TRANSFORMING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP FOR A GENDER RESPONSIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION
Women face varied problem in the Zimbabwean context which have their roots in the patriarchal system. These problems are gender based and they range from gender based socialization, gender based stereotyping, gender based violence as well as gender based discrimination in all spheres. These challenges are physical, economic, social, cultural, political, emotional and spiritual. The challenges have a different implication for women than for men although they impact on the whole well being of the society.

International law has tried to address the gender issue through laws, treaties and policies. The United Nations has responded to the gender challenge through gender mainstreaming. Chinken (2001:12) defines gender streaming as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislations, policies or programmes, in any area and at any level.” Reardon (2001) also show that gender mainstreaming involves intentions by the United Nations (UN) to remedy inequalities and problems arising due to failure to respond adequately to gender bias and lack of a gender perspective. The UN Charter affirms its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person and in equal rights between men and women (Munroe, 2001; Benedek, Kisaakye and Oberteither; 2002).

Since the inception of the UN, Laws, treaties and conventions regarding women’s rights have been adopted. In 1946 the UN instituted a commission on the status of women. It proposed political, economic and social measures to remedy the root causes as well as the consequences of systemic and systematic discrimination suffered by women in all parts of the world (Benedek, Kisaakye and Oberteither; 2002). 1967 saw the UN adopting the convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Benedek, Kisaakye and Oberteither (2002) say CEDAW constitutes the central and most comprehensive bill of human rights for women. It states in its preamble that extensive discrimination against women exists. It defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusive or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres” (Article 1). It condemns discrimination and obliges states to pursue comprehensive policies and measures to eliminate discrimination of women at all levels (Article 2). Article 3 of CEDAW according to Benedek, Kisaakye and Oberteither (2002:34) states the purpose as “full development and advancement of women for the purposes of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men.”

1975 was international women’s year whose aim was to define a society in which women participated in a real and full sense in economic, social and political life. From 19 June – 2 July 1975 an international conference of International Women’s Year was held in Mexico City. It adopted the World Plan of Action for the advancement of women. The plan expected a marked improvement in women’s literacy, vocational training, equal access to education, women’s employment opportunities, participation in public life and
parity under the law (Benedek, Kisaakye and Oberteither; 2002). The plan called for the establishment of national machinery to study the situation of women, develop policies and make programmes and legislative recommendations to translate national goals into reality for women.

In Africa, the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights presents the continental efforts to provide regional mechanisms for protection of human rights. According to Hellum, Stewart, Ali and Tsanga (2007) a supplement to the African Charter, a protocol on the rights of women had by January 2006 been ratified by the required fifteen signatories and entered into force.

After gaining independence in 1980 the Zimbabwe government took a proactive approach to addressing women’s issues and problems. Pressure to address gender disparities was a historical product or women’s involvement in the struggle for national liberation in Zimbabwe and throughout Africa (Makombe and Geroy, 2009). It is clear that the international community, the continent and the Zimbabwean government all take the issue of gender seriously. They have all shown a concern with gender challenges.

However the gender problem is still a point of concern in the Zimbabwean community and in the church. The Reformed church in Zimbabwe has been quiet for a long time on gender issues affecting women who constitutes the majority of the church membership. The ministers’ wives’ fraternal and representatives from the women’s league advocated for the realization of the humanity of women in the church at their two yearly women’s general league meetings which coincided with the synodical meeting of the church since the 1970s. They acted as a pressure group for the realization of women’s rights. However initially they got very negative and at times arrogant responses from the male only synod meetings.

It was only in 1984 when women were allowed to be church elders after ninety three years since its inception in 1891. Rutoro and Runyowa (2001) wrote a research report entitled Resource Development and Women in Leadership Positions in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The research report was presented at the 2002 church synod which passed the resolution for women to be trained as ministers. Rutoro (2007) produced a doctoral thesis on Lay Leadership Development in the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. The thesis paid special attention to the issues of women. He rightly notes that, “theology in the RCZ needs to interpret the Christian faith tradition in the light of its present realities and also discern what God requires of it.” He goes on to say that the inclusion and involvement of women in broader leadership structures will bring transformative development to the church. Despite these researches there are still glaring gaps in addressing the gender issue in the RCZ. Yes, the issue of the ordination of women has been accepted, endorsed, implemented and is slowly bearing fruit. However a lot needs to be done within the systems and structures of the RCZ to make it more responsive to gender challenges in its ministry. We should realize that it is not enough to simply let women into positions previously occupied by men, the essence is the redefinition of the structure to make them less discriminatory not only for women but for all people. There is need to address not only the issue of numbers of women in church
positions but also the structure of the framework that sustain uneven relationships between men and women in the society and in the church. Currently the situation is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordained ministers</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student ministers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>In moderamen</td>
<td>5 (ordained)</td>
<td>2 (not ministers)</td>
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2.0 Gender Justice

