

**Philippians 2:5-11: An Afrocentric hermeneutical
study of New Testament morality from a Shona
cultural perspective**

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DECLARATION

I, LOVEJOY CHABATA, hereby declare that this study: "Philippians 2:5-11: An Afrocentric hermeneutical study of New Testament morality from Shona cultural perspective" is my own original work and that all sources used or quoted have been accurately reported and acknowledged by complete references, and that this thesis has not been previously in its entirety or partially submitted by me or any other person for degree purposes at this, or at any other University.

Lovejoy Chabata

Date: September 2019

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lovejoy Chabata".

Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wrote this thesis under very strenuous conditions. I was caught up in the crest of an unprecedented and nerve wrecking storm that resulted in the split of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in Zimbabwe. As the presiding Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Living Waters Theological Seminary, the training institution responsible for indoctrination, spiritual formation and churning out pastoral candidates, I had to grapple with a plethora of intricacies ensuing from the cyclonic split of the Church. Lecturers, staff and students including myself, were forced to declare sides in a process that was shrouded in mistrust, estrangements, gerrymandering, blackmail, scandals and smear campaigns. As a result of this tumultuous situation in the AFM church and the vitriolic attacks that were targeted at me, I was hospitalised for a week in December 2018 due to a stress related ailment. These unfortunate developments unfolded during the time when I was supposed to be polishing up my PhD thesis for submission.

In this delirious moment, my beloved wife, Veronica “Vernice” Chabata stood with me as ‘a real help suitable for me’ (Genesis 2:18). I also want to thank my children for bearing with and enduring my frequent travels to North-West University where I often stayed for long periods, depriving them of filial love.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis firstly to my family; my loving wife Veronica, Praiseworthy Rumbidzoyashe, Peace Rugare, Pelatiah Tarwirwanashe, Parousia Ishevanouya, Philokalia Runako, Philothea Tinodaishe, grandchild Royal Tadiwanashe and my mother Mbuya Dainah Makoni Chabata. Secondly, I also dedicate the thesis to all mankind who pursue the mind which was in Christ Jesus, the mind of serving others, the mind of love and selflessness, the mind of kenotic leadership and the mind of Ubuntu (*hunhu*).

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABC	African Bible Commentary
ABH	African Biblical Hermeneutics
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AHS	Afrocentric Hermeneutical Standpoint
BDAG	Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature, now known as Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich or Bauer-Danker Lexicon
EAHS	Euro-American Hermeneutical Standpoint
Fr	Father
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

ABSTRACT

Philippians 2:5-11 have been investigated extensively by means of methodologies and epistemologies that are Western or Euro-American dominant. Since the pioneering work of Lohmeyer (1928) until the most recent work by Weymouth (2015), the interpretations of this pericope have not benefitted from the application of African epistemologies. The result has been that topics like the mind which was in Christ, humility, the humanity and servanthood of Christ, self-emptying, obedience unto death, resurrection and post-death exaltation are all interpreted and explained primarily from contexts alien to Africa. The dominant interpretations tend not to be exhaustive of the latent possibilities of meaning embedded within the text. The encounter *with* the text is a concept apparently alien to most Euro-American scholarship. A critical examination of these themes from an African perspective generally, and a Shona context specifically, may advance richer trajectories of meaning. Chimhanda (2014:306) states that the Shona consist of five major ethnic groups namely the Karanga, Zezuru, Manyika, Korekore and Rozvi. Due to the heterogeneous character of the Shona ethnic groups, this thesis shall be based on the Zezuru group of the Shona. Hence, wherever the term Shona appears throughout the thesis, it is referring to the Zezuru ethnic group. In this thesis, Philippians 2:5-11 is studied within the context of death and morality metaphors from a Shona cosmological perspective. Such an approach could yield insights from the vantage point of a hitherto marginalised African hermeneutic that will advance scholarship of the letter to the Philippians.

Key Words: Philippians 2:5-11, New Testament morality, Shona cultural epistemology, Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics, kenosis, ethical interpretation, kerygmatic interpretation, cultural perspective.

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Background

Paul's moral teaching in Philippians generally, and in Philippians 2:5-11 specifically, arises from a context of conflict in the community. Scholars largely agree that the selflessness exemplified by Christ (2:2-11) serves rhetorically to steady volatility and to admonish toward love, equality, humility, selflessness, condescension, oneness, unity, mercy and servitude (Martin, 1967:88; Hooker, 1975:152; Fee, 1992:29; Dunnett, 2001:68; Brown, 2013:2). The objective aimed for with this letter is harmony within the ecclesia and its constituent cultural pockets. This summation describes the interpretive conclusions at which contemporary scholarship tends to stop. These dominant interpretations tend not to be exhaustive of the latent possibilities of meaning embedded within the text. However, when viewed through African eyes situated in a Shona context, the levels of identification and proximity to the events depicted in the text are much higher. For example, the morality highlighted in the text finds greater conceptual proximity to ethical values like communality, selflessness, social solidarity, humility, love for fellow men, sharing with others and helping the needy (Jackson, 2004:28; Murove, 2007:1; Imafidion & Bewaji, 2013:103; Chingombe, 2013:81). Gelfand (1973:11) and Moyo (1973:50) assert that the Shona continue to extol virtues of solidarity, fraternity, equality, harmony and tranquillity. Thus, from an African perspective the complexities and implications of the letter are more than skin-deep.

Whereas in a Western context, Christ's incarnation and salvific death may, on occasion, tend to be interpreted narrowly as an exclusively cultic occurrence removed from the immediate contemporary experiences of "believers", Philippians 2:5-11 finds parallels in the Shona culture, specifically the celebration of death and post-resurrection exaltation as part of their pre-Christian cultural tradition (Shoko, 2007:58; Hove, 2013:1; Chikowero, 2015:30; Nyambi *et al.* 2016:117). Viewed from this angle, the crucifixion and exaltation events in the Bible are not merely religious and generally negative, as in an Easter event, but are also culturally immanent, positive and celebrated in cultural-religious ceremonies (Bourdillon, 1987:227; Gombe, 1998:46; Hove, 2013:2; Chikowero, 2015:31). Two outstanding examples of Shona cultural ceremonies that are coterminous with Christ's incarnation and resurrection are the 'Kurova guva' (integration of the spirit of the deceased as an ancestor to the family) (Gundani, 1994:123) and diramhamba (an animal dedicated to a spirit elder and symbolises the presence of that elder among the living members of the family) (Kumbirai, 1979:69). Thus, when the Shona culture encounters this text, the inculturation of this event may be said to be relatively greater than for the average Western reader. The conceptual proximity between the cultural celebration of death and resurrection of the Shona may even be nearer to the text than for a typical Western reader or scholar. The

interpretation of Martin (1967:111) and Käsemann (1968:88) that Jesus' crucifixion was motivated by his arbitrary decision instead of in obedience to God typifies the limited extent of a specific Western approach to this text. Contradistinctively, it will be demonstrated how an Afrocentric interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11 from a Shona cultural perspective expands the horizons of interpretation by highlighting nuances or layers of meaning that escape the interpretive radar of Western exegetical conventions.

1.2 Problem statement

The dearth of academic biblical analysis from or incorporating an African cultural cosmological perspective persists throughout the 21st century. The African Bible Commentary (ABC) being one exception, globally, there remains a gap in exegetical contributions from the continent of Africa (Adeyemo, 2006:4) that utilise African-based or Africa-constructed epistemologies and hermeneutical approaches. A bibliography listing of publications by African New Testament scholars that analyse biblical texts¹ West and Dube (2000:633-800) show a very lean engagement of New Testament pericopae from an African cosmological perspective. The latter contains only 14 articles from a post-colonial perspective with nothing on Pauline literature, particularly on Philippians 2:5-11. However, the tide is turning as scholarship referenced in what follows will confirm.

At the 2018 conference of the New Testament Society of Southern Africa, three papers employed an Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm.² This analysis of Philippians 2:5-11 aims to bolster the upward trend towards the recognition, deployment and iteration of an African hermeneutical praxis by studying morality in Philippians 2 from a Shona cosmological worldview.³

¹ The 2000 Afrocentric New Testament Literature survey by West and Dube featured only five works published by Wabukala & LeMarquand(1988) 'Pastoral Implications of Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Galatians 3:13 In An African Context', Van Aarde (1994) 'The Epistemic Status of the New Testament and the Emancipatory Living of the Historical Jesus in Engaged Hermeneutics', M.Dube(1996)'Botswana Women's Interpretations of Matthew 15:21-28', J.Ukpong (1996) 'The Parable of the Shrewd Manager Luke 16:1-13:An Essay in Intercultural Biblical Hermeneutic' and Getui, Maluleke and Ukpong(2000) 'Interpreting the New Testament In Africa'.

² Q. Kinunda (2018) "Listening to Rural Voices as They Read and Interpret the Zaccheus Story (Luke 19:1-10) in Tanzania: Social Transformation from A Biblical Perspective", David T. Adamo (2018) "The New Understanding of Pauline Concept of Cosmos in African (Yoruba) Context", C. Matarirano (2018)". Re-reading Luke's 'Persistent Widow' from the perspective of deviance theory (Luke 18:1-8).

³ The New Testament Society of Southern Africa publishes its *Neotestamentica* journal annually and focuses on showcasing African scholarship. The journal is accessible online through its website www.newtestament.co.za

1.3 Aim and objectives

1.3.1 Aim

This study aims to analyse Philippians 2:5-11 through the application of a hermeneutical model that is informed by elements alive on the African continent, specifically within the Shona culture. These elements include communalism, textual appropriation, conceptual proximity, textual proximity, textual immanence, ancestralism and inculturation. The intended outcome is to expand the boundaries of prevailing interpretive conclusions and to advance the voices of emergent communities relegated to the margins of the global interpretational endeavour by examining through an alternative, complimentary indigenous hermeneutical lens the dynamic interplay between and validating the reception and assimilation of the biblical text within an African reading community.

1.3.2 Objectives

To achieve the above aim, this study pursues the following objectives:

A critical overview of the relevant literature on Philippians 2:5-11.

An exegetical analysis of Philippians 2:5-11.

An analysis of the meaning of morality presented in the text utilising the Shona conceptual metaphors of morality framework.

An intensive study from a Shona perspective of the following seven concepts which the study deems to be the main themes of the pericope:

- φρονεῖτε ... ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (the mind ... that is also in Christ Jesus), Philippians 2:5.
- μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God) Philippians 2:6a.
- ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ (thought it not robbery to be equal to God) Philippians 2:6b.
- ἐκένωσεν (emptied himself): Philippians 2:7a. As a model of kenotic/self-emptying leadership, ἐταπείνωσεν (humbled himself) Philippians 2:8a.
- ὁμοιώματι/σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (Likeness/fashion/form of a man) Philippians 2:7b.
- ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου (obedient unto death), Philippians 2:8a καταχθονίων (those who are under the earth) Philippians 2:10b.

- ὑπερύψωσεν (highly exalted) Philippians 2:9a.

An evaluation of the Afrocentric approach to New Testament studies.

1.4 Central theoretical argument

An integrationist hermeneutic that brings together Western interpretations that have dominated analysis of Philippians 2:5-11 during the 20th century with conceptual systems of the Zezuru ethnic group of the Shona in a complementary and multi-focal approach, will enhance the understanding of the pericope, and thus advance scholarship of the Philippian epistle.

1.5 Methodology

This thesis puts forward an iteration of the nascent Afrocentric hermeneutics as the primary methodological framework. Chapter 2 discusses and outlines the framework in great detail. Suffice to acknowledge at this stage that the framework operates in concert with and interdependent upon existing methodologies that resulted in the gargantuan research outputs on the Philippian corpus. Rejecting an isolationist mindset, the methodology employed is thus an integrationist and epistemologically dialogical one. It is a fusion of an attempt at a hermeneutical dialogue between an Afro-optic analysis and two Euro-American methods namely reader-response analysis and reception theory. A Shona cultural context forms the backdrop for this analysis, which entails the interpretation of a selection of major themes of the biblical text through the lens of the Shona cultural worldview.

1.5.1. Reception Theory

Reception theory was introduced by Hans Robert Jauss in a work titled "Towards an Aesthetic of Reception". The theory focuses on altering interpretive and evaluative responses of generations of readers to a text (Jauss, 1982:231). It stresses how reading communities interpret the meanings of a text based on their respective cultural background and life experiences. Reception Theory (RT) presupposes that the reader's response to a text is a combination of the reader's own horizon of expectations and the confirmations, disappointments, refutations and reformulations of the expectations.

1.5.2. Reader Response

Reader-response theory will be employed to explain how the Shona make use of biblical literature to address their life situations. Bultmann (1960:289) and the former Cambridge but now American based scholar, Vanhoozer (1998:108; 2007:40), both agree that the reader's 'horizon' or set of interests and expectations that affect what the reader looks for and finds in New Testament texts ought to be considered and respected. Fish's (1980:7) radicalism

dismisses the horizon of the text arguing that meaning does not inhere in the text but rather in the reader or the reading community and therefore, shall not be followed as it negates the integrationist approach set forth in this thesis. It will be demonstrated that the Shona as a reading community, approach Philippians 2:5-11 with presuppositions and interests drawn from their cultural and religious cosmology.

1.5.3. Conceptual Metaphors of Shona Morality

Conceptual metaphors constitute an important ingredient in Shona cultural epistemology. An understanding of the way the Shona interpret spiritual phenomena and distinguish between the physical and the metaphysical is an essential step in this thesis' methodology. The conceptual system of the Shona is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. When they think, speak and act, the Shona employ cognitive or conceptual metaphors that carry deep meanings. (Sanders 2016:50) defines a conceptual metaphor as "when we understand or experience one thing in terms of another". Lakoff and Johnson (1999:115) argue that morality is metaphorical in nature because it involves human attempt to concretise abstract concepts and even feelings. In their ground-breaking work on conceptual metaphor theory, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:195) propounded that there are three types of conceptual metaphors, namely orientational, ontological and structural metaphors. All three conceptual metaphor types are homologous to Shona cultural cosmology.

1.5.4. Orientational Conceptual Metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:196) state that orientational metaphors structure concepts linearly deal with spatial orientations, for example, the word "up" is associated with "more", "control", "good" and "rational". This is resplendent in statements like, 'The number of his publications keeps going up', 'I am on top of the situation', 'Things are looking up' and 'rising above emotions'. Oriental conceptual metaphors among the Shona would include reference to God as Zame and Nyadenga in reference to God's transcendental aboard.⁴

1.5.5. Ontological Conceptual Metaphors

The second category of conceptual metaphors is ontological metaphors which involve the projection of entity or substance status on something that does not have that status inherently. Ideas are viewed as entities and words as containers. For example, 'It is hard to get that idea across to him', 'It is difficult to put my ideas into words' and 'your words seem hollow'. The mind is a Container. For example, 'I can't get the tune out of my mind' and 'he is empty headed'. The mind is a Machine. For example, 'my mind is not operating today'. The mind is a brittle object. For example, 'the experience shattered him'. Vitality is substance. For example, 'he overflows

⁴ More examples of Shona orientational metaphors are given on page 103.

with energy'. Shona morality concepts are largely expressed through ontological metaphors. For example, when the Shona say of a person, 'ndiMwari zvake' (he is as good as God) to mean that the person is innocent.⁵

1.5.6. Structural Conceptual Metaphors

The third category of conceptual metaphors is structural metaphors which involve the structuring of one kind of experience or activity in terms of another kind of experience or activity. For example, 'understanding is seeing', 'I see what you are saying', 'life is a gambling game' or 'I'll take my chances'. The study has used Shona structural conceptual metaphors such as 'gudo guru peta muswe madiki akuty'e' (senior baboon should be humble in order to earn the respect of the junior)⁶.

