Canisius House Jesuit Residence, Harare, May 15, 2000
Fr. Albert Plangger, S.M.B., Mambo House, Harare, May 16, 2000
Sr. Bernadette Garatsa, L.C.B.L., Chichester Residence, Chishawasha, May 16, 2000
Fr. Constantine Mashonganyika, IMBISA House, Harare, May 17, 2000
Mr. Laurence Masundire, Archdiocesan Chancery, Harare, May 18, 2000
Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi, Bible House, Harare, May 18, 2000
Fr. Ignatius Zvarevashe, S.J., St. Francis Xavier Church, Braeside, Harare, May 19, 2000
Br. Ignatius Bvukumbwe, Silveira House, Chishawasasha, May 22, 2000
Fr. John Dove, S.J., Silveira House, Chishawasasha, May 22, 2000
Br. Laurence Makonora, S.J., Silveira House, Chishawasasha, May 23, 2000
Sr. Catherine Mazarodze, L.C.B.L., Chichester Residence, Chishawasha, May 23, 2000
Mrs. Monica Basopo, Private Residence, Mbare, Harare, May 24, 2000
Mr. Peter Gatsi Ravaya, Private Residence, Mbare, Harare, May 24, 2000
Mother Roch Mushonga, L.C.B.L., Makumbi Mission, May 28, 2000
Fr. Patrick Moloney, S.J., Prestage House Jesuit Community, Harare, May 29, 2000
Fr. Christopher Gardiner, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Bark River, MI, July 8, 2000
Mrs. Teresa Joe, Kutama Mission, July 28, 2000
Mr. Boniface Mariwa Gumbo, Kutama Mission, July 28, 2000
Mr. C.L. Muringayi, St. Ignatius Mission, Chishawasha, July 31, 2000

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