Gender justice entails the comprehensive application of biblical law, love, mercy, justice and equity at all levels self, family, communities, church and state. The report on the gender justice section on the occasion of the World council of Reformed Churches’ Uniting General council in Grand Rapids, USA which was held from 18 to 28 June 2010 states that:

Gender justice is an ongoing journey of praying together, engaging, challenging, always seeking discernment on how God wants us to live as women and men. It involves finding and putting into practice new ways to express and live out the uniqueness of bearing the image of God, fulfilling our responsibility of building and nurturing right, just and equal relationships in our families, churches, communities, regions and the world. We do so by first being open to the promptings of the spirit of God, challenging us to hold under the scrutiny of God’s justice, all the norms that we have nurtured about the roles and places of men and women in the family, society and church which have resulted in exclusionary practices that pains God and fracture relationships.

UNIFEM (2010) also notes that gender justice entails ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the state and even in institutions. Goetz (2010) asserts that gender justice is often used with reference to emancipatory projects that advance women’s rights through legal change or promote women’s interests in social and economic policy. Gender justice can be defined as, “the ending of and if necessary the provision of redress for inequalities between women and men that result in women’s subordination to men.” These rights may be in the conception of human dignity, personal autonomy and rights that deny women physical integrity and the capacity to make choices about how to live their lives.

2.1 LESSONS FROM JESUS CHRIST

a) Jesus Christ the author of gender justice

I am going to explore the relevance of John 8 v 2 -11 to gender justice. The Pharisees came to Jesus with a woman caught in adultery. They tell Jesus that the woman was caught in the act of adultery. There are a lot of justice question that might have raced in Jesus’ mind as they may do in our minds today

- If the woman was caught in the act, was she doing the act alone
• Is it possible to do adultery alone
• Where was the other part to the adultery i.e. the man?
• Why did the Pharisees and the teachers of the law let the man go?
• Why did they accuse the woman only?
• Wasn’t this a case of gender injustice?
• The Pharisees and the teachers of the law said that the law commanded them to stone such women. What did the same say about such men?

Jesus saw beyond the accusation. He saw what the human eye could not see and the human mind could not comprehend.

Jesus said “if anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Jesus was not breaking the Law of Moses but he was saying, the woman ought to be stoned according to Moses’ law, but only by him whose life did not warrant stoning. Jesus the impartial judge, the founder of gender justice. Why do I see this incident as an incident of gender justice?

• There were only men who were condemning a woman to death because of an act she did with a man.
• No one was condemning the man who was part to the adulterous act. The other men could not condemn him. They were saying the man was right. He had the right to do adultery and it was the woman who was wrong.
• They were applying the Law of Moses with partiality.

Jesus saw beyond what other people at that time saw – the issue of gender justice. So Jesus softly fights the cause of the woman even amidst a lot of opposition. “if anyone is without sin, let him throw the first stone.” Today society is throwing stones at innocent women through its unjust practices but unlike Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith, the church is silent. At times it is also part to the injustices. Shouldn’t the church take the example of Jesus – to be proponents of gender justice in our communities and to be agents of social justice? A lot of women sit in church every Sunday, physically and emotionally wounded by members of the same congregation. Is it enough to urge them to forgive ‘seventy times seven times’ and ‘to bless those who persecute you’. Is it really enough just to offer them the hope of the crown in heaven when the same people preaching those words are the perpetrators of the injustice? Shouldn’t the church go a little further to try to correct the gender based injustices?

Ministers should be equipped to be agents of justice, peace, freedom, liberty, love and hope. What should the church learn from Jesus for its Ministry?

• Ministers should be teachers and preachers of gender justice. They should stand for those deprived of their basic rights through unjust social practice. (if anyone is without sin let him throw the first stone.) the bible says in Matthew12 v 18-20

Here is my servant whom I have chosen  
The one I love, in whom I delight  
I will put my spirit on Him  
And He will proclaim justice to the nations  
He will not quarrel or cry out  
No one will hear His voice in the streets
A bruised reed He will not break
A smoldering wick He will not snuff off
Till He leads justice to victory

How many women are bruised in our church (the bruised reed), how many whose light is smoldering (the smoldering wick) and the minister is not equipped to bring justice for them or to address their issues and challenges.