1.6 Concept clarification

1.6.1 New Testament Morality

Keck (1996:3) states that 'New Testament Morality' focuses on the moral teaching of the New Testament. The morality of the New Testament deals with the moral life of the Christian Church. Meeks (1993:4), argues that morality "names a dimension of life, a pervasive, and often, only partly conscious set of value-laden dispositions, inclinations, attitudes and habits". Morality of the New Testament therefore describes, prescribes and proscribes proper behaviour and what is acceptable. Sampley (1991:1) remarks that Paul's moral reasoning concerns how believers should behave and walk between two times, namely between the death and resurrection of Christ on one hand and the parousia or second coming of the Lord on the other hand. The morality of the New Testament is theological in character in the sense that it points to God's will for mankind. Paul's hortatory and paraenetic teaching is basically moral in nature. Keck (1996:8) asserts that to study the morality of the New Testament, one should do two things namely; first, to analyse the material formally in order to identify the reasons given for or against behaviour, that is, the warrants and sanctions; and then, secondly, develop a taxonomy of adduced reasons. Scholars such as Malherbe (1989:8) and Hays (1996:13) have contributed immensely to the subject of New Testament morality albeit from a Euro-American standpoint. The best morality teaching in the Pauline corpus is in Paul's use of the Christological Hymn in Philippians 2, "which accents Christ's humbling Himself as the warrant for the appeal to do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility, counting other better than self" Keck (1996:11). The position adopted in this thesis is that Philippians 2:5-11 is arguably the epitome of New Testament morality teaching, hence the choice of the text for this study. Existing scholarship on Philippians 2:5-11 is divided on the ethics or moral value of the pericope. Scholars who pursue

⁵ More examples of ontological conceptual metaphors are given on page 84.

⁶ More examples of structural conceptual metaphors are given on page 76.

an anti-ethical view of the Christ Hymn argue that the hymn was never intended to posture Christ as a model to be imitated by His followers (Käsemann, 1968:88; Martin, 1987:152). Others such as Zimmerli and Jeremias (1957:98), Hurtado (1984:124) and Wright (1986:321) postulate that the morality of the Christ Hymn was intended to offer mimetic education to believers. The Afrocentric approach neither calls into question the moral value of this text nor its relevance in numberless cultures of this world, including the Shona culture.

1.7 Outline

Chapter 1 addresses the background of the study, the problem statement as well as aim and objectives of the study.

In Chapter 2 the history of Afrocentric hermeneutics is reviewed and its advantages and disadvantages as a hermeneutical tool discussed.

Chapter 3 reviews scholarly standpoints on Philippians 2:5-11 and analyses the views in order to establish gaps from previous research on the pericope. Thus, existing literature on the text is reviewed in this chapter and the review culminates with a summary of gaps that can be filled if the text is studied through the Shona cultural lens.

Chapter 4 specifically focuses on Euro-American interpretational trends on the seven key themes of the text isolated for this study.

Chapter 5 reflects on Shona morality framework. Shona conceptual metaphors of morality are discussed with illustrative highlights of how those metaphors resonate with morality issues raised in Philippians 2:5-11. The chapter applies principles of reader response analysis and reception theory to demonstrate how the Shona appropriate and interpret the pericope.

Chapter 6 applies the Afrocentric paradigm in the study of the key themes of the text, demonstrating how an enhanced understanding of the pericope emerges if the passage is approached from the Shona cultural perspective. The complementarity between Euro-American and Afrocentric hermeneutics is put to test in both Chapters 6 and 7 where Shona death, morality, and hymnic beliefs are used to shed more light on the meaning of the passage.

Chapter 7 investigates the designation of Philippians 2:5-11 as a "hymn". The purpose of the hymn genre in the Pauline corpus shall be discussed. Aspects of Shona hymnody will be scrutinised relative to the hymn genre in Paul. It also investigates parallels between Philippians 2:5-11 as a hymn and Shona traditional hymnody. The chapter demonstrates that the Shona make use of their traditional hymnody to receive and interpret the story of Christ Jesus in the

text. It will be demonstrated that an interpretation of the pericope through Shona traditional hymnic forms fosters new trajectories of meaning.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the research's findings, results of the study, recommendations for future research, conclusion of the study and a comprehensive bibliography of sources used in the research.

Literature that shall be helpful in this study from the Zimbabwean context includes the works listed below. Chitando (2002:58) studied the relationship between Shona hymnology and early Christian worship. Mwandayi (2011:50) produced a treatise on the cosmology of the Shona people. Gelfand (1973:44) compared the ethical and moral beliefs of the Shona people with Western Christian ethics. Moyo (1973:52) investigated the ethics of the Ndebele and Shona peoples. Machingura (2012:222) analysed the attribution of messiahship status to Robert Mugabe and compared it with the messiahship of Christ. Banana (1993:17-32) criticised colonial translation of the Bible by Western missionaries and advocated its translation into the correct Shona register. Chimuka (2001:14) defended Shona cultural beliefs against over-critical Western scholarship and finally, Charumbira (2013:206) compared the crucifixion of Christ with the hanging of Nehanda Nyakasikana, a national spirit medium, by colonial settlers.

1.8 Ethical considerations

In this thesis, the writer undertook to abide with professional ethics of modern scholarship, which include but are not limited to the following:

Acknowledgement of sources of information, thus, guards against plagiarism in all its forms.

The writer pursues this research due to its social and scientific value. The research contributes to the ongoing clarion call to African biblical exegetes to explore ways of interpreting Scripture from indigenous cultural perspectives. The thesis contributes to scientific knowledge by demonstrating that new ways of interpreting Philippians 2:5-11 can be achieved if the pericope is viewed through Afrocentric lenses.

The writer also adheres to the academic custom of the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University as guided by the broad academic regulations of the North-West University.

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This work is original and not an extension of work done elsewhere.

CHAPTER 2: AFROCENTRIC HERMENEUTICS: BACKGROUND, SALIENT FEATURES, JUSTIFICATION AND CRITIQUE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 stated the background, the problem, the aim, objectives, methodology, the outline and ethical considerations of the research. As articulated in Chapter 1, the main hermeneutical trajectory used in this research is the Afrocentric method. Chapter 2 will now present a historical review of the Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm, discuss its pitfalls and advantages as well as proffer reasons for choice of the method in the study of morality in Philippians 2:5-11. Chapter 2 therefore catapults the research into the mode of analysing the pericope through an Afrocentric lens informed by the Shona cosmological discourse. In this chapter, the chronology of publications will not be strictly adhered to as the researcher will be forced by the historicity of the Afrocentric method to link perspectives in retrospect for purposes of emphasis and tying of loose ends in former or subsequent developments. Notwithstanding, effort shall be made to avoid anachronistic representations where these are unwarranted.

2.2 Background

The incursion of Afrocentrism in the study of biblical texts, as posited by Dube, Mbuvi and Mbuwayesango (2012:6), started in the 1990s with the launch of African Biblical Hermeneutics sessions at the Society of Biblical Literature. The African Biblical Hermeneutics sessions developed as a sequel to an earlier group that focused on 'The Bible in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America' which ran between 1990 and 2000. The focus on reading Scripture from an exclusive African perspective started as a nascent movement which has since gained momentum and impetus. The process culminated in the opening of an African Biblical Hermeneutics Section at the Society of Biblical Literature by Dora Mbuwayesango, Justin Ukpong, Musa W. Dube and Gerald O. West. Biblical hermeneutics on the basis of the Afrocentric method has focused, inter alia, on the following aspects of interpretation:

- Decolonisation of biblical interpretation.
- Inculturation hermeneutics.
- Feminist/Gender based hermeneutics.
- Reconstructionist hermeneutics.
- Social Engagement hermeneutics.

- Transformational hermeneutics
- Environmental/Ecological hermeneutics.

2.3 Salient features

The Afrocentric method can be viewed as a form of cultural criticism that examines etymological uses of words and terms in order to know the source of an author's location (Asante, 1987). Asante (1991:170-180) posited loosely that the Afrocentric concept is a framework of reference where a given phenomenon is viewed and understood through the lens of African people. A more detailed definition of Afrocentricity followed in 2003 when Asante (2009:2) defined Afrocentricity as "a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values and perspectives predominate". In regards to theory, it is the placing of African people in the centre of the analysis of African phenomena. In terms of action and behaviour, it is devotion to the idea that what is in the best interest of African consciousness is at the heart of ethical behaviour. Afrocentricity seeks to enshrine the idea that blackness itself is a troupe of ethics. Thus, to be black is to be against all forms of oppression, racism, classism, homophobia, patriarchy, child abuse, paedophilia and white racial domination. The Afrocentric paradigm represents a revolutionary shift in thinking framed as a structural adjustment to black disorientation, decenteredness and lack of agency that seeks answers to the following questions which Asante (2009:1) posits:

- What would African people do if there were no white people?
- What natural responses would occur in the relationships, attitudes towards the environment, kinship patterns, preferences for colours, type of religion, and historical referent points for African people if there had not been colonialism or enslavement?

Proponents of Afrocentricity from the continent are weighing in to refine the concept. Mazama (2001:388) latches on to Asante positing that the Afrocentric idea "rests on the assertion of the primacy of the African experience for African people". Dei (2012:4) expressed the view that the Afrocentric school of thought is about validation of African experiences and histories, as well as a critique of the continued exclusion and marginalisation of African knowledge systems in the face of Western hegemonies. Dei (2012:43) corroborating Mazama and Asante, asserts that the Afrocentric school of thought concerns the validation of African experiences and histories and reacts against the perceived marginalisation of African knowledge systems by Western scholarship. The Afrocentric method is anchored on the assumption that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first. The method also presupposes that phenomena are diverse, dynamic and mobile. This necessitates that someone accurately notes and records

the location of phenomena even in the midst of fluctuations. The method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege and position in order to establish how principal myths create place. It is the polar opposite of the radical individualism often associated with the Euro-American lifestyles. This view builds on that of Carter (1985:50) who contends that Christianity borrowed a lot of elements from Egyptian religion and that it would be more reasonable and accurate to view Christianity as an offshoot of Judaeo-Egyptian religion, rather than Judaeo-Greek religion. Adamo (2001:87) maintains that African and biblical cultures appear to hold the following traits in common:

- There are encounters with demonic powers and evil spirits.
- There is the reality of poverty.
- There is freedom or deliverance of the oppressed.
- Healings are done by use of herbs, saliva, tunics, prayer, touching, words, incantations, water and sound.

Adamo (2001:87) argues that the above cultural congruencies between biblical cultures and African traditional beliefs gave birth to African cultural hermeneutics, known as Afrocentric hermeneutics. The task of this brand of hermeneutics is to offer alternative though not oppositional hermeneutical and exegetical vantage points parallel and in partnership with the Euro-American equivalents; to counter the perhaps unintentional marginalisation of African knowledge systems. Afrocentricity is a functional interpretative tool. It demonstrates how the Gospel can be interpreted and made relevant for and applied to social challenges in Africa (Enuwosa, 2005:88). Enuwosa (2005:88) avers that several important Gospel themes have their equivalents within African religion and culture making the bold claim that equivalent types of the god-king, redeemer-saviour-creator of the New Testament Christology were recognised in Africa long before the coming of Jesus. The approach enhances the African reader's understanding of the Bible and its relevance in his or her situation and culture. Adamo (2015:31) makes transformation in Africa a key outcome of the hermeneutical endeavour that circumscribes Afrocentricity and lists the following as functions of Afrocentric Hermeneutics:

- Formulation of a biblical hermeneutic that is liberational and transformational.
- Breaking the hermeneutical hegemony and stranglehold that Eurocentric biblical scholars have long enjoyed.

- Understanding the Bible and God's word according to Scripture and African culture and tradition.
- Existential interpretation of the Bible.
- Blackening the Bible.
- Reappraisal of the Bible for the purpose of correcting the effect of the cultural, ideological conditioning to which Africa and Africans have been subjected to in the business of biblical interpretation.
- Promotion of African culture, tradition and identity.

From the above functions, the following methodological traits of Afrocentrism may be discerned:

- Communal reading and interpretation.
- Regard of the Bible as power.
- Africa and Africans in the Bible.
- African comparative.
- African evaluative.
- Using Africa to interpret the Bible and using the Bible to interpret Africa.
- The promotion of distinctive life interest.
- African identity.

The traits of Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics listed above presents this method as a new approach to textual meaning that emphasises communalism, social cohesion, social solidarity and oneness of people. Thus, the text is a tool in the hands of the hermeneutist to promote the moral fabric of the interpretational community.

An Afrocentric approach rather than elevating the text to the exclusive domain of ivory tower hermeneutists, brings it down to the level of the community; the point where text and community intersect. Communal hermeneutics will be applied to penetrate the moral fabric of the Shona. Adamo (2015:4) defines communal hermeneutics as the communal approach to hermeneutics which has been described in various ways as "reading with the ordinary readers", "reading with the community", "reading with African eyes", "reading with residual illiterate people", "real

contextual readers", "spontaneous and subconscious readers", and "collaborative and interactive readers". West (1995:454; 2001:21) says that the communal approach to biblical hermeneutics incorporates ordinary readers; the ordinary people as well as poor and marginalised communities. This approach distinguishes an Afrocentric approach from one that invites the uncomplimentary labels of it being elitist and highly intellectualised. McKim (1986:181) refers to 'professional and trained interpreters of Scripture' who exclude from their scope and practice of hermeneutics, the illiterate, ordinary readers and marginalised members of poor communities.

The communal approach to biblical hermeneutics will bring richness to the interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11 as the ignored, marginalised and forgotten members of poor African communities are incorporated in the process of interpreting Scripture. The Afrocentric hermeneutics strive to reach out to all those who are involved in the art of biblical hermeneutics whether orally or in writing. Formal theological training, while not available to the majority, have not deterred the use of the Bible in day to day living. The Bible is appropriated as the instrument of religious power and practice in independent African churches across the continent (Mbiti, 2004:219). The Bible is deployed to ward off evil spirits in homes, on farms fields and in other places of employment. The sense of community is very important and strong in the African context. Philippians 2:5-11, engenders and seeks to entrench a Christian value system in which humility and selflessness are sublime. As Witherington (2011:67) argues, the main message of the pericope is a critical shifting in the Greco-Roman cultural values which promoted individualism and inequalities. Thus, the text has a contextual plot that fits aptly with the Afrocentric method's thrust of promoting communal relations. As this thesis will show in the following chapters, an interpretation of the Bible that promotes sound social relations and community relationships is important.

Jonker (2001:28-39) lists the following five benefits of the communal approach to reading the Bible:

- It helps one to identify his/her identity among the community of scholars.
- It helps African biblical scholars to intensify diversity and make use of the diversity in the global community.
- It helps scholars to eradicate the individualistic and exclusivist tendencies in biblical scholarship that seem to characterise Eurocentric biblical scholarship.
- It helps to open discourse on our (Afrocentric) interpretation.

- It offers one the very opportunity of investigating the relationship of the community of theological and hermeneutical discourse.

A communal reading of Scripture engages those communities who use the Bible but do not qualify and would not be described as “professional” scholars. Afrocentric hermeneutics fights "valorisation" of any racial/ethnic group above another, which engenders the tendency to subvert the Bible's vision and authority (Felder, 1991:186). Brown (2004:54) states, "true Afrocentrism is placing Africa as an ideological construct at the centre of biblical investigation that will serve as a useful tool for African scholars in our endeavour to create a hermeneutic that speaks to the needs of a historically marginalised people." Thus, Afrocentric Hermeneutics aims to move Africa and Africans towards the centre of the biblical academic landscape and biblical interpretation. Brown (2004:54) further states that Afrocentrism re-envision the interpretive topography through the lens of culture and traditional religion.

Adamo (2005:8) is part of an expanding cohort of scholars, who champion this vision of a uniquely African interpretive epistemology on the continent and elsewhere. At this forefront of this cause are Charles Copher, Randall Bailey, Cain Hope Felder, Vincent Winbush, Madipoane Masenya, Musa W. Dube, Dora Mbuwayesango, Andrew Mbuvi, Gerald West, David Adamo and Knut Holter (a Norwegian scholar), among others.

Based on the above description of Afrocentric hermeneutics, this researcher defines it as an approach to reading biblical texts which combines constructive social values and Christian values as a motif in the understanding of the Bible message. In this thesis, the method shall be used to penetrate Philippians 2:5-11 by studying how the cultural values of the Zezuru ethnic group of the Shona can be used to interpret the text's ethics embedded in Christ's self-abnegation and emptying.