- We are all equal before God (woman, where are they who condemned you. Has no one condemned you) Jesus showed partiality in his execution of justice. We should emulate Jesus’ form of justice by imitating the same concern for the vulnerable members of our communities.
- The church should not unfairly condemn people on the basis of their sex (neither do I condemn you)
- Jesus bring freedom and liberty for the unjustly treated (go now). Ministers should be liberators of the oppressed as they preach gender justice
- Admonition for sinning (leave your life of sin)

b) Jesus welcomed women to His Ministry
After His resurrection it was Jesus’ intention to first appear to a woman, Mary Magdalene (John 20 v 1 – 18) How can we explain the incidents of Jesus’ resurrection.

- Mary found the tomb open
- She ran to report to Jesus’ male disciples
- The disciples outran Mary back to the tomb
- Peter reaches the tomb first, bend over, looked in and saw strips of linen lying there
- Simon Peter arrived, went into the tomb and saw strips of linen lying there and the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head
- The other disciple (unnamed) also arrived, went into the tomb. He saw and believed. What did he believe? That indeed Jesus’ body was stolen.
- The disciples went back to their homes.
- Mary is left alone at the tomb.
- She bend over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and one at the feet. Where the other disciples saw only linen this woman saw angels.
- Mary then saw Jesus.
- Jesus commission Mary to go and spread the word.

Women were important in Jesus’ life and it is the duty of the church to imitate that and not to sideline them or to ignore their concerns.

c) The Holy Spirit fills all regardless of sex
Acts 1 v 14 : As the disciples waited for the holy spirit, “they all joined together in prayer, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers. In Acts 2 v 1 the Holy Spirit was poured when they were all together in one place. The Holy Spirit filled all of them irrespective of sex. Peter reinforces the prophesy of Joel 2 v 28:

And in those days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh
Your sons and daughters will prophesy............
3.0 GENDER SCENARIO IN THE SHONA CULTURE

In Zimbabwe gender based challenges are found in all spheres i.e. the physical, the emotional, the economic, the socio-cultural and the spiritual.

**Physical**– women more than men suffer physical abuse from members of the opposite sex. This is because a woman is powerless over her body and that women belong to men. Its’ not only husbands who beat their wives but also boyfriends, brothers, fathers any male member of the extended family has a right to beat up a female unmarried member of the family if they think that she has misbehaved. Normally women are blamed for asking for the beating. The community or the family will always say that the woman should have done something wrong. In most instances the husband is not reprimanded for beating the wife because it is his right to do so. As we sit here many women are being battered in their matrimonial homes as their parents and the community continues to urge them to ‘bear on’ for the sake of the children. Many women are forced to carry their bruises, pain and anger caused by injustice, oppression and many other forms of violence in silence.

**Emotional** – what we normally see as results of violence are broken bones and wounds. We ignore the most terrible and hidden consequences of abuse. During discussions with many women who are physically and emotionally abused it was evident that they are angry, disillusioned, depressed, silenced in their homes, dispossessed of their self will, feeling worthless, dejected and frightened. They feel dehumanized and humiliated. Violence destroys the inner being of a person, shatters their personalities and destroys their confidence in their ability. However they are encouraged to remain silent about their trials and tribulations (usafukura hapwa – don’t open the armpit or chafukidza dzimba matenga- the roofs cover what happen inside homes) these are Shona proverb which encourage women to bear on and not expose her husband’s wrongs. Ironically the same women smile at life, sing in church and go on with their daily chores hiding their pain behind smiling faces. However most are bleeding inside.

**Economic** – there is also unequal division of wealth between men and women. It is the males who own the traditional means of production (land), the symbol of wealth (cattle) the homestead and all that is in it i.e. the children and the wife. Women are deprived of the chance to own a homestead or land. Even when the husband dies everything goes to the son and the mother is left under the rule of her own son or male members of the extended family. Also in the modern economy it is the males who go to seek for employment in towns which again result in them being more economically powerful than the women. Because of their economic power over women, men can do whatever they want with women. Due to lack of economic independence women continue to persevere under very harsh circumstances.
Socio–cultural – the socialization process demeans the value placed on a woman. Decision making is a male prerogative and women always have to go along with what the males decided even against their will. They are implementers and men are the decision makers. A wife cannot pass a decision without her husband’s consent. If a major decision has to be taken and the husband is not around the wife will consult other male relatives to seek permission to do anything. At times she even has to consult her own son for permission. So there are gender-based dehumanization of women in the socio–cultural context.