2.4 Critique of Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics

Adamo (2015:51) states that African biblical transformational hermeneutics cannot claim to be one hundred percent objective. Adamo further argues that the history of biblical interpretation has revealed that there has never been an interpretation that has been without references to or dependent of a particular cultural code, thought patterns or social location of the interpreter. Interpreters cannot be detached from their environments, experience and culture, be they from the African or Eurocentric backgrounds. Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics should also be wary of falling into the same trap of racial prejudice and hegemonic complex it seeks to condemn and prove wrong in the Euro-American hermeneutical system. Caution should be exercised for the method not to be vainly antagonistic towards Eurocentric approaches. A close scrutiny of the founding principles of Afrocentrism reveals that the approach was initially intended as a front

against oppression and abuse of black Africans by their white colonisers. The glaring facts on the ground now reveal that in postcolonial Africa, the liberators have turned out to be more villain and capricious in their reigns compared to the former colonial masters. Thus, the terms of reference that formed the foundation of Afrocentrism have changed. Adeleke (2009) argues that the loosening of Europe's visible political and social clutch on the continent means that some of the foundational assumptions of the Afrocentric method have shifted. This therefore means that Afrocentrism should pursue a wider agenda than sheer belligerence against Eurocentrism. Lombard (2006:148) argues that African biblical hermeneutics is a mere affirmation and security seeking endeavour by African black academics who vainly seek to attain the level established by white scholars. Farisani (2017:4) responds to Lombard's criticism of Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics as a security and affirmation seeking gimmick by black African scholars by stating that when one looks at the several branches and multiple methodologies employed by African Biblical Hermeneutics (ABH), the generalisation of approaches to suit a narrow argument is not helpful to scholarship at all.

It should also be noted that not all Euro-American biblical scholars are against African cultures and thought systems. There are scholars like Vanhoozer who do not belong to the group of Euro-American scholars who are hostile and antagonistic towards other cultures. Vanhoozer (1998:108) argues in his Reader Response insights that readers must be allowed to master their cultures and use their cultural memes in the process of interpreting biblical texts. Vanhoozer avers that there is no single culture that can claim rights to the final determinate meanings of biblical texts. Thus, Afrocentric scholars should not bundle together all Euro-American biblical scholars as blindly opposed to African ideo-theological praxis. Vanhoozer (1998:108) says, "The position of the reader partly determines what will be seen or understood, what one sees is relative to one's position - a view that includes one's history, prejudices and values". Vanhoozer further argues that times and places have their peculiar problems and possibilities to which the Scriptures must respond. Thus, according to Vanhoozer (2007:19), the Gospel must speak to the reader's everyday world which includes one's environment, not only the physical location but also the moral, intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in which we live and breathe. Such views from an American theologian show great respect for other cultures outside his own realm.

Muzorewa (1990:220) argues that the same caution that must be taken to rid Euro-American readings of accompanying baggage, should apply to the traditional theological thought forms of the African world view. Muzorewa argues that local traditional customs in Zimbabwe indeed have traits of evil which have to be removed from Christian life. It is not everything about the African culture that can be allowed to continue as part of Christianity. Adeleke questions and queries one of the founding fathers of Afrocentric philosophy, Asante's point that black Africans

retain their African identity despite spending many years into the Diaspora. Adeleke rejects Asante's view that Western cultures cannot dwell inside a black body, arguing that people's self-consciousness change over time given a different context. Adeleke remarks that Africans now have to redefine their sworn enemies because they are now being subjected to corrupt, despotic and oppressive hegemonies under their own kith and kin. We notice a serious oversight in Adeleke's view here because he fails to appreciate the political shenanigans of Europe and America, especially how they sponsor insurrection, mutiny and civil strife in Africa. The Afrocentric model also suffers from the limitation that it cannot be used to the complete exclusion of the Euro-American perspective. Euro-American paradigms have influenced African experiences and values in many years of imperialistic designs such that complete exorcism of Western forms of thought, language and civilisation will not be easy.

In spite of the above misgivings of the Afrocentric approach to biblical hermeneutics, the method has a number of strengths that make it appealing and pertinent to this thesis. The approach explores some of the strengths of the method infra.

2.4.1. Integration of real life issues in Theology

According to Holter (2006:37-392), unlike Euro-American interpretative approaches, Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics always strive to be rooted in everyday life. Holter (2006: 377-392) further argues that the Afrocentric approach exerts a presence in social, political and ecclesiastical contexts of Africa. The Afrocentric approach is a transformational enterprise which does not detour in the halls of academia but traverses the tapestries of human life to deal with complexities, challenges and enigmas thereof. This integration of real life issues creates a platform for dialogue and engagement between the African biblical scholars and the ordinary interpreters of Scripture who expect the scholar to research on topical issues that boggle their minds with the view to proffer answers to riddles of everyday life. According to West (2010:140-160), the African biblical scholar should not settle in the academy alone but must engage the indigenous reading community in their realities of life. Compared to the Afrocentric approach, Euro-American based hermeneutics create a gap between the academy and realities of life. For African biblical interpreters, the risen Lord must be recognised and appropriated to the modern context. African biblical scholar based in Canada, Diane B. Stinton (2010:xvii) introduces the concept of "an African palaver" in which every member of the Christian faith has the right to participate in the interpretation of Scripture, whether in speech or symbolic action. This means that interpretation of biblical texts is not a preserve of a few who are deemed competent and well trained in the art of biblical exegesis. Western hermeneutics' obsession with professionalism and formalism in the reading and interpretation of biblical texts (Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser) makes biblical interpretation an activity that is elitist and reserved for halls of

academia. The Afrocentric approach takes biblical interpretation to the practical exigencies of human life. Current trends in theology favour an approach to theology that addresses real life issues. A transcendental and abstract faith will not attract followers in the modern world where people employ cost-benefit-analysis philosophy to religious participation.

2.4.2. Afrocentric hermeneutics leads to a less strict and extreme theology

Unlike Euro-American exegesis which spends too much energy on pure academics, Afrocentric hermeneutics focuses more on how the Bible addresses issues of everyday life. African Biblical Hermeneutics tackles issues of practical life such as *Talitha Cum* Hermeneutics of Liberation (Dube, 2012:29), Bible Reading and Land Distribution (Wafawanaka, 2012:221), Hermeneutics for Transformation (Nadar, 2006:339), Embodiment and Biblical Interpretation in the HIV/AIDS Context (Dube, 2012:483). Bediako (2010:16) advocates for an approach to biblical hermeneutics which encourages participation in the Gospel Truth as opposed to simply enunciating that Truth. The Afrocentric model encourages participation in truth as opposed to a rigorous interpretational apologetics which is an end in itself. An Afrocentric hermeneutics that will seek to redress crises ranging from gender inequalities, child labour, forced child marriages, poverty, poor governance, civil strife, corruption, dictatorships and megalomania in leadership is what the African *sitz im leben* needs.

2.4.3. Afrocentric hermeneutics integrates the hermeneutist

Euro-American interpretational models have a thrust towards neutral and unbiased hermeneutics. The Afrocentric approach is by nature skewed or biased towards the African context. It is not a generalised approach to biblical interpretation and it does not challenge anyone to change their ways. Embedded in the Afrocentric approach is priori that readers of biblical texts will approach the text with presuppositions that originate from factors of space, time, environment and context. The Afrocentric model is not hypocritical; it is not silhouetted in glib rhetoric or slippery epistemology in its confession of bias towards African historiography. In this vein, it is conceived that bias towards a noble inclination is not necessarily a vice. Jonker (2001:30) submits that African biblical hermeneutics traverses through three types of contextuality, namely didactic contextuality which refers to the context within which and for which biblical interpretation takes place; interpretive contextuality which refers to the context of the interpreter; and meta-rhetorical contextuality which refers to the context of language, thought forms and symbols and figures of speech. African biblical scholars constitute an interpretive community that engages biblical texts from the points of view of that interpretive community. Afrocentric scholars are socially and culturally conditioned. Just as Euro-American biblical scholars belonged to an interpretive community that preserved its traditional stereotypes and prejudices, the Afrocentric biblical scholars engage in the enterprise of biblical interpretation

under the influence of their interpretive community's way of thinking, form of life, objects, purposes, goals, procedures and values. The African biblical interpreter is therefore not a Kantian tabula rasa that must be filled.

2.4.4. Afrocentric method facilitates dialogue between culture and the Bible

Justin Ukpong (2001:24) argues that comparative interpretation is one which actualises the theological meaning of the text in today's context so as to forge integration between faith and life, and engender commitment to personal and societal transformation. West (2011:22) contends that appropriation of theological meaning of texts in today's context marks the distinction between Afrocentric method and Euro-American models of interpretation. West (2011:24) argues that "While Western forms of biblical interpretation have been reluctant, until recently, to acknowledge that text and context are always, at least implicitly and in conversation, the dialogical dimension of biblical interpretation, the dialogue of the two has always been an explicit feature of African biblical hermeneutics. Interpreting the biblical text is never, in African biblical hermeneutics, an end in itself. Biblical interpretation is always about changing the African context". The dialogue between the African culture and the biblical text brings an interesting dimension to biblical interpretation whereby the message of the Bible becomes alive to the problems besetting Africans.

Unlike the Euro-American biblical interpretation that has tended to hide or omit the contemporary context of the biblical interpreter, African biblical hermeneutics is frankly skewed towards didactic contextuality. Orobator (2010:3) asserts that context is the primary feature of Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics which presents theology as a discipline grounded in the ordinary experience of Christians and their faith communities. Orobator further argues that interpretation must not produce meaning for the theologian only by excluding his or her community. Orobator says, "Context is to faith what soil is to a seed." This researcher agrees with Orobator that biblical interpretations must speak to people's daily lives in order to foster change for the betterment of lives. Mugambi (2001:144) adds his voice to the importance of context in biblical interpretation; "I opt for the approach which allows unrestricted movement between text and context. On the one hand, the context provides the operational platform on which theology has to be done. On the other, the text provides the analytical stimulus for creative reflection". In this thesis, both context and text are treated with great respect, with the belief that if text and context engage each other, context can be articulated while the text's purpose can be understood in greater light. In the same breadth, it is contended that removal of context from the interpretative task renders biblical hermeneutics some frivolous mind game which is of no benefit to posterity.

2.5 Justification for the Afrocentric approach in the study of Philippians 2:5-11

The choice of the Afrocentric paradigm in this study is based on the following reasons:

(a) Conceptual and Textual Proximities to Shona Cosmology

A balanced and close study of Philippians 2:5-11 shows a consanguine relationship between Shona morality memes and Paul's appeal to the Philippians to espouse virtues of oneness, societal harmony, humility, selflessness, servant leadership and sacrificial love. Gelfand (1973:11) and Moyo (1973:50) attest that the moral values of communal life, selflessness, social solidarity, equality and harmony are highly prized among the Shona. One also finds that the pericope touches on the philosophy of servant type of leadership exemplified by Jesus Christ's kenosis. Humility and self-humbling are one of the key moral values among the Shona. I therefore argue that there is a greater proximity of the concepts and ideological frameworks of Philippians 2:5-11 on the one hand and Shona cosmology on the other, compared to the text's concepts and philosophical ideology with Western cultures.

(b) Textual Immanence

It is given and accepted that Philippians 2:5-11 was occasioned by specific situations prevailing in the Philippian Church. Martin (1967:61), Collange (1979:3), Fee (1992:29), Hendriksen (1962:99) and Brown (2013:2) agree that the text was occasioned by a serious threat to unity in the Church at Philippi as selfish ambition, grumbling and disunity were tearing the Church apart. The text was written by Paul as an antidote to the problem of schisms in the Church through enforcement of moral values such as acting in humility, considering others more significant than self, emulating the humility and sacrificial life of Christ. In this thesis, I postulate that Philippians 2:5-11's moral teaching is pervasive across cultures. I argue that the pericope is alive to Shona morality just as it applied to the Philippian community. What is key to the Afrocentric hermeneutic is that the pericope has an existential correspondence and relevance to the Shona contextual interpretation. This researcher is aware that Paul's original recipients had a different conceptual frame of reference from that of the Shona. The text is approached from the conviction that it has a transformative message for Africa and for the Shona community in particular. The notion of textual immanence as a central hermeneutical motif will be advanced in this current research. Nthaburi and Waruta (1997:40) and Adamo (2012:299) assert that unlike Western conservative scholars who busy themselves with the theoretical implications of inerrancy or infallibility of Scriptures, the Afrocentric approach advances from the notions inspiration, efficacy and existential implications or praxis in redressing everyday life issues of the Africans.

(c) Text as Transformational Tool

According to Fee (1992:29), Philippians 2:5-11, has assumed a "grandeur" and a "role" both in the church and in private devotional life quite apart from its original context. In Afrocentric hermeneutics, the Bible is regarded as an effective tool for social change and transformation (West, 2000:22). With the text's rich paraenesis or moral teaching which promotes harmony, unity, communalism and selflessness, it will unequivocally play an inspirational role in Africa's clarion call for renewal in leadership and governance models practised on the continent. While Western scholarship has seized itself with studying such aspects of the text as its form, origins, background of ideas, its overall meaning and role in its present context, the meanings of key words and phrases, my task in this thesis is to escalate the text's usefulness in modelling human behaviour along the example of Jesus Christ from a Shona morality perspective.

(d) Textual Appropriation

Fee (1992:29) argues that Philippians 2:5-11 can be easily appropriated to different worldviews. This thesis shows that New Testament morality can be studied from the African context in general but most specifically, in terms of Shona cultural worldview. The text's themes of self-emptying, sacrificial death, exaltation in death and Christ's superior rank above the dead are elements that can be studied more profoundly if interrogated from the Shona traditional lens. Lohmeyer and Jeremias removed from their structural reconstructions of the text, the following phrases:

- τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ (to be equal with God) Philippians 2:6c
- θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (death of the Cross) Philippians 2:8d
- τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνόματα (above all names) Philippians 2:9c
- ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ (that at the name of Jesus) Philippians 10a
- ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων (of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth) Philippians 2:10c
- εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς (to the glory of God, the Father) Philippians 2:11c. Lohmeyer (1928 cited by Martin, 1983:36), Cerfaux (1946 cited by Fee, 1992:32), Jeremias (1953:146-154), Collange (1973 cited by Fee 1992:32), Talbert (1967:141) and Martin (1983:36) excised the original structure of Philippians 2:5-11 to such an extent that one of their own fold, Fee (1992:32) describes Martin's omission of Philippians 2:8d, 10c and 11c as "performing a rather radical surgery" on the sense of the text. The underlying reasons for the excision of

the above phrases are that the scholars considered the phrases to be un-Pauline (Martin, 1967:36) and that the phrases were foreign to Paul's language and style. The scholars therefore sought to reconstruct the original structure of the hymn by removing the phrases (Fee, 1992:30-31). Martin (1997:289) insisted on isolating the original structure of the text from the Pauline version, pointing out, "once the hymn's significance in its original form is detached from the use Paul makes of it, we are relieved of these irritating difficulties of interpretation". In a sense, Martin seems to be saying that removing the phrases which were deemed not part of the original, pre-Pauline hymn was going to make the interpretation of the hymn easier.

While I concede that the reasons for removal of the phrases that the scholars deemed both un-Pauline and unoriginal bordered around questions of linguistic structure and etymological concerns, I argue that Paul's adaptation of the phrases for use in the Philippian context should not be treated as an interpolation that warrants peripheralisation of those aspects in the process of interpretation of the hymn. Recent scholarship has also given a thumbs up to the treatment of the pericope as an encomiastic prose composed by Paul himself specifically for the Philippians letter (Collins, 2002:261-272; Reumann, 2008:361-362). Brucker (2014:1-14) argues that the view that Paul adapted the hymn for his letter to the Philippians "has now run its course" and that the hymn is now widely accepted as a Pauline composition. Hence, as Holloway (2017:115) argues, the metamorphic myth in the text fits well within its immediate epistolary context to support the thesis that Paul himself composed the pericope. The point of departure in this thesis is the presupposition that the Bible is divinely inspired⁷. Appropriating the text to the Shona cultural context will provide inroads into understanding in picturesque ways issues of death and post death exaltation.