Spiritual – all the problems discussed cascade down to affect the spirituality of women. One woman once asked crying pitifully, “do you really think there are also women in heaven?” she had borne her burden quietly and she was on the verge of collapse and she wondered whether God would accept her with her heartbreaks, pains, confusion, depression, frustration, disillusionment and anger. Women come into the church with broken spirits and anger and they are commanded to love thy enemy and forgive those who persecute you. They sit, sing, praise God, pray, preach love and take sacraments with the very people who wound them daily in the name of culture. The minister on the other further put salt on injury by preaching gender insensitive sermons, misinterpreting scripture for his own end. Women bear the pain silently and continue coming to church for the love of God and to find solace in other women who are in the same situation. Women believe in sharing their stories as part of a healing process and inspiration. But in most cases the church lacks real structures for addressing the gender challenges in the communities they operate.

There are convictions within the Shona culture that women’s subordination is legitimated by socially embedded convictions and not by an appeal to justice. These convictions are assumed to be beyond the realms of justice. Hence the concept of gender justice which seeks to enhance women’s autonomy and rights in relation to men are controversial and raises intense debate. It is within this social system in which the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ) has to work. The church should affirm its voice and stance on the gender issue as a justice issue and as a God ordained mandate.

. The bible teaches us in Micah 6verse8 that: “He has shown you Oh man what is good. And what does the Lord require? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Gender justice is a controversial issue because:

- There are convictions that women’s subordination are socially embedded and are beyond the realm of justice
- Different means of achieving gender justice are also controversial
- Women cannot be identified as a coherent group along with other sets of disempowered people
- Relationship between men and women in the family and in the society are a key source of gender injustices
- The patriarchal mindset which are produced in the private sphere are not contained there but they infuse also into the church structures. So even in the church justice can be gendered responding to the patriarchal standard derived from the domestic arena.
4.0 A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Gender justice in theological education is a serious concern today than ever because:
- The church has an obligation to respect the rights of both sexes indiscriminately
- An obligation to protect those rights from being broken by its own members through education, conscientisation, awareness building and sensitization.

However gender issues are not adequately integrated in theology as evidenced by the contents of theological education curriculum. They are kept at the periphery of the theological curriculum where student ministers’ wives are involved in the women ministry program and taught by ministers’ wives who are not theologically trained. In Zimbabwe theological education system is male oriented. Theological epistemologies are also male centered and there is absence of the female voice in theological discourses. Gender justice is not included in theological education because of
- Male oriented theological education
- Patriarchal culture and history
- Women’s historically lack of participation. Throughout the church’s history, theology has been done with the exclusion of women and their experience
- Ignore indigenous people’s knowledge systems, heritage, local contexts and indigenous women’s experiences
- The content of theological education remain highly abstract and detached from the reality of the local people
- Women’s ministry is for women who are not theologians

Engendering theology means
- Taking initiatives to break the bonds of silence binding women and make the voices of women be heard in theological discourses
- Reshaping and re-envisioning the contents of the theological education by integrating women as subjects.
- Integrate gender issues in the curriculum as a major and not as an elective. Making it an elective may again raise the problem of gender biases in choosing elective where mainly women will be seen to select the “women’s subject”
- Develop a new paradigm to integrate gender studies within the theological framework.
- Justice should be the central theme in gender sensitive theology
- Theological education should not be just about justice but should do justice because knowing is not enough we must apply, willing is not enough we must do.

Due to emerging issues like gender justice, globalization, and conflict there is need for a paradigm shift in theology as the current theological curriculum fails to address the growing societal issues. These issues need a perspectival change in theological thinking and rethinking theological education is therefore pertinent. The new paradigm should be people centered, contextual and issue based preparing students for life, to be in solidarity with those whose life is threatened, are marginalized or oppressed, to struggle for their liberation through working towards creating a new humanity in Christ. Theology is
practiced in congregation so it is imperative to equip ministers with the right type of theology which responds effectively to global, regional, national and local challenges. Hence the need for theology which can transform pastoral leadership for a gender responsive Christian ministry.

Theological education should focus on the real life experiences of people, their misery, suffering, pain and struggles and concerns. Consider the contextual realities of gender injustices in Zimbabwe. It is imperative to include women in the setting of a theological curriculum which addresses their concerns. Paulo Freire (1971) in his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* rightly questions, “who are better equipped than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an unjust society?” It is pertinent to include women in the redefinition of a theological curriculum which facilitates the development of ministers who are gender sensitive and who will in turn contribute immensely towards a gender responsive Christian ministry. Theological education should be in a position to interrogate the system in which it finds itself embedded. Interrogate unjust social practices like gender based socialization, patriarchy, gender based stereotyping and gender based violence.

According to Florenza (2001) theology and theological education must be conceived as a transformative and discursive praxis that critically reflect on the concrete historical and political configurations of theological communities which have engendered and still engender the exclusion of the ‘other’. …………..theology should not limit itself to a critical reflection of religious and ecclesial practices. It should also give importance to the critical reflection on the socio-cultural and political practices in which the Christian community have been and are still embedded and to which they contribute. The struggle for justice means hearing silenced voices. The fundamental goal of theological education should be about doing justice

There is need to reflect on what we are doing, how we are relating, how we are feeling and the significance of what we are doing. This reflection can help in the formulation of a gender responsive curriculum that addresses the real core issues in the local gender challenges.

There is also need to place the experiences of women at the center of gender theology. In the current theological practices women’s experiences and knowledge are sidelined. Including women in theological discourse will ensure that live world experiences of the marginalized are brought to life and used as a basis for research and empowering learners for a gender responsive Christian ministry. Lived knowledge is better than any theory. Suppressed experiences should be the sources of redemption and reconstruction of gender knowledge in theology.

### 5.0 REDEFINING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AS GENDER INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Galatians 3 v 28 says, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Through the blood of Jesus, God redeemed everyone and we are all equal before him. There is need for men and women to work in partnership with the understanding that both were created in the image of God (Genesis 1 v 27) redeemed by Christ (Galatians 3 v 26 -28) and gifted by the Spirit without distinction (Joel 2 v 28)
The Secretary General of the United Nations in his 2011 annual address declared that only through women’s full and equal participation in all areas of public and private life can we hope to achieve a peaceful, sustainable and just society. (Sun :2011) In inclusive theology there is the removal of obstacles to attendance to ensure that every individual will get the opportunity and necessary support to identify his or her talents to the fullest. It encompasses the removal of obstacles practiced on women in the society and in the church. According to Rugtvet (2008) inclusion builds on the human viewpoint that all individuals are the same and have equal worth. It is a philosophy of acceptance, belonging and community. No one sees him or herself as more important than the other but people learn to live with differences and they learn from differences. In the Shona societies and in the RCZ there are very well established hierarchical structures that sustain the patriarchal structure. These systems have to be transformed through a formed system of shared responsibility and cooperation. Inclusion does not only mean placing women in positions of responsibility. It involves on-going advocacy, planning, support and commitment.

For inclusion to take place theologians should be trained to educate children in their Sunday school groups from an early age about the value of a gender inclusive church. This is so because values attitudes as well as basic knowledge and skills that constitute the foundation for personal development throughout life are formed at an early stage in life. For a gender responsive Christian ministry theological education should catch them young. Teach young children to accept each other regardless of sex while they are still young. Let the children grow up understanding the bible from a non-gendered perspective. Look at biblical people of both sexes and emphasis their contributions non-discriminately.

Index to be used for inclusion

- Valuing everyone
- Increasing participation of both sexes
- Restructuring cultures and policies so that they respond to the gender justice initiative
- Reducing barriers to participation and access to decision making
- Foster mutually sustainable relationships between the sexes
- Recognizing that inclusion in the church is one aspect of inclusion in the society

People often have views on gender inclusion but they have little time, energy and inclination to explore them. Theological education should lead in the transformation of values through curriculum transformation. The curriculum should

- Build critical awareness to make people aware of the urgency of gender inclusive justice in the Christian Ministry. Students should be made aware of the gender based crisis we are in as we are on the watershed of a new era in gender identity formation in different communities and cultures.
- Create new space for reappraisal and rethinking by interrogating existing discourses and by focusing attention on overlooked possibilities for moving practice forward.
• Find a methodology that make the familiar unfamiliar. Motivate students to find hidden meanings and connotations of often taken for granted actions in a way that stimulates self questioning and creativity.