(e) Social and religious syncretism between the text and Shona culture

My survey of Western exegesis of Philippians 2:5-11 has shown that the world of biblical texts is not esoteric but syncretistic. Fee (1992:35) summarises the views of Western scholarship on the sources around the concepts in Philippians 2:5-11 as follows: Hellenistic and pre-Christian Gnosticism cultures (Käsemann), Heterodox Judaism (Lohmeyer), Iranian Myth of the Heavenly Redeemer (Beare), Jewish Gnosticism (Sanders), Old Testament Servant Messages (Coppens, Moule, Strimple), Adam Christology (Murphy-O'Connor, Dunn) and Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom Speculation (Georgi, Hurtado). In this thesis, the writer agrees that Philippians 2:5-11 could have been influenced in its philosophy by different cultures as suggested by the scholars cited by Fee. Similarly, the Shona culture and indeed any other culture from any continent can still influence the reading and interpretation of the pericope. Hence, the motif in this thesis is that

⁷ The Afrocentric paradigm inherently upholds the principle of sacredness of scripture, 2 Timothy 3:16.

there is a symbiotic relationship between Philippians 2:5-11 and elements of Shona morality. Shona traditional spiritual morphology has elements that will help us interpret the death, the new name given to Jesus Christ after resurrection, his exaltation above other names, as well as the meaning of the phrase, "of those in heaven, and those in the earth, and those under the earth". This work serves to encourage New Testament scholars from the West to give indigenous Afrocentric hermeneutics a chance to demonstrate what results can be realised from its use. This study's focus on the study of New Testament morality from a Shona cultural perspective comes hitherto, against a skewed interpretation culture that views African thought systems as fetish, magical and unscholarly (Pietz, 1988:105). This thesis seeks to prove that interpreting morality issues in Philippians 2:5-11 through Shona cultural cosmology yields new discoveries in the meaning of the pericope.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter described the Afrocentric hermeneutical approach to biblical studies. It also examined both strengths and weaknesses of the method. The method has been selected for use in this thesis because it provides groves of analysis in which text and context dialogue, liven textual immanence and appropriation in contemporary communities. Afrocentric hermeneutics' emphasis on communalism as a tool of interpretation syncs aptly with the Shona's kinship relations and cosmological beliefs which will be useful in the study of Philippians 2:5-11.

CHAPTER 3: CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH ON PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

3.1 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the current state of scholarship on Philippians 2:5-11 as the epicentre of New Testament morality. Gaps in recent scholarship on the pericope are discussed relative to the Afrocentric paradigm.

3.2 An exegetical review of literature

An exegetical review here refers to the process of examining the historical and literary contexts of Philippians 2:5-11. I find it inexorably imperative that in order to effectively study this pericope, I carry out a review of literature on the general background of the text. This process will draw on traditional historical critical methods such as form criticism in respect of the genre of the text, textual criticism in respect of linguistic characteristics of the pericope and redaction criticism in respect of what authors have done to the text throughout its interpretational history. In the end, an exegetical synthesis will be attempted to highlight motifs and concerns that are pertinent to this thesis.

Bockmuehl (1998:1) is of opinion that the passage “is life giving and enthuses “heart refreshing joy”. Osiek (2000:32) describes the text as “a jewel of the Pauline corpus” while Fee (2007:1) describes it as “the acropolis” of Christological passages in the entire Pauline corpus.”. The passage sets Christ’s humility, self-emptying and selflessness as mimetic both in principle and purpose. Kiefer (2016:149) sums up the Euro-American interpretational community’s views on the pericope when she says, “scholars have disagreed as to whether this hymn serves as a moral imperative to follow Christ’s example or a celebration of the soteriological act of God”. While some scholars in this tradition have dismissed the view that the kenotic act of Christ cannot apply to abused and marginalised communities of the world, this researcher seeks to test the hypothesis that the moral virtues inferred and implied in this text have praxis in African cultural settings, especially if subjected to exegesis through the Shona cultural lens.

The academic consensus, with rare dissent, is that Philippians 2:5-11 is a hymn. Martin (1967:364) locates the text in the setting of early Christian worship in the genre of hymns which the Early Church customarily sang to Christ, or the 'Carmen Christi'. Lohmeyer (1928:10), Martin (1983:24-41), Ellis (2000:319), Collins (2003:361-71), Tobin (2006:92) and Fewster (2015:191) agree that the passage is indeed a Christ Hymn. However, Fee (1992:29-46) and Bockmuehl (1998:116-117) reject this designation.

Another area of division is the explanation for the purpose and function of the hymn. The context of the Philippian church, was one characterised by divisions, schisms and skirmishes among its members (Philippians 2:3). The hymn emphasises the need for Christian unity (Philippians 2:2,4). The alternative explanation is that the hymn points to pre-Pauline and Second Temple Jewish Messianic beliefs and liturgies. Hooker (1975:152-153) advocates for an interpretation that is based on the current theological climate as opposed to the original Pauline authorial context or pre-Pauline circumstances. On the purpose of the text, Martin (1967:71), Käsemann (1968:47) and Sanders (1969:280) argue that the text was never intended to set any ethical example for Christian believers to follow. Hurtado (1984:117) rebutted Käsemann's description of the ethical interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11 as 'ethical idealism' as well as a downplaying of the soteriological mission of Christ. By describing the ethics of Philippians 2 as 'ethical idealism', Käsemann implies that the ethics only exist as a mental construct that is removed from reality. Käsemann found it pugnacious that the salvific mission of Christ be reduced to a mere 'ethical or moral entreaty'. Käsemann also expressed reservations on the objectivity of the ethics and morals inferred in the text because the *sitz im leben* of the passage has a Gnostic background. Hurtado (1984:117) argues that Käsemann's anti-moralising stance blurred his vision of the real issues being raised in the pericope. Hurtado then argues that the Jewish influence in the background of the text provides a fertile ground for the ethical interpretation of the text. This view is based on the fact that moral teachings or paraenesis constituted a key component of Jewish traditions.

Martin says neither in its present context in Philippians nor in its original setting was the hymn meant to set an ethical example before Christ's followers. Martin (1967:288) argues that verse 5 was wrongly translated. Instead of "have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus", it should read, "act as befits those who are in Christ Jesus". The following outline summarises Martin's arguments:

- The somewhat technical language of the hymn speaks against the view that it is presenting a simple, ethical picture of Christ.
- Verse 5 does not refer to 'the mind which was also in Christ'.
- Paul rarely uses the ethical example of Jesus to reinforce an ethical appeal. To be a Christian is not to follow in the footsteps of the earthly Jesus but rather, to share in His risen life. Jesus' life is never an "*exemplum ad imitandum*" throughout the Pauline corpus.
- Only verses 6-8 provide an example of humility.

Martin (1967:63-67) summarised the three main views of Euro-American scholarship on Philippians 2:5-11 as follows:

- The self-emptying of Christ and His refusal to take advantage of His equality with God are viewed as factors of the incarnation event and not a pointer to His pre-existence.
- The purpose of *kenosis* was for Christ Jesus to manifest in His humanity and incarnational form exclusive of the divine attributes of omnipotence and omniscience.
- The ethical interpretation of the text is confined to the quest for unity in the Philippian church. A.T. Robertson (1959:69) buttresses this argument by arguing that the pericope is not dealing with Christology but is simply a call on the Philippian church believers to follow the example of Christ's humility in order to achieve unity.

Tan (2017:14) states that hitherto, scholars have concentrated on the pre-existence debate, Christ's choice of self-abnegation, the incarnation, abasement, exaltation, universal homage and the christological confession. Tan (2017:187) further observes that the passage also ought to be interpreted against the background of a Greco-Roman society that values the concepts of *mimesis* (imitation) and *paideia* (education or upbringing). Furthermore, the text should also be approached from the angle of first century rhetoric's emphasis in concepts of *paradeigma* (pattern) and *exempla* (example). Eastman (2008:429-430) contends that the passage is fraught with the language of Greco-Roman mimetic education. Krentz (2010:253) submits that the ethical mission of the pericope cannot be dismissed successfully. Marshall (1968:117) disagrees with Martin (1967:63-67), defending the ethical and moral teaching of the hymn. Marshall (1968:117) opines the following four points of rebuttal:

- Granted that the hymn was originally composed for a christological and soteriological purpose, there is no reason why Paul should not have given it a fresh application in the Philippians epistle. There are more examples in the New Testament of items of teaching being used to instil more than one lesson. An example of this is the use of parables.
- There is a recurrent appeal throughout the epistle for the followers of Christ to partake in His humiliation and suffering on earth in order for them to be glorified with Him.
- The use of *ἐν* in verse 5 suggests an introduction of an example and the fact that this construction recurs twice in Philippians (1:30 and 4:9) reinforces this interpretation.
- The view that Paul makes little use of Christ as an ethical example is also disputed. In Romans 15:1-7, Paul encourages believers to have a selfless disposition like Christ. They are to be of the same mind one with another as Christ also received them to the glory of

God. In 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, Paul explicitly refers to the example of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul suggests that readers should show the same kind of χάρις (2 Corinthians 8:6) as was demonstrated by Christ in His renunciation of His riches. These considerations suggest that the Christ Hymn is used in Philippians as a means of putting the example of Christ before the readers.

Sampley (1991:113) argues that the notions of morality expressed in Philippians 2:5-11 are eschatologically motivated by concern for believers in light of the Parousia. The morality paraenesis has two sides: one deals with the death and resurrection of Christ while the other has in view the parousia or the second coming of the Lord. Understanding the salvific importance of the death and resurrection of Christ against the backdrop of the imminence of Christ's return influences the ethical conduct of the believers. The morality issues raised in Philippians 2:5-11 are therefore meant to prepare people for the second coming of Christ. Perkins (1991:90) and Meeks (1993:182-183) agree with Sampley that Paul's morality is geared to prepare an eschatological community, or what Perkins (1991:89) calls a "heavenly politeuma". The Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (1989) nuances the word "politeuma" in four possible directions of meaning. Four words capture the trajectories of meaning for this word namely, πολίτης, συμπόλιτης, πολιτεία and πολιτενομαί. The first word πολίτης connotes a member of a city or state or the inhabitant of a country or district. In the πολίτης sense, "politeuma" would imply that Paul is admonishing the Philippians to realise that they belonged together as equal citizens with the same rights. The second word συμπόλιτης denotes possession of same citizenship as fellow citizens. The combination of συν and πολίτης yields the idea of people who share same moral and philosophical values. The third word πολιτεία signifies the relation in which a citizen stands to the state, the condition of a citizen or citizenship. It therefore epitomizes the privileges, rights or limitations that bind a person in relation to citizenship. Paul is therefore encouraging the Philippians to reach a level of ethical conduct where they treat each other with mutual respect as citizens who have equity before the law. The last word, πολιτενομαί implies behavior or conduct that befits one's status as a citizen of a country. In that sense, "politeuma" would mean that those who belong to Christ's community are expected to follow a prescribed mode of moral behavior, which in this particular instance, entails humility and love for others.

Some scholars are opposed to the eschatological application of the ethics contained within the text. O'Brien (1991:210-211), Fee (1995:204), and Hellerman (2009:779-797) propose that the passage ought to be interpreted in its immediate literary context that focusses on encouragement toward mutual submission and self-sacrifice; like-mindedness, love, being in full accord and unity of mind.

The moral import of Philippians 2 has not gone unnoticed. Fee (2007:370) describes Philippians 2:5-11 as "an acropolis", a "high-water mark", "one of the most significant christological moments in the New Testament" of Pauline Christology that testify to Christ's loving, redemptive sacrifice and the implications of that love for all relationships and behaviour within the believing community. Morality deals with codes of human behaviour, that is, how a community of people should live and relate with each other. New Testament morality is concerned with how believers in Christ ought to live and relate to each other. Lakoff and Johnson (1999:115) say that morality is about human well-being and covers ideals such as justice, fairness, compassion, virtue, tolerance, freedom and rights, all of which stem from the fundamental human concern with what is best for us and how we ought to live. It can be reasonably inferred that Philippians 2 lends itself to be both theologically doctrinal important that is christologically, as well as moral-ethically infused. It does not have to be an either or.

In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul draws on the example of Christ to prescribe how the Christian community ought to predispose their thinking and living. *τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν* (let this mind be in you) derives from the verb *φρονέω*, meaning giving careful consideration to something (BDAG-Arndt and Gingrich, 1957), and in this case, it means believers ought to give special consideration to how they should behave towards others. The word appears 26 times in the New Testament, of which 23 times is in the Pauline corpus, 9 times in Romans and 10 times in Philippians (Fee, 2007:373). The word *φρονέω* mostly appears in paraenetic passages in the Pauline corpus where the Apostle teaches moral virtues that must be observed by the community of believers. While a sizeable number of scholars agree that Philippians 2:5-11 presents an ethical or moral teaching which must be followed by the Christian community, four scholars namely Barth (1962:53-62), Martin (1967:71), Käsemann (1968:84) and Sanders (1969:280) argue that the passage was never intended to present a moral code for believers.

In this thesis, I argue that Philippians 2:5-11 presents the finest moral or ethical teaching in the New Testament. This view is premised on the fact that Paul's reference to the example of Christ elsewhere is rampant throughout his corpus. Elsewhere, Paul points to the selfless example of Christ, for example, in 2 Corinthians 8:9, he points to Christ who became poor so that His followers might become rich; 2 Timothy 2:12⁸ refers to the endurance of Christ which should be imitated by His followers if they are to reign with Him; Romans 15:5 encourages believers to consider the good of neighbours as Christ did not please Himself and lastly in 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul himself says that he is an imitator of Christ. Other verses in the New Testament that point to the example of Christ which should be imitated include Mark 10:44, 45 where Christ's example of serving and pouring out His life for many is highlighted and 1 Peter 2:21-25 says

⁸ I am aware that a number scholars endorse the Deutero-Pauline character of 2 Timothy. For the purpose of this thesis the minimal traits of Paul in 2 Timothy justify reference to the cited verse.

that Christ left an example for His followers to follow in His steps. I contend that the ethical or moral thrust in Philippians 2:5-11 is arguably the zenith of New Testament moral teaching. The pericope demonstrates that Jesus Christ was and remains the model of virtuous morals of humility, sacrificial love, selflessness, kenotic leadership, servitude, and the "way up is down" principle of leadership. In a vain attempt to evade the moral interpretation, Käsemann (1968:74), whose revulsion with the ethical interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11 is notable, makes a mild compromise by pointing out that Jesus is the "archetype" and not the "model" of Christian morality. When one examines the difference in meaning between "archetype" and "model", one discovers that archetype means very typical of a certain person, a primitive mental image inherited from earliest human ancestors which is supposed to be carried forward to the next generations. On the other hand, a model is a person or thing used as an example to be imitated or followed. While I agree that Käsemann addresses the cosmic nature and scale of the Christ event as opposed to the mythical view of the term 'model', it should be noted that he denies that Christ can be a model of morality. In his 1950 publication, titled, 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11', Käsemann insists that only naïve ethical idealism would suggest that the unique events of Christ's incarnation, death on the cross and exaltation by God could be imitated in a Christian's life (Hansen, 2009:120).

Van der Watt (2006:v-ix), commenting on the relationship between identity, ethics and ethos in the New Testament, summarised the approach of Euro-American scholarship to the study of New Testament morality when he commented as follows with reference to himself and his German, North American and Austrian colleagues: "We limited ourselves to the descriptive task rather than trying to harmonise material or engage in hermeneutical discussion on what should and what should not be applied to our current situation today". He acknowledged that the aim of his work (in liaison with his Euro-American cohorts), on New Testament ethics, was merely to establish how a particular book of the New Testament presents the identity, ethics and ethos of the original people involved in the formation of that particular document. Such an approach is purely exegetical, diachronic and academic. My approach, as a point of departure from Euro-American scholarship, is hermeneutical and also recognises the value of a combination of diachronic and synchronic approaches to the text. The approach adopted in this current research is to shift focus away from the question of the original people who were involved in the formation of Philippians 2:5-11 and to explore how the text might be encountered by a contemporary African community.

3.3 Gaps to be filled through Shona cultural hermeneutics

Views elaborated on in the previous section, highlighted fundamental notions of transference and transcendence. This raises the following questions that require further exploration through an Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm:

- Should the interpretation of passage be confined to its immediate “original” literary context only?
- Can the morality embedded within the text be applied exclusively to an eschatological or heavenly setting?
- Can the ethical/moral value of the pericope transcend the admonitions given to the Philippian church if interpreted through the Shona cultural perspective?
- Can the mimesis of ancient Christian hymns be transferred to other cultures and settings beyond first century Greco-Roman, Judaeo-Greco or Hellenistic *sitz- im- leben*?
- Could an argument be sustained that neglected themes like kenosis, death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ evince improved proximity, adoption and praxis within a different cultural context like that of the Shona?

The researcher will respond to the above five questions, by applying the Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm from a Shona cultural perspective.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that there are a number of neglected issues in the current, largely Western, interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11. Euro-American based interpretations of the pericope have locked up the meaning of the text either into the past or future. History and eschatology have thus dominated the hermeneutics of the passage. This observation opens a new window for the investigation of this text through the lens of a specific, contemporary cultural community, the Shona cosmological system. Either inconclusive or piecemeal debates have been carried out around the pre-existence, kenosis, humility, choice, death, resurrection, exaltation and universal homage of Christ, albeit through abstract hypotheses which do not relate with practical, existential and transformational mission of the Gospel. This chapter has discussed the approaches to, and the methodological assumptions that Euro-American scholars make when they approach the text in Philippians. The next chapter will further reflect on Euro-American methodological assumptions showing how the Afrocentric approach enriches interpretation of themes that emerge in the former’s approaches.