6.0 THEOLOGY SHOULD APPROACH GENDER ISSUES FROM A SITUATED ANALYSIS

We are living in societies with multiple levels of domination which are different in different cultures. Collins (1990) posits that the domination is in three levels:

**Personal biographies** – each person has a unique personal biography made of concrete experiences, values, motivations and emotions. No two individuals occupy the same social space, thus no two biographies are identical.

**Group or community level of the cultural context** – the cultural context is formed by those experiences and ideas that are shared with other members of a group or community which give meaning to individual biographies.

Although the mode of female exclusion may be the same but the means vary across cultures. Hence we cannot address the issues of gender using universal solutions. Gender, is socially and culturally constructed and thus should be addressed from within a specific cultural and social context. The local means awareness of history, culture and social variations.

The dynamics of different micro-situations have to be analyzed as meaning and truth changes with micro-contexts and it becomes difficult to generalize meaning even across micro-situations. Doing theology requires a local and situated analysis.

Theology should seek to make “voices crowded out and silenced by dominant groups to be heard”, (Grasswich, 2006) so that the marginalized such as poor women may assume their rightful place in ongoing debates. Research and give a chance for women deprived of the right to self determination to express their views. They will be free to say what their experiences are really and what they think. Interrogate their own perceptions of the socio-cultural values and how these values affect them as women.

It is not enough to simply let women into positions previously occupied by men. What should be addressed is the very structure of the framework and not its prepositional contents. What matters is not a straight reversal of the balance of power which may leave the opposition intact. What matters is redefining the structures (culture and leadership) in such a way as to make them less discriminatory, not only for women but also for men.

7.0 TRANSFORMING PASTORAL LEADERSHIP STYLE FOR A GENDER RESPONSIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Bass and Regio (2006) and Clegg, Konberger and Pitsis (2005) say in transforming leadership we should redefine people’s mission, vision, a renewal of commitment and the restructuring of the system for goal accomplishment. It has been made clear that our
societies are very discriminatory based on gender. They discriminate against women in the decision making processes and leadership. Women’s experiences are not valued at all and women are an invisible group in most areas in the social, political, economic and at times in religious life. So a leadership style is needed to empower women and transform the church into a gender responsive church. Asares (2010) says the goals of transformational leadership is to transform people and organizations and change them in mind and heart, enlarge their vision, insight and understanding, clarify purposes and make behaviour congruent to beliefs, principles and values and bring about changes that are permanent, self perpetuating and momentum building.

7.1 Individual consideration for gender responsive Christian ministry

Bass and Regio (2006) note that transformational leader involves offering support and encouragement to individual followers. Each person has unique personal experiences, values, motivations and emotions. Thus the minister should try to understand each person as an individual. The study generally showed that:

- Few families involve women in major decisions making, even on matters concerning their destiny.
- Domestic violence leaves a woman depressed, hopeless, humiliated, doubting her self worth, having a low concept of herself.
- Gender based socialization suppresses women’s personality and potential
- There are unjust and discriminatory socialization practices based on gender.
- Gender based stereotyping strongly influences a person’s self concept.

The minister needs to consider people as individuals so as to stimulate gender inclusive justice. It was noted that women have more sophisticated demands than men. Thus the minister, most respondents pointed out, should keep lines of communication open so that female members of the church would feel free to share their deep worries and challenges. The minister should align the goals of the individual, his/her own goals, the group and the church to promote gender inclusive justice in church management. The minister in promoting gender inclusive justice should act as a facilitator of human development and conscientisation. The minister should have an in-depth understanding of the cultural issues affecting women and problems women face in the church. He/she should be able to see the problem in the correct perspective.

7.2 Intellectual stimulation for gender inclusive justice

Transformational leaders not only challenge the status quo, they also encourage creativity and innovativeness among followers (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis; 2005, Bass and Riggio; 2006)

From this study it was noted that because of their experiences in the social spheres women develop low concepts of themselves which results in low carrier aspirations. A person, it was noted, who thinks she is incapable will not use her talents to actualize full potential. It is thus the duty of the minister to create an environment which allows women to see and accept themselves exactly as they are so that they can actualize the whole of their potential for ministry. It is imperative that the leader should insist on the changed consciousness of the individual and the transformation of the institutional systems for
total transformation to be a reality. Maslow in Davidoff (1997) argues that due to our upbringing most of us are blind to our true potential. This assertion is true of women congregants due to the social factor of:

- Socialization (socialized for a low status in society).
- Stereotyping (social language depict women as passive, indecisive).
- Gender based violence (which leaves a woman feeling afraid, confused, hopeless, not in control of her body and life).
- Patriarchy – which stifles leadership ability in women.