CHAPTER 4: KEY THEMES FROM THE EURO-AMERICAN INTERPRETATION OF PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the tapestry of Shona epistemology as key to how the Shona receive and interpret biblical texts. This chapter isolates key themes of the pericope and investigates Western or Euro-American interpretative traditions on those themes. The purpose is to identify interpretative trends that represent a distillation of the academic consensus on interpretations of this text. This process acts as a harbinger to the investigation of the meanings of the key themes of the pericope from a Shona cultural perspective in chapters 5 and 6.

The biblical text under investigation is reproduced below in SBL Greek, King James Version English, and Zezuru Shona Bible for ease of reference. The Bhaibheri reChiShona has been selected because it is written in Zezuru expression of Shona which is generally the form of Shona used in formal education in Zimbabwe.

Table 4-1: Philippians 2:5-11 Greek-English-Shona parallel (Adapted from SBL, KJV Study Bible and Bhaibheri reChiShona)

GREEK	ENGLISH (KJV)	SHONA
<p>⁵ τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ</p> <p>⁶ ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,</p> <p>⁷ ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος</p> <p>⁸ ἑταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ·</p> <p>⁹ διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,</p> <p>¹⁰ ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων</p> <p>¹¹ καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ</p>	<p>V5 for, let this mind be in you that(is) also in Christ Jesus,</p> <p>V6 who, being in the form of God, thought (it) not robbery to be equal to God,</p> <p>V7 but did empty Himself, the form of a servant having taken, in the likeness of men having been made,</p> <p>V8 and in fashion having been found as a man, he humbled Himself, having become obedient unto death-death even of a Cross,</p> <p>V9 wherefore, also, God did highly exalt Him, and gave to Him a name that (is) above every name,</p> <p>V10 that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow- of heavenlies, and earthlies, and what are under the earth-</p> <p>V11 and every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</p>	<p>V5 ivai nomoyo uyo, wakanga uri muna Kristu Jesu vo;</p> <p>V6 iye, kunyange akanga akafanana naMwari, haana kuti kuenzana naMwari ndechinhu chinofanira kubatisiswa;</p> <p>V7 asi wakazviita usina maturo, akazvitorera chimiro chomuranda, akaitwa nomufananidzo womunhu.</p> <p>V8 akati awanikwa anomufananidzo womunhu, akazvinipisa, akateerera kusvika parufu, irwo rufu rwemuchinjikwa.</p> <p>V9 saka Mwari wakamukudza zvikuru, akamupa zita rinopfuura mazita ose;</p> <p>V10 kuti muzita raJesu, mabvi ose apfugame, ezviri kudenga nezviri panyika, nezviri pasi penyika,</p> <p>V11 kuti ndimi dzose dzibvumire dziti Jesu Kristu ndiyeShe, kuti Mwari, baba, arumbidzwe.</p>

4.2 Philippians 2:5 τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (ENGLISH: The mind that was in Christ) (SHONA: Moyo wakanga uri muna Kristu)

Verses 1-4 are prolegomena to verse 5. The opening article τοῦτο both emphasises and links back to the teaching in verses 1-4 (Hawthorne and Martin 2004:107; Hellerman 2005:108). This

interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the verb φρονεῖτε syntactically connects with τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε and τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες, in verse 2.

Tan (2017:68) argues that τοῦτο φρονεῖτε should be translated as "this think" or "have this mindset" and that the imperative tense is pointing to some action that Paul previously asked the Philippians to take in verses 1-4 (Fee,1995:199). The imperative is that the believers should think about their relationship with each other. The following words suggest that the community is beleaguered with negativity. These include ἐριθεία (rivalry, self-ambitions) (verse 3) κενοδοξία (vainglory, self-conceit) (verse 3) ἐαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες (selfishness) (verse 4) ὑπερέχοντας ἐαυτῶν (self-esteeming) (verse 3). Watson (1988:57) stresses that a rhetorical analysis of Philippians 2 produces results that lean towards advocacy for unity in the community of believers. The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG) (2000:1065) suggests three directions of meaning for the term φρονεῖτε as used in verse 5. The first direction of meaning connotes having an opinion with regard to something, to think, form or hold an opinion or judge a situation. The second trajectory of meaning denotes giving careful consideration to something, to set one's mind on or be intent on an issue. The third interpretation points to the development of an attitude based on careful thought, being mindful or disposed to an idea. From the first direction of meaning, Paul is encouraging his audience to think or feel in the same way Christ regarded other people. The followers of Christ are being persuaded to think about others in the sense of being concerned about them. There is also an idea of being in agreement, thinking the same thing and living in harmony. Believers are encouraged to cherish thoughts about the welfare of others. The second trajectory of interpretation of φρονεῖτε implies that followers of Christ should learn to take the side of others than their own side of things, espouse others' cause just like Christ endured humiliation for the sake of all humanity. The third meaning points to the need for the followers of Christ to allow the same kind of thinking dominate them as dominated Christ Jesus. The believers are also admonished to have the same thoughts among themselves as they have in their communion with Christ Jesus. That means the same love they express towards Christ Jesus they should also show it to each other.

MacArthur (2001:119) states that after encouraging the believers to have oneness, love, and fellowship in the spirit, to be merciful toward one another and to live in humility, unity and harmony, Paul urges them to have the mind which Christ had. Verse 5 is a transition from the exhortation given in verses 1-4 to the illustration drawn from the character of Christ. Rees (1954:43) argues that believers are now being encouraged to adopt a new attitude, this time,

not just to one another as believers (which sense is portrayed in verses 2-4,) but in pursuit of the example of Christ who poured out himself (ἐκένωσεν) and humbled himself (ἐταπείνωσεν)⁹.

This use of φρονεῖτε¹⁰ is consistent with its use in the rest of the corpus (Fee 1995:200). Bekker (2006:3) proposes that the self-emptying, servant posturing, humility, obedience and embracing of humanity by Christ Jesus was a mimetic Christological model for Christian leadership. The reference to the personality of Jesus Christ for imitation by the believers is generally referred to as the ethical interpretation of the pericope (MacArthur, 2001:118).

4.2.1 The ethical and soteriological trajectories of interpretation and their thematic discourses

This trajectory of interpretation discusses whether the primary function of Philippians 2:5 is ethical on the one hand or kerygmatic on the other. According to Eastman (2011:1), debate rages around the question whether Paul is giving a statement of Christ's incarnation or whether he intends to provide an ethical example to be followed. On the kerygmatic side, the trajectory looks at theological issues such as the pre-existence of Christ, Adam Christology, social, political and literary backgrounds of the hymn. On the ethical side, the trajectory looks at the function of the hymn as a form of a Code of Conduct for the Philippian Christians. Fee (1992:27) points out that Käsemann and Martin's objection to the notion of the use of the hymn as an ethical example for the Christian church is based on the theological argument that one cannot really follow Christ's example which is the incarnation of a heavenly being. The main point of the Christ Hymn is contained in verses 9-11 which deal with Christ's lordly triumph which no one can follow.

Hurtado (1984:124), Swift (1984:245), Dunn (1996:114) and Nebrada (2011:240), have been unanimous in their view that the hymn presents a special appeal to the Philippian Christians to imitate Christ. Hurtado posits that the language of the hymn is paraenetic in nature and takes after the language of early Christian paraenesis. Hurtado (1984:124) posits that the servant language of the hymn reflects Jesus' own servanthood which He demonstrates for imitation by those who believe in Him. Nebrada (2011:240) also argues that the experiences that Paul went through at Philippi are highlighted in the hymn for the Philippian Christians to imitate. Zimmermann (2009:399) contends that Paul, by virtue of being a missionary, is an ethicist who is concerned about the behaviour of his converts.

⁹ Rees, P. 1954. *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*. Westwood: N.J. Revell, page 43 cited by MacArthur (2001:119).

¹⁰ BMY Morphology and Gingrich refer to similar uses of the term φρονεῖτε elsewhere within the Pauline corpus in the senses of holding on to an opinion (Romans 11:20; 12:3a, 16a; 15:5; 1 Cor 13:11; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10; Philippians 1:7; 2:2; 3:15; 4:2, 10), setting one's mind on, being intent on or espousing someone's cause (Romans 8:5; 12:3b, 16b; Philippians 3:19, Col 3:2), to observe (Romans 14:6) thus, to have thoughts or attitudes, be minded or disposed.

Eastman (2011) avers that the Christ Hymn falls within the scope of Greco-Roman mimetic education. Greco-Roman mimesis holds that imitation of virtue follows a hierarchical order from low to high. However, in the case of Christ, it is observed that He takes on the form of Adam (condescension) while the Philippian Church is to mime Christ. There is therefore a subversion to the Greco-Roman mimetic order. Eastman however, maintains that the mimesis in reflected in the hymn is Greco-Roman due to Paul's interaction and experiences with the Roman world.

Fee argues that the concept of imitating Christ could be misunderstood by those who argue that it is not possible to imitate Christ. Fee (1992:29) contends that the issue is not imitating Christ in the sense of repeating what He did but is in the sense of being like him in mind. Fee says that for Paul, "*imitatio*" does not say do as I did but says, be as I am. Jesus' self-emptying and self-sacrifice are meant for Philippian believers to espouse proper selflessness and humility in their Christian walk. Fee further contends that Christ is used elsewhere as an example as in Romans 15:1-7; 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 1 Corinthians 10:3-11:1. Fee (1992:29) further argues that imitation of Christ is encouraged in the eschatological sense from v9-11 where eschatological vindication shall take place to those believers who will share in Christ's sufferings in the present life. Just like Christ got elevated after enduring suffering in the body of *ταπεινώσεν*, the enduring believers will also be transformed in the likeness of His glory. Fee, with the concurrence of Wright (1986:352), suggests that the end of the Christ Hymn shows how Jesus demonstrated what it meant to be *τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ* (to be equal to God).

Dunn (1996:114-121) argues that Christ, by becoming a man, assumes the place of Adam in the Christ Hymn. The *μορφῇ θεοῦ* referred to in the hymn is seen as referring to the image or likeness (*εἰκὼν*) of God with which Adam was created as pointed out in Genesis 1-3. Wanamaker (1997:179), developing from Dunn, posits that the Christ Hymn is meant to demonstrate how Christ as the second Adam defeated the forces of evil that had conquered the first Adam. Martin chooses to downplay the ethical role of the hymn, arguing that the hymn is intended to be a soteriological/christological drama on the actions of Christ. Martin (1983:21) contends that the major purpose of the hymn is to urge the Philippian Christians to act according to their standing in Christ. The presence of ethical issues in the hymn is viewed as only an extension of the primary christological/soteriological meaning.

Morgan (1998:56) endorses the ethical interpretation of the text by suggesting that the fifth verse should actually read: "Think this within you or rather, have this attitude which was also in Christ Jesus". Martin (1959:95-96) and Käsemann (1968:45-88) argue that the text does not have an ethical interpretation. They argue that the 'mind of Christ' is referring to a soteriological once off event that is experienced by the believer at salvation point. Their argument is premised

on the view that no human being is able to follow the example of Christ Jesus since humans are only human and are therefore devoid of the divine nature. Morgan (1998:55) sums up Käsemann's soteriological view of the pericope, "The Christ Hymn of Philippians 2:6-11 is not to be understood in ethical terms as providing an example of humility for Christians to imitate but rather, in kerygmatic terms, as a drama of salvation". Kiefer (2016:155) disagrees with the idea that the purpose of Philippians 2:6-11 is ethical, choosing instead to interpret the text through the incarnation lens.

Fee observes that the word $\varphi\rho\nu\nu\epsilon\omega$ appears 26 times in the New Testament, of which 23 appearances are within the Pauline corpus. Paul points people to the perfect example of Christ nine times in Romans, and seven times in Philippians, once in 1 Corinthians, once in 2 Corinthians, once in Galatians and once in Colossians.¹¹ In the debate on Paul's paternity of Colossians, I subscribe to the view that the letter is authentic to Paul, hence, its inclusion here. Hurtado (1984:113-126) and Fee (2007:372) defend the ethical value of the text. Fee (year: page) especially criticises Käsemann and Martin by accusing them of following caricature which is "not the perspective of most who have written on the subject". This researcher observes that despite aspersions against the ethical value of the text by some Euro-American scholars and the acknowledgement by others like Hurtado (1984) and Fee (1992) that the text is ethically rich, there is not much vindication of the pro-ethical interpretation hitherto. Fee (2007:372) views verse 5 as having a paradigmatic role in the pericope. This view holds that verse 5 is a bridge between Paul's ethical exhortations contained in verses 1-4 and verses 6-9. Hammerich (1966:28-29) and Hooker (1975:152-153) point to verbal similarities between verses that precede verse 5 and those antecedent to it, for example, one notices continuity in discourse between verse 3 and verse 6 in the use of $\eta\gamma\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ (regard one another) verse 3 and $\eta\gamma\eta\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$ (did not regard) v6; $\kappa\epsilon\nu\omicron\delta\omicron\zeta\iota\alpha\nu$ (empty conceit) v3 and $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ (he emptied himself) verse 7. Continuity is also noticeable between $\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\varphi\rho\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$ (humility) verse 3 and $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ (he humbled himself) verse 8. Thus, verses 6-9 are an escalation of the moral exhortation in which Paul is encouraging oneness, fellowship, thinking of others, communal love, harmony and unity.

4.3 Philippians 2:6 $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ μορφῇ θεοῦ (ENGLISH: form of God) (SHONA: kufanana naMwari)

According to O'Brien (1991:206), the exegesis of this phrase $\mu\omicron\rho\varphi\eta$ θεοῦ in 2:6 influences the interpretation of the entire pericope. Apart from standing at the beginning of the hymn, this phrase is also the first of the several sequential statements regarding Jesus' status. Grappling

¹¹ In the Pauline corpus the idea that followers of Christ should set their minds on following the example of Christ $\varphi\rho\nu\nu\epsilon\omega$ finds references in Romans 8:5; 11:20; 12:3a,3b, 16a,16b; 14:6, 15:5; 1 Corinthians 13:11, 2Corinthians 13:11, Galatians 5:10, Philippians 1:7; 2:2,5;3:15, 19;4:2,10, Colossians 3:2. Elsewhere, the idea appears in Acts 28:22, Matthew 16:23 and in Mark 8:33. (BGM Morphology and Gingrich).

with this phrase entails dealing with numerous complicated questions precipitated by the hymn. The questions that arise include:

- What is the meaning of the preposition ἐν used in the phrase, 'in the form of God?' (Hansen, 2009:134).
- What is the conceptual background to the phrase?
- What is the lexical range of the noun, μορφή?
- How should the meaning of 'in the form of God' be interpreted in terms of the parallel phrase 'form of a slave' in verse 7?
- How does the phrase 'in the form of God' relate to the expression 'equal with God'?

Bockmuehl (1997:1) suggests that 'form of God' is parallel to the notion of 'equality with God'. He defines μορφή as referring to the visual characteristics of a person or object. 'Form of God' is interpreted as referring to Christ's pre-existence and visible divine characteristics. Craddock (1985:43) agrees with Bockmuehl on the point that 'form of God' relates to the pre-existent state of Christ and adds that the phrase marks the first stage in the three movements in the hymn, namely pre-existence, existence and post-existence. Fee argues that 'form of God' means that it is the pre-existent Christ who emptied Himself in verse 7. He says that Paul used the term μορφή to characterise the reality of Christ's divinity (his being God) and the metaphor of His humanity (taking on the role of a slave). Hansen (2009:134) argues that the phrase 'in the form of God' describes 'the sphere of location' of Christ's 'preincarnate existence'. Hansen's view captures Thayer's Lexicon (1889:418) idea that μορφή is used in the sense that Christ Jesus used to have another form in which he appeared to the inhabitants of heaven, that that heavenly form can now be distinguished from the μορφὴν δούλου which he assumed at incarnation. The μορφή θεοῦ is therefore the form that resembled that of his father just like children normally look like their father. Thus in the physical sense of μορφή, Jesus looked like his father in appearance. Thayer goes on to explain that Jesus did not cling to that heavenly appearance but emptied himself of it so as to assume the form of a servant in that he became a man.

Hellerman argues that Paul uses the phrase μορφή θεοῦ not to describe Christ's ontological reality but as a marker of power and social status. Hellerman's sense resonates with Vine's Expository Dictionary (1985:251) view that μορφή (Strong 3444) suggests the special or characteristic form or feature only ascribable to Christ in the New Testament. Vine's Expository Dictionary further states that μορφή is not just an abstract attribute but the nature or essence of Christ which is permanent and eternal. In that regard, μορφή θεοῦ is the divine nature actually

and inseparably subsisting in the person of Christ. Vine argues that the form of God relates to the whole nature and essence of deity which is undetachable and inseparable from the divinity thereof. There is thus nothing accidental or attached by coincidence as it constitutes the very personhood of the deity. This view means that Christ was eternally in that form which is distinguishable from the servant and man forms. Hellerman further argues that Paul uses the hymn in Philippians for ecclesiological, not for Christological purposes. Runge (2011:28) says Philippians 2:6 declares that Jesus is fully God and possesses all the rights and privileges of divinity. Runge adds that Paul uses Christ as a model because He did not use His power or rights for His own benefit. Another view says that before Christ became a Man (incarnation), He shared with God the divine essence without actually being identified with it. This view suggests that although Christ possessed divine attributes prior to incarnation, He never occupied the same rank with God. He was not God even though He shared in divine essence with God.

Fee (2007:376) and Brown (2013:2) state that the phrase *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* /in the form of God (verse 6), is precipitous of multiple questions that demand multiple answers. The word *ὑπάρχων* which precedes *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* suggests that Jesus has a continual eternal being in the true nature of God and that He is subsisting in that nature of God. Robinson (1973:208) argues that Jesus was never in the "form of God" in the sense of pre-existence as God. If He was not, in the words of John 1:2 *οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν* (this one was in the beginning with God), then the kenotic aspect in the text falls through. The premise of such an argument is that the historical Jesus was a mortal on whom divine powers were conferred by God. Martin (1967:63) argues that *ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ* (in the form of God) is refers to the historical Jesus in the course of his earthly life up to the time when he had to choose between his own exaltation or to obey the Father's will and that the context of the text does not support the earthly pre-existence of Jesus.

Strimple (1979:256) observes that scholars like Martin, Robinson and Käsemann risk orthodox Christology by their refusal to recognise the presence of any reference to supernatural categories such as pre-existence and the incarnation of deity. In this thesis, it is acknowledged that non-appreciation of supernatural elements of the pericope is a recognised feature in "western" scholarship but one rejected from an Afrocentric perspective, specifically within Shona reception of the Bible and subsequent Shona cosmology. Gibbs (1971:85) contends that there is very little inclination in contemporary exegesis of Philippians 2:5-11 to seek support for the kenotic interpretation of the text. This thesis redresses that deficiency of support for the self-emptying element in the pericope. The denial by western scholars of "incarnation of deity" and "kenosis" is probably due to a lack of appreciation of supernatural phenomena and this gap is to be redressed by this thesis through an Afro-optic analysis of the concepts of incarnation and kenosis.

Harvey (1965:337-338) contended that the belief in two natures of Christ as the God-Man is "an embarrassment" to contemporary theologians. He suggests that verse 6 of the pericope is saying that Jesus, like Adam, was a man, made in the image of God and thus the divine nature was his from the first. Harvey further argues that Jesus did not seek equality with God, choosing to give up all concern for himself and aiming for the glory that comes with a life lived fully for God by dying on the Cross. In essence, Harvey is stating that Jesus was a man whom God endowed with His own nature. Jesus then decided not to take advantage of the divine attributes for his own advantage but craved for the honour that comes with separating one's life entirely for God to the point of dying on the Cross. Such an interpretation subtly denies the pre-existence and deity of Jesus. It also removes the aspect of ὑπήκοος (obedience to God). The view also connotes that Jesus died on the Cross in order to snatch the honours of dying on the Cross. The interpretation does not view the death of Jesus on the cross as a salvific act of redemption.

Bakken (1968:76) supports the view that Christ was not God by arguing that verse 6 confirms that Jesus was a creature, that he emptied himself of the aspiration to be God and thus became a man whom God intended; and to him and through him, man is given dominion. Bakken's interpretation simply reduces Christ to a super man who divested himself of an opportunity to be God in order to earn futuristic dominion. Similarly, Dunn (1989:310-311) contends that μορφῆ θεοῦ refers to Jesus as the second Adam, a man upon whom a form of God was imputed at that time when he did not consider (οὐχ ἡγήσατο) taking advantage of the μορφῆ θεοῦ. The argument by Dunn is that prior to that moment when Jesus chose not to take advantage of the form of God, he was not equal to God. Dunn (1989:115) further argues that when Christ chose to assume μορφῆν δούλου (the form of a servant) he was taking the place of Adam when he became a slave to sin.

There are scholars who argue for the pre-existence of Christ and thus support the kenosis theory of the pericope. Fee (2007:376) argues that the use of ὑπάρχων (being) in verse 6 presupposes that Jesus was in the form of God and that he took on the lower statuses of servant and man in a process called condescension. Fee contends that it is the pre-existent Christ who emptied Himself and that the human form in which Christ appeared was metaphorical. Bockmuehl (1997:127) suggests that "form of God" is parallel to the notion of "equality with God". Bockmuehl defines μορφῆ as referring to Christ's visual characteristics, that Christ had God's visible divine characteristics. The divine characteristics were on Jesus from the beginning. Craddock (1985:47) argues that μορφῆ refers to one of three movements of Christ in the text, namely, pre-existence, existence and post-existence. Runge (2011:27-33) argues that Philippians 2:6 is a statement of the full divinity of Christ. He further argues that

Paul's intention in verse 6 is to present Christ as the model of humility because He did not use his power or rights for his own advantage.

Macknight (1841:360) argues that Christ shared a semblance with God the Father in terms of outward appearance. Behm (1967:744) stresses that the most appropriate terms that could have been used in place of μορφῆ (form) are εἶδος (appearance) and ὁμοίωμα (fashion). The outward appearance or form that Jesus shared with God, the Father was the glory or δόξα. Dunn (1980:107) argues that Christ bears the image of God as the Second Adam. Dunn (1998:204) further attests that Christ is in fact, the image or εἰκὼν of God. Behm (1967:751) argues that Paul also had graphic images of the glorious light of Christ which He saw on the occasion of his conversion on the road to Damascus. Dunn (1998:209) maintains that the first Adam of Genesis had the image of God or *imago Dei* and just as the second Adam in the person of Jesus Christ also possessed the glory of God which Paul had physically beheld. Thus, the δόξα (glory) exists in the physical outward sphere.

To conclude this section, the following observations are noteworthy:

- The preposition ἐν used in verse 5 raises theological questions relating to the pre-existence of Christ. It is debatable whether Christ was prior to incarnation in the same form with God or rather, that He attained the sameness with God at the point of incarnation.
- Adamic Christology is introduced as a panacea to the riddle of Christ's dual nature just as it, by extension, also acknowledges the eternal existence of Christ as the Son of Man.
- The self-emptying of Christ is inbuilt in the ἐν μορφῆ θεοῦ because the condescension of Christ to the levels of men and that of a servant denotes a descent from a former state of grandeur, hence, pre-existence.
- This section is an important precursor to the discussion of the subject of pre-existent and post death exaltation of Christ from a Shona cultural perspective.

4.4 Philippians 2:8 θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (ENGLISH: death, even death of the cross) (SHONA: parufu, irwo rufu rwemuchinjikwa)

Parts of Philippians 2:5-11 which deal with supernatural categories such as pre-existence and the incarnation of deity still need further uncasing from other cultural perspectives (Strimple, 1979:256). The questions of one who is equal with God (ἴσα θεῷ) dying in gross humiliation, the cursed death (θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ) on the Cross (Galatians 3:13), His self-emptying (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), obedience unto death (ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου) and post resurrection exaltation

(ὑπερύψωσεν) as well as reference to things in heaven (ἐπουρανίων), and things in earth (ἐπιγείων) and things under the earth (καταχθονίων) have narrow interpretation in Western cultural cosmologies. Thayer's Greek Lexicon (1889:338) says καταχθονίων refers to those who dwell in the world below, that is, the departed souls. Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (2000:530) says the term refers to beings or powers under the earth or in the subterranean. There is not sufficient research on these beings or powers in the subterranean due to the castigation of beliefs in the underworld as base, cultic and primitive (Gill, 1982:125-127; Thorpe, 1992:111-117; McCall, 1995:256; Johnson, 2003:327-346). In this research I will attempt to enhance the understanding of this phenomenon of beings that belong to the underworld from a Shona ancestral perspective.

Marshall (1968:104-127) dissociated God from the process of Jesus' humiliation and death on the Cross by suggesting that Jesus did not die in obedience to God but in obedience to forces of evil. Questions are asked among western scholars such as, how can one equal to God who went as far as death on the Cross truly be a model for modesty and humility? How can self-deprecation and crucifixion be linked together as normally, the self-humbling would not be crucified? How can one who took himself down to the lowest death truly become an example of humility? These questions which have boggled the minds of western scholars can be unravelled through application of Shona spiritual teleology.

4.5 Philippians 2:6 οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ (ENGLISH: thought it not robbery to be equal with God) (SHONA: haana kuti kuenzana namwari chinhu chinofanira kubatitswa)

This strand of interpretation argues that Christ is of the same nature with God, that he was in His own right and independence, God with lordship over the world. In spite of such grandeur, Jesus did not raise Himself in proud arrogance and independence. The sameness with God was, to Jesus, something not to be held on to or used for personal gain or advantage. The term ἄρπαγμὸν translated 'not to be grasped' or 'not to be exploited' carries two possible directions of meaning. The first direction of meaning, called *res rapienda* (Martin, 1987:152) is use of the term in an active sense where it carries triple meaning:

- To steal something by force (robbery).
- To snatch at (spoil).
- To take something wrongfully (plunder)

The second direction of meaning, called *res rapt* (Martin,1987:152) is use of the term in a passive sense where it carries a double meaning:

- A thing to be retained (treasure).
- A thing to be exploited (advantage).
- An object of eager desire (prize).

The two interpretational directions therefore speak to Jesus' attitude towards His being (ἡγήσατο) God's equal. Despite His ability or capacity to use force, power or authority of divine office to defend Himself from the torture of His enemies and eventual death by crucifixion, Jesus did not use His divine attributes or equality with God for personal gain or advantage. In a selfish, individualistic and narcissistic sense, Jesus would have regarded His equality with God either as something to be grasped at every cost or as something to be exploited or used for personal advantage, that is, ἀρπαγμὸν. New Testament scholars generally agree that verse 6 of Philippians 2 endorses Jesus' equality with God the Father (Fowl, 2005:94). Even those who question the nature of that equality agree that the equality (ἴσα θεῷ) was there. What needs unravelling is but the nature of the equality. Jesus' equality with God meant that He could use his divine powers to His personal advantage. In this section of the thesis, a summary of views of scholars on the meaning of the phrase οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν (not robbery or not to His own advantage) shall be explored, followed by an inculturated interpretation of the concept in terms of Shona expectations of selflessness and benevolence in leadership.

Hoover (1971:95-119) and Wright (1986:321-352) agree that the term ἀρπαγμὸν is an abstract noun which emphasises the idea of "grasping" or "seizing". In that sense, the term refers to the act of Jesus not considering His equality with God to consist of grasping or being selfish. Jesus did not take advantage of His equality with God to grab or plunder. He did not assume a despotic fever like a megalomaniac to muscle it out on those under Him. Jesus was in the form of God (μορφῇ θεοῦ) in terms of likeness and sameness. That position of being equal with God meant Christ Jesus had omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. He had all the essential attributes of God. Paul says despite having all that power as a divine being, Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal to God. The word robbery derives from the word 'robber'(λέσστής) which describes a person who uses coercion, force or violence to take what does not belong to him. If Paul had used the word 'robbery' in the sense of ρπαγμὸν, the sense created would have been that Jesus did not use violence to hold onto His equality with God. Instead of using λέσστής, Paul uses ἀρπαγμὸν a derivative of the verb ἀρπαγή which means 'to ravish away', 'to carry off', or 'to plunder'. The suffix ὄς then gives the word 'robbery' an active sense of meaning, thus creating a

gerund that describes 'an act of plundering'. According to Wright (1986:321-352), the *πραγμὸν* use of *ἀρπαγμὸς* would render the meaning of the verse as saying, "who thought that being on an equality with God did not consist in plundering". Thayer's Greek Lexicon (1889) interprets the idea of *ἀρπαγμὸν* as connoting the spirit of seizing things and being booty. Such a sense of a leadership which does not exploit power for self-aggrandisement or benefit is the interpretation that we adopt in this thesis. In Christ, there was no spirit or attitude of using his equality to God (ἴσα θεῷ) as an opportunity to plunder resources for His own selfish ends. As noted above, the idea that 'Christ thought it not robbery to be equal to God' renders to possible directions of meaning. *ἀρπαγμὸν* can be interpreted either in an active sense (*res rapienda*) or in a passive sense (*res rapta*).

The sense of meaning portrayed in Philippians 2:6 is that Jesus did not acquire His equality with God by *res rapienda* tactics. He did not employ force or violence associated with a robber (*λέσστής*). Having been given such a high official and divine loftiness (*ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι*), Jesus did not abuse the power at His disposal and demonstrated astounding humility in that:

- He did not use the power to snatch, spoil or plunder for His own good or personal benefit.
- He did not exploit or take advantage of His position to pursue personal interests or to take vengeance against His opponents.
- He did not view the lofty position as a prize or object of eager desire.
- He also did not see His lofty position as something to be clung to or grasped.

4.6 Philippians 2:7 ἐκένωσεν (ENGLISH: he emptied himself) (SHONA: akazvinipisa)

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon (1889:344) states that *ἐκένωσεν* denotes Jesus' act of laying aside equality with or the form of God. Thayer goes on to suggest that the term also means to make void, to deprive of force and effect, to render useless, to cause to be hollow or empty in significance. Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon (2000:539) says the term *ἐκένωσεν* carries the sense of making empty or desertion by an earthly spirit. It also connotes divestiture of position or prestige in the sense of which Christ gave up the appearance of his divinity and took on the form of a slave. *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* would thus mean that Jesus emptied or divested himself of his prestige or privileges.

The *ἐκένωσεν* or self-emptying of Christ refers to the act of Jesus emptying Himself of His divinity. In this sense, Christ, who ones enjoyed sameness with God (ἴσα θεῷ) in the pre-existent state, willingly divests himself of His deity attributes, thus losing the privileges that accompany deity. Concomitant with the loss of the deity privileges is His adoption of the human appearance

(ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων) and the form of a servant (μορφήν δούλου). Kent (1978:149), Utley (1997:192) and Ellsworth (2004:35) assert that Jesus' kenosis consisted in him laying aside his majesty, taking on the form of a man, being obedient unto death and leaving his heavenly glory for a manger. Kent (1978:153) further states that as Jesus emptied himself, he chose to humble himself, to become like a man and add on manhood, and took the form of a servant. Verse 7 of the hymn describes the kenosis as "taking the form of a servant". Jowers (2006:766) states that when Jesus assumed the form of a servant, he clarified the relationship between him and the Father. This reading of the hymn began to wane in the late 60s due to the decline in the human nature of Jesus as emphasis was placed on his divinity. The result was a new type of kenoticism which holds that God has a propensity or capacity to empty Himself willy-nilly. Macquarrie (1966:199), Harvey (1965:337), Fisk (2006:45-73) and Gorman (2007:147-169) contend that self-emptying is a fundamental character of the divine.

I have noticed that Verse 7a and 7b constitute the kenotic view of the pericope which traditionally holds that when Christ condescended to the level of mankind, He divested Himself both of the μορφή (form) of God and the worship that was due to Him as God. Jesus was content to relinquish and forego the glamour and glories of being equal to God. This line of interpretation views the incarnation of Christ, His assumption of the rank of disgraced and frail humanity, His election of shame for honour as "self-emptying". Jesus did not just temporarily borrow or enter a foreign domain when He became a man, ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, thus, emptied Himself of the μορφή θεοῦ which He used to have prior to the incarnation which He now exchanged for μορφήν δούλου, or form of a servant. Another perspective, however, holds that He did not empty Himself in the sense of becoming hollow but rather, He remained full although He appeared as if He was empty. It is held that Jesus only veiled His fullness, at least from the sight of men. This latter view, which is held by most Euro-American scholarship, argues that κενόω as used in verse 7 of the hymn means that by taking on the form of a man, Christ made Himself as nothing although he retained His divine fullness. δούλους is understood to have been used as a synonym of His humanity, thus, in a metaphorical as opposed to metaphysical sense.