Research participants noted that leaders should involve them in the formulation, planning, resource distribution and implementation of any project in the church or even beyond. Projects or ideas should not only be imposed on them to implement. The leader should be able to solicit new ideas and new solutions to problem from all the church members not only the top hierarchy which in most cases is comprised of men only.

Monroe (2005) asserts that women incorporation into masculine domains has been at a cost as it requires that they reject and submerge their definition of self as women. Some female ministers explained the complexities of church management. It was noted that to be assimilated into the prevailing institutional structures they have to lose some of their distinctive identities as women to fit into the male dominated domain through a process of integration and assimilation into the prevailing culture. It is the duty of the Minister to offer women new knowledge about their own experiences and the strengths of feminine attributes which can greatly empower them and promote gender inclusive justice in the church. It is imperative to develop women’s collective leadership capacities and stimulate their effort by questioning assumptions, reframing problems and approaching old situations in new ways (Bass and Reggio, 2006). Identification of problems and creative problem solutions are solicited from them. Both sexes need respect and recognition.

### 7.3 Inspirational motivation for gender responsive Christian ministry

The leader should be able to appeal to the followers, better nature and move them towards higher and more universal needs and purposes.

From discussions with women it was clear that their:

- Needs are scarcely satisfied.
- Have emptiness in their lives which they hope can be filled by the church.
- Have a deep desire for success, which is hindered by social and cultural factors.
- Experience human ties which are confining, restrictive and oppressive.
- They experience an internalized oppression which represents domination on the personal level.

This shows that women need inspirational leadership to empower them. The leader should be able to inspire and stimulate followers to achieve extra ordinary outcomes and in the process develop their own leadership capacity and address their sense of self worth.
Hay (2009) listed hints to inspirational motivation which can be handy in creating gender inclusive justice

- Motivational speeches and conversations.
- Public display of optimism and enthusiasm.
- Highlighting positive outcomes.
- Stimulating teamwork
- Encourage women to contribute to the development of an attractive, alternative future.

There is need to have gender forums in the church for both male and female congregants. These can be at congregational, presbytery and synod levels. These will inspire both males and females to consider gender justice in their actions, attitudes, perceptions and discourse. This can be done through conscientisation, sensitization, awareness building and education.

Inspirational motivation creates normative power which elicit moral involvement i.e. “I do this for the good of a greater cause or higher glory,” not enumerative involvement i.e. “I do this because I am being paid for it,” (Clegg, Kornbeger and Pitsis; 2005).

7.4 Idealized influence for a gender responsive Christian ministry

The minister should serve as a role model in the congregation. The followers should trust and respect the minister so that they emulate and internalize his ideals. People are ready to follow the ideals of a minister if he/ she is exemplary. The minister should:

- Engender trust, loyalty and respect.
- Have a clear vision of a gender responsive church; a vision that can inspire others.
- Act positively to prove that gender inclusive justice is a reality not a dream.
- Build confidence and trust.
- Provide a role model.
- Revoke unjust practices.

The leader, should have greater self awareness, integrity, confidence, self control, positive, optimistic, resilient and future oriented. This researcher proposes a leader who follows the Post Modernist paradigm of leadership. She should exhibit the following key attributes:

- **Servant** leadership– research participants showed some reservations on ministers who boss over them. For the female congregant such a minister is just an epitome of a patriarchal system where the males boss over the females. So there would be no dividing line between society and church. So if they have a minister in the church who does not differentiate him/herself from the followers, they would feel more empowered to be themselves.

- **Empowers** – the leader should empower participation in gender inclusive justice practices. It is only when workers feel empowered that they can feel free to develop their potential and have higher aspirations.

- **Androgynous** – should be able to speak in both male and female voices, so that no sex would feel excluded from mainstream practices of the church. These post modern perspective of a leader should be embraced if the minister has to
transform to ensure that gender responsive justice is to be realized in the Christian ministry

The minister should:

- Build critical awareness to make people aware of the urgency of gender responsive justice in the church. He/she should set in motion dialogue with the church members who are implementers of the change.
- Build teamwork for church members to learn to act and function as teams, respecting each other irrespective of sex. The minister should work with the teams to facilitate their ability to confront each other and accept shared goals.
- Enhance participation to help overcome resistance and encourage understanding of the need for gender responsiveness.
- Establish external linkages to help the church in the process of establishing gender responsive justice.