Strimple (1979:266) points out that the sense of ἐκένωσεν derives from Isaiah 53:12 where the suffering servant would be made naked, would be poured out or emptied. Strimple argues further that the Septuagint uses the verb ἐκκένωω four times in Genesis 24:20, 2 Chronicles 24:11 and twice in Psalm 136 to mean the sense of emptying. Thornton (1952:94) contends that only ἐκκένωω has the double sense of voluntary self-giving to the utmost limit and the idea of shameful humiliation. Scholars who adopt the suffering servant idea of Isaiah 53 argue that it is glaringly obvious that Paul uses the sense of voluntary humiliation and exaltation motif in Philippians 2:5-11. Furness (1967:178) argues that the Philippians 2 text does not veil its reference to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 as it even closes with a direct quotation of Isaiah

45:23. Moessner (2009:133) argues that the use of ἐκένωσεν by Paul relates to two possible meanings in which the verb ἐκκένωω either means "to empty" whether literally or metaphorically, that is in the sense of depleting or divesting or "to deprive of" in the sense of negating, making ineffective or destroying. Tan (2017:67) agrees with Moessner that the verb ἐκκένωω can be taken in a literal or figurative sense. In the literal sense, the verb means "to empty or make empty" while in the metaphorical sense it means "to void or render of no effect" (Tan, 2017:67). Hawthorne and Martin (2004:117) argue that the verb can also mean "to pour out", implying that Christ laid down His life for others as depicted in Mark 10:45, John 15:13 and 1 John 3:16. Hooker (1975:152) argues that the process of Christ emptying Himself entailed rendering Himself weak and defenceless, experiencing humiliation through incarnation and crucifixion willingly. The traditional sense that Christ emptied Himself of the essential attributes of God is rejected. The main view held is that Christ only made Himself as nothing by becoming a man but He retained His equality with God. Christ's servanthood is viewed as synonymous with His humanity. A Jewish understanding is attached to verses 7(a) and 7(b) where the idea of the suffering righteous man is drawn from Isaiah 53. Jesus is viewed as the obedient Adam and last Adam who replaces the disobedient first Adam.

Silva (1992:105) contends that by making Himself nothing, Christ actually went through a descent from highest glory to lowest depths. Martin (1983:195) refutes the traditional kenotic view, arguing that Christ did not empty Himself of the form of God (μορφῇ θεοῦ) but only made Himself "as nothing" by becoming a man. Martin's view therefore is that Christ did not divest Himself of divine attributes. Martin also argues that the servanthood ascribed to Christ in μορφῇν δούλου is synonymous with His becoming a man (ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). Fee (1995:195-196) explains the process by which Christ emptied Himself. Fee states that in the first instance, Christ existed as God as depicted in the phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων (being in the form of God). Secondly, Christ translated Himself into the fashion of a man (σχήματι εὔρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος). Fee says phrases which specify what Christ did are ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (He emptied Himself) and ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν (He humbled Himself). Thirdly, Paul introduces a modal participle μορφῇν δούλου λαβὼν (took upon Him the form of a servant) and participial phrases ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος (was made in the likeness of men) and γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου (became obedient unto death) to describe how Christ emptied Himself. Fourthly, the extent of the humiliation is described by the noun phrase θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (even death of the Cross).

Käsemann (1968:67) contends that Christ's kenosis arises from His incarnation. He argues that when Jesus became man, He fell victim of evil forces of the universe like any other mortal. Käsemann thus likens humanity to slavery. He interprets μορφῇν δούλου λαβὼν as referring to the

humanity of Christ. On the contrary, Tan (2017:83) refutes Käsemann's point of view on the basis that δούλου and ἄνθρωπος do not mean the same thing.

The views expressed by Fee, Martin and Moessner rebut that of Käsemann who argues that when Christ descended to the realm of a man, He became subject to the limitations of all humanity and was therefore weak enough to be enslaved by forces of evil. Käsemann's point was that Christ was not obedient to God by dying on the Cross, that it was not God's will for Him to die on the Cross but a fact of His defeat by forces of evil.

The first direction of interpretation resonates with the kenotic theology of the 19th Century which posited that Jesus divested Himself of those attributes which made Him equal with God (τὰ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ), those qualities equal to what God had (τὰ ἴσα). Such an interpretation denotes that Jesus became lesser than God when He emptied Himself (ἐκένωσεν). Some of the qualities or attributes of equality which Jesus shared with God were no longer in Him, according to Philippians 2:7. Thus Jesus' state of "being" (ὡς... ὑπάρχων) underwent significant change to leave Him unequal with God. It is notable that the diminution of Jesus' status in verse 7 is varied in verses 9-11 where His status ontologically changes as God highly exalts Him (διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν). Moessner (2009:134) states, "This deliberate act (ἡγήσατο, 2:6) of self-abnegation in reducing one's ontological status is then to be emulated by the Philippians whose 'obedience' must continue on all the way like Christ Jesus (ὑπήκοος, 2:8-πάντοτε ὑπήκουσατε... κάτεργάζεσθε, 2:12)". The Philippians, according to Moessner's interpretation, will be rewarded with exoneration and elevation to a heavenly status just like Jesus if they emulate and imitate His self-emptying. In the end, the Philippians, like Jesus, would have transformed and glorified bodies like His.

Moessner (2009:135) further contends that ἐκένωσεν might mean "negates" or "denies", considering that the conferment of a higher status on a person in the Roman Empire was by others. Jesus, by emptying Himself of His equality with God, deprived Himself of any genuine status recognition by others in a Roman society "thoroughly steeped in this mindset of human worth" (Moessner, 2009:ibid). The general sense of the latter meaning of ἐκένωσεν is hinged on the surmise that the Roman society might have wanted to confer a high status on Jesus in the same way they venerated the emperor cult. As a point of departure from the Romans' obsession with status, honour and achievement, Jesus chose an "upside down" stance, a topsy-turvy to the *cursus honorum* culture in the Roman Empire.

Summary of key views on ἐκένωσεν

New Testament studies remains indebted to Euro-American scholars for the meticulous manner in which they have interrogated the subject of kenosis. By way of summary, the following are the main findings of Euro-American scholars on the self-emptying of Jesus:

- From an ethical interpretation perspective, Jesus' condescension sets an example of humility, self -sacrifice and selflessness for believers to imitate.
- Jesus voluntarily chose self-abnegation from a higher status of being equal with God to becoming as a man.
- From a kerygmatic and soteriological perspective, those that are in Christ should espouse a way of life befitting that salvific experience.
- The kerygmatic view argues that it is naive to think that mortals can imitate what the God-Man did.
- A few Euro-American scholars subscribe to the notion that Jesus' death on the Cross was not obedience to God but subjugation by forces of evil.

4.7 Philippians 2:7, 8. ἐκένωσεν, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτον, μορφην δούλου λαβών (ENGLISH: self-emptying, form of servant in terms of leadership philosophy) (SHONA: kuzvidurura, kuita muranda: segwara reutungamiriri muchiShona)

Roof (2013:2) argues that the Christ hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 ought to be considered as a sacred leadership example with instruction for the disciples, early church leaders and contemporary Christian leaders. These scholars contend that the Christ hymn advocates for a leadership model that is "contrary to the ambition driven, narcissistic model that the world has traditionally promoted". Kent (1978) and Grieb (2007) suggest that the key message of the Christ Hymn to Christian leaders is "humility and selflessness". Carson and Moo (2005:501), Allen (2007:61), Jowers (2006:49) and Ellsworth (2004:36) argue that the humility of Christ which is visible in His regard of equality with God as something not to be exploited as well as in His unprecedented self-emptying is a great lesson that had to be followed by the "original listeners due to their status conscious culture". Walumbwa *et al* (2008:89) used the humility paradigm in the Christ hymn as a basis for the development of contemporary leadership theories. Greenleaf (2010:87) also developed a theory of servant leadership from the hymn. Follower-focused leadership theories approach leadership in a manner where the lesson of humility from the Christ Hymn is highlighted. The hymn is very useful in transformational leadership, especially in communities where humility, reduction of power-distance and the

minimisation of the traditional hierarchical approach to leadership are contrary to social norms. Roof (2013:7) points out that the humility and altruism of Christ as described in the Christ Hymn in Philippians depicts the level of moral awareness and development that is critical for the authentic leadership model. Walumbwa *et al* (2008:89) posit that all positive contemporary leadership theories will draw important lessons for leaders from the Christ Hymn.

Walumbwa *et al* (2008:90) identify characteristics of authentic leadership which are reflected in the Christ Hymn as follows:

A pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to include the following attributes:

- A greater self-awareness
- An internalised moral perspective
- Balanced processing of information
- Relational transparency
- Humility, authenticity and altruism.

Greenleaf (2010:87) points out that the contemporary theory of leadership most exemplified in the Christ Hymn is servant leadership. Greenleaf points out that the key principle in servant leadership which was demonstrated by the Christ Hymn is that "a great leader is seen as a servant first". Yukl (2010:420) lists seven key values of a servant leader which are reflected in the Christ Hymn as follows:

- Humility
- Treating others with respect
- Helping others
- Making sacrifices for others' well being
- Placing others' needs ahead of one's own
- Altruism
- Authenticity

DeSilva (2004) points out that Philippians 2:5-11 does not only proclaim Christ's divinity, but also deposits an all-important instruction on humility for the Philippian Church, disciples, church leaders throughout history, and contemporary Christian leaders of today. Bloomquist (1993:220) says that a key message in Philippians 2:5-11 is that just as Jesus was exalted due to his submission, humility and suffering, so should leaders view difficulties and status differently. Bloomquist further encourages leaders in the model of Jesus to take the form of slaves before mankind, be willing to suffer and mimic Christ's humility.

Carson and Moo (2005:501) state that in Philippians 2:6, although Christ was equal with God, He chose to be subservient to the Father's will, demonstrating that leaders should espouse an ethos of accountability in addition to responsibility. Roof (2013:2) and Easley (2018:3) contend that the pericope presents a vital source for studying and understanding leadership through the model of Christ. The kenotic and servant forms of leadership that emanate from Christ's self-emptying (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), taking on the form of a servant (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών) and self-humbling (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν) proffer unique ways of leading be it in the Church or in the secular sphere.

4.8 Philippians 2:7 ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος / σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (ENGLISH: in likeness/fashion as men/man) (SHONA. kuwanikwa akafanana nevanhu, akaita semunhu)

The phrases ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος (being made in the likeness of men) and σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (being found in fashion or appearance as a man) are an endorsement of the historical Jesus at the beginning of His earthly life, having existed before as a divinity (Marshall, 1968:116; Sanders, 1971:66; Hamerton-Kelly, 1973:168). Kummel (1973:153) states that Jesus was in essence like God but chose to surrender His likeness to God as a sign of obedience to God. Jesus assumed the human form of existence thereby subjecting Himself to the powers of the world. Kummel (1973:153) further notes that Jesus' obedience to the Father's will made Him descend further to dying the shameful death on the Cross.

ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος means Jesus humbled himself having become a man. The view holds that Christ underwent wilful humiliation by becoming a man and suffering death on the Cross. Divergent views of scholars such as Talbert (1967:148), Martin (1967:36), Sanders (1969:281) and Hamerton-Kelly (1973:157) display a lack of consensus on the use of ὁμοίωμα in verse 7c as to whether it means that Jesus took on the form or likeness of a man fully or rather, had always existed in the form of man as depicted in the creation story in Genesis 2. Hamerton-Kelly (1973:153) argues that the reference to ἄνθρωπος is read as consistent with the LXX υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, son of man of Daniel 7:13, a rendering which agrees with

the Hellenistic scope of the son of man who is a suffering servant. Martin (1997:75) contends that the death of Christ was not an act of obedience to God but was a form of slavery to death. Käsemann (1950:331) posits that Christ was not obedient to His Father in dying on the cross but was subjected to spiritual forces which He only overcame after God eventually exalted Him.

The word *γενόμενος* (was made) comes from *γενόμαι* which means to become. It means that Jesus assumed a new form when he became a man. He had always existed in the form of God (*ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ*). *ὁμοιώματι* (likeness) is from *ὁμοίωμα* which means a form or resemblance. In addition to referring to Jesus being made in the visible likeness of men, it also captures the sense of Jesus actually having the human likeness of men. It means that when Jesus entered the realm of human history, He was in the actual form of a man and was a man in every respect. Galatians 4:4-5 and Hebrew 4:15 explain that Jesus Christ became a man so that He might understand the real situation and circumstances of mankind, that is, their sins, infirmities and depravity. As we have noted above, Jesus' becoming like men (*ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος*) his being found in fashion as a man (*σχήματι εὔρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος*) presents an important leadership lesson in modern governance. In becoming like a man, Jesus demonstrates that leaders can climb down to the level of their followers in order to remove gaps and schisms between the leader and the led. When the leader walks in the shoes of those that He leads, collective bargaining processes become irrelevant because leaders will meet the needs of followers without being asked as he or she already knows their needs. As Paul says in Romans 6:8, Christ died for all believers, even before they repented.

4.9 Philippians 2:8, 9. *γενόμενος ὑπήκοος, αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν* (ENGLISH: exaltation for obedience) (SHONA: kusimudzirwa kunobva pakuterera)

This line of interpretation explores whether God exalted Christ as a reward for the latter's obedience or simply an act of God's grace. Another important point of investigation at which Euro-American scholarship stumbles is whether Christ's exaltation is an apotheosis i.e. the glorification of a subject to divine level. Euro-American scholarship has maintained that Christ did not empty Himself of His deity attributes. If that be the case, why then would Christ be elevated to a *κύριος* level? If Christ was obedient to the forces of evil and death, it is also an enigma that God would reward Him for submitting to the world of darkness. The scholars argue that Christ's exaltation was an act of divine grace as God would not be arm twisted by the humiliation of Christ. The argument is that penitence does not force the hand of God. Euro-American scholarship is also undecided as it is divided on the question of the name given to the exalted Christ. Some argue that the suggested name of *κύριος* suggests deity sovereignty. The question is why would deity sovereignty be conferred on one who was in the image of God before His incarnation?

The prefix ὑπερ is employed in a superlative sense to suggest that Jesus takes the highest station above all other powers. His lordship towers above both the terrestrial and the celestial. He is Lord of both the church and the universe. It is argued that Jesus enthroned in a scene in which the proclamation of His name causes all creatures to admit that He is the rightful κύριος (Lord) of the universe. Powers that are hostile to Jesus succumb to defeat by Him and surrender. Käsemann (1950: 313) argues that the exaltation of Christ must be an eschatological event which will be consummated probably at the second advent of Christ.

Marshall (1968:106) points out eight key threads of interpretation of the text which have reigned in Eurocentric scholarship since the nineteenth century. These can be summarised as follows:

- The Lutheran Dogmatic view

This view holds that the hymn does not point to the pre-existence of Christ but to the incarnate, earthly Christ. This view rejects the kenosis theory of the hymn.

- The Christological Theory of Kenosis

This view holds that Christ divested Himself of His divine attributes of omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence and revealed His divine person solely through a human consciousness.

- Anti-ethical view

This view holds that the Christ Hymn is never intended to posture Christ as a model to be imitated by His followers. Marshall (1968:107) argues that neither in its present context in Philippians nor in its original, was pre-Pauline setting the hymn meant to set an ethical example before Christ's followers. This view, according to Marshall (1968:107) is premised on Käsemann's argument that throughout his corpus, Paul rarely uses the example of Christ to enforce an exhortation.

- The Cosmic, Soteriological Drama view

This view seeks to interpret the hymn in terms of Jewish Mythological Son of Man of Daniel 7:13 and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:1-12.

- The Gnostic view

This view holds that Jesus is a heavenly being whose feat of obedience cannot be imitated by mortals of planet earth. This view suggests that Christ only came in the likeness of an earthly man but that likeness was not sameness of nature. The view strongly rejects any ethical and dogmatic interpretation of the pericope.