8.0 Transforming culture in the church for a gender responsive Christian ministry.

Fieldling (1997) defines culture in an organization as the pattern of basic assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and values that a group built up. The beliefs, assumptions and attitudes become part of the collective mind of an organization. Organizational culture can be invisible and so a lot of study is required to understand and comprehend it. The church has been affected by masculinist cultures which promote male domination and female subordination. Organizational culture must support activities linked to the mission of the organization. The minister should understand the culture in the church to be able to transform it to be gender responsive. According to Clegg, Pitsis and Kornberger (2005) many women in organizations feel excluded from strong cultures that are extremely masculinistic.

There is clear sex segregation in the church where there are sex based groupings i.e.

- The men’s league
- The women’s league
- The boys’ league
- The girls’ leagues

Males mainly group alone and females alone. This discourages cross-pollination of ideas across the sexes. Each sex discusses its own concerns in its own group. The church does not approach gender based issues from a holistic approach. Gender problems have their roots in both sexes so can not have a one sided approach in their resolution. The minister should encourage a culture of mixing and interacting through creating male/female teams in the church. This may improve the mixing of masculine and feminine ideas to come up with one thing and achieve the goal of having a gender responsive Christian ministry.

Ministers should be researchers of problems, their causes and possible solutions to the problems. An in-depth macro analysis of gender related problems should be done using a participatory approach. A wider perspective of the problem is to be provided for the church members to be able to appreciate and understand the gender problem and how it is related to wider issues. The organizational culture aspect of the gender problem should
then be put in its correct perspective and relevant action taken to address the problem. So it is imperative to have ministers who are trained in research and gender education.

There is need to have gender neutral cultures in the church. This should be achieved through gender education to both male and female members on the need for the reorientation of gender based biases. A resocialisation of values to create alternative value system. There is also need of what I want to call reculturalisation (the gradual process of instilling of an alternative culture by gradually doing away with the ingrained gender insensitive beliefs, attitudes, values and ideologies). This can be done through:

- Gender conscientisation workshops.
- Gender education for members.
- Gender days (awareness campaigns to build awareness that there is no alternative to addressing the gender problem. This is the reality which we should all learn to leave with).
- Gender memorial sessions – where inspirational speeches, sermons, poems, songs to be prepared for the sessions.

These should be done as the minister works with all the people in the church to ensure an effective transformation process. Yeann (2001) notes that leaders must have a deep understanding of the identity and impact of the organizational culture in order to communicate and implement new visions and inspire follower commitment to the vision.

9.0 Transforming church structure for gender responsive Christian ministry.

Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis (2005) point out that as new strategies develop, they require new organizational structure to house them. To promote gender inclusive justice in the church structures there is need for equal representation of both sexes at all levels of decision making. Ministers should be educated to accept that for justice to prevail in the church the old structures have to be transformed. To begin with, there should be a change in policy to make room for a male and female delegate from each congregation to go to the synod and presbytery meetings. The ministers should come up with structures that are gender inclusive and that allow more women to enter into church decision making structures. This will enable the church to be more gender sensitive in its decisions. The tall structure (where an issue should first of all go to the local council, then to the presbytery level before it goes to the synod) is not compatible with gender inclusive justice as it epitomizes the social system where the husband is always the head and the woman is in a subordinated position. Most gender based concerns are not attended to as they fall by the wayside before they reach the highest level. Some gender issues may be brushed aside at council level as they may be considered trivial.

The minister should be responsive to the members’ spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological, social and cultural challenges. Systems should not just be responsive to the spiritual, paying no attention to the other needs of members. Psycho-social needs are not catered for. The minister should put in place psycho-social support systems in the congregation to support members’ social and psychological concerns from a biblical perspective. This then calls for theological education to equip ministers in this area. To deal with a person as a whole person not just as a spiritual being..
10.0 Conclusion
This paper has highlighted the importance of transforming pastoral leadership in promoting gender inclusive justice in the church. The ability to bring change in all aspects of the church fosters effective transformation from gender exclusive system of governance to a system which embraces gender inclusive justice. To be a transformational leader, it has been noted, requires vision, initiativeness, patience, integrity, honesty, courage and persistence. To bring the vision of a church with gender inclusive justice in their management requires transforming pastoral leaders who are committed to this important cause of bringing the vision into reality.

11.0 References


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