- The Biblical view

This view holds that all trajectories of interpretation that fall outside Scripture should be eschewed in the process of interpreting the Philippians 2:5-11. Cullmann (1963:203) and Geiselmann (1965:140) emphasised the need to avoid extra-biblical sources in the study of the passage.

- The Hellenistic view

This view stresses on the need to understand the meaning of the text within the context of Paul's interaction with Diaspora cultures as well as within the context of his Gentile missionary work. This approach emphasises on the Greco-Roman worldview.

- Eucharist versus Baptism view

This view holds that if the text is to be read from the primitive Christianity setting, then it has to be understood from a baptism angle and not from a Eucharist one. It is held that in baptism, the believers are conformed to the image of their Lord as depicted in the passage.

4.10 Summary of salient views from the Euro-American perspective

From the literature on Philippians 2:5-11 cited above, it is noticeable that Euro-American scholarship has extensively dealt with the pericope from the angles of the world behind as well as the world inside the text. Issues to do with the text that have received great attention include the authorship, origin, structure, purpose and hymnic nature of the pericope, albeit, as Fewster (2015:203) argues, “without satisfactory conclusions”. In their interpretation of the pericope, Euro-American scholars were mostly guided by pre-Pauline early Christological background. Those aspects of the text which they could not trace to the original structure of this ancient pericope in terms of form and etymology, they rejected. Lohmeyer excised the phrase *θανάτου*, *θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ* at the end of verse 8. Jeremias (1953:152-154) also removed *ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων* at the end of verse 10 and *εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ* at the end of verse 11. Talbert (1967:143) suggests that Lohmeyer and Jeremias excised the above cited aspects of the pericope on the grounds that they were Pauline additions to an earlier hymn. Talbert (1967:147) also excised *θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ* while Martin (1983:36-37) removed from the text what

Lohmeyer had rejected as unoriginal elements of the text. The Euro-American scholarship has also relegated the function and theology of the pericope to the early first century Philippian church (Hurtado, 1984:124). Whereas scholars like Hurtado (1984:125), Eastman (2008:429-430) and only to a limited compromising extent, Martin (1987:287-289) agree that the text has an ethical value, maintaining that any such mimetic function of the text was not intended for any other communities other than the Philippian Christian community. The position in Martin (1983:21) in apparent agreement with Käsemann (1968) is that the text serves a kerygmatic or soteriological purpose.

Euro-American scholarship has discussed extensively the text's implied pre-existence of Jesus Christ on one hand, as well as His kenosis or self-emptying on the other. The pre-existence and kenotic theological aspects of the text are also hinged on the question of the form of God which is ascribed to Christ in the text. There is no consensus among the scholars as to whether Christ was really equal with God prior to His taking on the form of a man. There are speculative aspersions around the nature and scope of the self-emptying of Christ with some contending that if Jesus divested Himself of some divine attributes, it follows that prior to His birth, he was equipped with those attributes. Such a view thus answers the pre-existence question. Scholars in this fold also find it quite enigmatic that Jesus could adopt human appearance (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων) and the form of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου). Harvey (1965:337-338) describes the self-emptying of God as a strange assertion. Talbert (1967:153) emphasised on an interpretational trajectory that eschewed the pre-existence issue, choosing rather to focus on the earthly life and servitude of Christ. Talbert (1967:153) argues that Philippians 2:6-11 is only concerned with Jesus' ministry and life on earth and not about pre-existential matters.

Some Euro-American scholars find paradoxical Christ's becoming a servant (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών) against conferment upon Him of the Lord (κύριος) title. Gundry (1994:276) finds the shame and honour dichotomy in the servant to Lord Transformation of Christ strikingly contrary to the cultural context of Roman Philippi. Wortham (1996:274) interprets the servant versus Lord Titles of Christ as suggesting a topsy-turvy to the social order in the Roman Empire in which the ultimate goal of every citizen would be to rise in status and remain in that esteemed position both for honour and concomitant benefits. The exaltation of Christ (ὑπερύψωσεν) above things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth (ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων) after He died a shameful death like a sinner on the Cross becomes too sublime to a mere call for Christians to live worth of the Gospel (Fowl, 2005:77).

4.11 Conclusion

The views expressed by Euro-American scholars display interesting fissures or gaps. Gaps in this scholarly tradition include the following:

- Circumscribing hermeneutics of the text to its historical context thus giving insignificant attention to the contemporary world in front of the text.
- Changing the original structure of the text to suit the interpreter's determinacies.
- Limited discussion and, or avoidance of interrogation on spiritual, death and after life issues.
- Little appreciation of the ethical value of the pericope.

Building on the above gaps in the Euro-American hermeneutical tradition, Chapters 5 and 6 shall re-engage the text to explore what new meanings can emerge from a Shona cultural lens if:

- The text is interpreted in its original form without excising aspects which were removed by Lohmeyer, Jeremias and Martin.
- The mind in Christ Jesus (φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) is exegeted from Shona morals of communalism, kinship ties and social cohesion.
- Christ's self-abnegation, kenosis, death and exaltation are studied through Shona leadership, death and spiritual worldviews.

CHAPTER 5: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 AND ITS HOMOLOGY WITH SHONA CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Introduction

Synchronous links exist between Shona cultural thought forms and Philippians 2:5-11 morality. This chapter is a prelude to the application of the Afrocentric method in ensuing chapters. The Shona thought forms and epistemological praxis is discussed as a methodological inroad into how the Shona, through their conceptual metaphors, interpret the key themes of the text. The cultural framework of the Shona is thus articulated as key elements in the main method of this study that looks at the New Testament morality from a Shona cultural perspective.

5.2 Orientational, ontological and structural metaphors of the Shona

The Shona use metaphors to make sense of abstract and enigmatic ideas or phenomena. Inexpressible and inscrutable expressions of everyday life are often expressed in clear and vivid terms by means of metaphors. Shona traditional religion is a home of conceptual metaphors. To understand the spiritual beliefs of the Shona, it is vital that one understands their metaphorical systems. Throughout their history, the Shona have used objects, activities and experiences with which they are familiar to depict abstractions and the supernatural. They use animals, birds, reptiles, trees, mountains, hills, water bodies, flora and fauna, as source domains in order to reason about other experiences that are less accessible to their senses. Shona epistemology is rich in orientational, ontological and structural metaphors as discussed below.

The Shona employ all three types of conceptual metaphors and go further to personify ideas, animals, plants, body parts and even birds. Ideas are treated like resources and commodities. Ideas are weapons used to win an argument. Further, ideas are also viewed like food or fashion. One notices that Shona conceptual metaphors arise out of their life experiences as well as their attempt to make sense of enigmas of existence such as death, suffering and poverty. They also encapsulate virtues and vices into metaphoric language. In this part of the thesis, I discuss conceptual metaphors of Shona morality as a prelude to my engagement with the morality of Philippians 2:5-11 from the perspective of Shona cosmology. This approach is a departure from Western scholarship's view that metaphors are non-cognitive and merely ornamental in nature. (Davidson, 1984:245; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999:204; Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014:4; Sanders, 2016:51). I argue that the language of Philippians 2:5-11 is metaphorical language, for example, the idea of Jesus Christ emptying Himself (ἐκένωσεν) is metaphorical. Liquids are emptied. The idea that the divine can take on the form of a human being (ὁμοίωματι ἀνθρώπων) is also metaphorical. The phrase, φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ

Ἰησοῦ (the mind which is in Christ Jesus) is representing certain character attributes hence it is metaphorical in nature. Embedded in the elements of condescension in the pericope is the orientational metaphor, "the way up is down". The "way up is down" metaphor is embedded in phrases like, οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν (not robbery/not to be grasped), ἐκένωσεν (emptied himself), μορφὴν δούλου (form of a servant), ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων (in fashion as a manner). The Shona often speak in proverbial oriental metaphors such as, *mwana waShe muranda kumwe*, meaning that people of rank should not show off their power indiscriminately or *aive madziva ave mazambuko* meaning that those who were once domineering later became nobodies.

5.3 Shona Taboo as a conceptual metaphor

The Shona believe in taboos (*zviyereswa*). According to Chemhuru and Masaka (2010:121), "taboos are avoidance rules that forbid members of the human community from performing certain actions such as eating certain kinds of food, walking on or visiting some sites that are regarded as sacred, cruelty to animals and using nature's resources in an unsustainable manner". Mawere and Kadenge (2010:29) state that Shona taboos serve as "codes of conduct/commandments and indigenous knowledge systems and beliefs that helped in preserving the natural environment, peace, order and the integrity of societal structures." Pearsall (1999:112) describes taboos as "the inviolable". Taboos act like a curriculum on ethical or moral conduct for the purpose of fostering peace, harmony, good character and moral uprightness. Taboos would fall under the category of structural conceptual metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:196). This is because they are a system of associating certain behaviours with some defined stigmas. What you see on the surface is different from the actual meaning attached to the behaviour. Gelfand (1979:138) comes up with six categories of Shona taboos namely: "those that talk about living in the correct way, successful pregnancy, and avoidance of danger, good behaviour, healthy living and those conveying religious teachings". There are some adverse repercussions attached to the infringement of Shona taboos. Such adverse consequences may include, inter alia, drought spells, plagues, strange deaths, stormy rains that destroy crops and some other natural calamities. A close analysis of the Shona taboo system reveals that some of the taboos were empty threats that were meant to regulate the behaviour of children. As Gelfand (1979:56) says, "Much avoidances were enforced, some of the consequences were believed by everyone, but others were empty threats employed to discipline the children". Mawere and Kadenge (2010:32) list taboos in two categories as "real" and "false" taboos as follows:

Real Taboos

- Do not kill another person so that you will not attract the wrath of an avenging spirit (*Usauraya, iwe nemhuri yako munopara ngozi*).

- Do not defecate and/or cut down trees in sacred mountains as disobeying this rule will result in your death or can lead to you being troubled by ancestral spirits (*Usaitira tsvina kana kutema miti panzvimbo dzinoera dzakaita semakomo uye nzizi dzinoera, unofa kana kunetseka muupenyu*)
- Do not use soap when bathing in a sacred pool for this will result in you being abducted or killed by the resident mermaids (*Usageza nesipo mudziva kana panzizi dzinoyera, unotorwa kana kuurayiwa nenjuzu*).
- Do not scold, beat or kill your mother as this will result in you being a wandering maniac as your mother's avenging spirit will buffet you after her death. The society will also cast you out as a vagabond (*Usatuka, kurova kana kuuraya amai vako nokuti unozotanda botso*).

“False” Taboos

“False” taboos are so-called in the sense that what they say is apparently untrue although they are still effective in carrying out their intended purpose. Gelfand (1979:156) states that there was an element of empty threats in taboos. Tatira (2000:146) argues that taboos often had a surface meaning or a lie which could be distinguished from the real truth beneath the surface of the taboos. Chigidi (2009:174) would describe “false taboos” as taboos of intimidation because they just contain an element of instilling fear as a means of enforcing conformity to moral values.

- Do not eat from the pot because you will develop a baboon like face (*Usadyira mupoto/muhari unozoita mahobi*).
- Do not sit on a burning faggot because you will hit your wife to death when you get married (*Usagara pahuni irimumoto unozoponda mukadzi*).
- Do not sit on a pounding pestle or grinding mortar because you will kill your wife when you marry (*Usagara pamutswi/duri, unozouraya mukadzi*).

All those who violated the real taboos faced calamities ranging from inexplicable deaths, barrenness to madness. As early as 1930, Meade (1930:18) contended that respect for taboo is a duty towards society because whoever breaks it catches the taboo contagion with deadly severity. Taboos of the Shona play a key moral role in the preservation of natural resources, for example, there are environmental taboos that are good for the ontological well-being of humans and the environment at large (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010:123). Such taboos include prohibitions such as the felling of certain types of trees such as wild fruit trees, the prevention of

stream bank cultivation, the igniting of bush fires and the killing sacred animals or reptiles such as the python which is associated with ancestral spirits.

Shona taboos are very useful in interpreting metaphysical phenomena for which empirical science has failed to provide answers. Supernatural calamities and what ensues after death are issues for which empiricism has failed to provide answers. The Shona do not treat untimely and mysterious deaths lightly as such deaths are sometimes associated with breach of cultural taboos. However, it should be noted that this is only one among many beliefs among the Shona regarding untimely and mysterious deaths. While empirical sciences provide for post-mortem tests after gruesome deaths, the Shona go beyond the physical post-mortem to enquire in the supernatural the cause of a gruesome death. This quest for answers beyond the physical in the event of death has equipped the Shona with a special knowledge around death and post-death dynamics.

The death and post-death stories of Jesus Christ as depicted in Philippians 2:5-11 contain some elements which Western scholarship may have found difficult to believe. These include, ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου (obedient unto death), θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (death of the Cross), καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν (and God highly exalted Him), πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων (every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and of things in earth and of things under the earth). In this thesis I argue that a Shona worldview in interpreting the death of Christ on the cross and his exaltation will foster a new understanding of the pericope. As we have noted above, the Shona taboos are not just put in place by the living. They are as sacred as was the *Shema* to the Jews (Deuteronomy 6:1-10). The *Shema* contained social and religious laws that were to be passed from generation to generation. The taboos are sacred property of both the community of the living and of the dead. The dead who are described as the living dead join the physical living in upholding societal taboos.

5.4 Shona totems as conceptual metaphors

There is also a practice of totemism among the Shona. Clans among the Shona people are easily identified through totems. Sanders (2016:50) points out that metaphors involve "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another domain" The Shona totems are a case in point where a particular group of people's behaviour or moral fabric is embodied in nonhuman objects, animals, birds, reptiles and even a part of the body. Tsiko (2017) refers to Pathisa Nyathi's definition of a totem, that "a totem or mutupo in Shona, refers to an animal, part of the animal, bird or snake, which a person is connected to". Nyathi further states that a totem defines and identifies one's family line; describes one's spiritual identity; acts as a spiritual code; defines one's ancestry and blood or genetic line, hence, it is one's spiritual DNA or identity.

Freud (1919:8) defines a totem as follows: "As a rule, it is an animal, either edible and harmless, or dangerous and feared; more rarely, the totem is a plant or a force of nature (rain, water) which stands in a peculiar relation to the whole clan". Freud further explains that firstly, a totem is the tribal ancestor of the clan; secondly, it is the tutelary spirit and protector of the clan; thirdly, it sends oracles and though otherwise dangerous, it knows and protects its own children. The members of the totem are under obligation to protect their totem by not killing and not eating the meat of that animal. Tatira (2000:146-151) observes that taboos among the Shona help to uphold societal values such as sanctity of human life, importance of fertility and respect of the small, powerless and harmless creatures in the environment.

Members of a clan who violate these prohibitions face the wrath of the whole community and the punishment is very severe. There is a prevailing belief that the character of the totem is inherent not only in a single animal or single being but in all the members of the species. The totem is hereditary through maternal or paternal lines and cannot be violated even by marriage. Among the Shona, a married woman usually adapts the clan praise tag or *chidawo* of her husband but if she dies, her spirit goes back to her own people and only members of her own original totem can lead in her burial rituals. The *chidawo* is a eulogising appendage to the totem. Totemism operates under a strict law that stipulates that members of the same totem are not allowed to enter into sexual relations with each other, that is, they cannot marry or even date each other. The law is meant to prevent incestuous sexual relations among clan members. There is therefore, insistence on exogamous marriage. Marriage to a member of the same totem among the Shona is believed to have negative repercussions on the community such as natural disasters and droughts. Those who commit such an offense attract punishment from the community led by chiefs under the guidance of the ancestors through spirit mediums. Where an incestuous relationship has resulted in the birth of a child and it is reasoned that the infringement is a gross violation of this law, the culprits may be asked to look for a white cow which has to be accompanied by other cows whose number is determined by the chief as directed by ancestral spirits through the guidance of spirit mediums. The white cow and the other cows are delivered to the chief and a cleansing ceremony is conducted during which the two cut off totemic ties between their two families and their marriage is declared legal. The ceremony is called *chekaukama* ceremony (totemic severance ceremony). However, dire consequences for breach of totemic prohibitions have always dogged incestuous unions even after performance of the *chekaukama* ceremony. These include bizarre behaviours, madness, physical disabilities and waywardness of the children born out of such a marriage.

Mugovera (2017) explains that consequences of incestuous relationships among the Shona include genetic disorders which are a scientific phenomenon. The ancestors of the Shona people were therefore highly intelligent people who knew that genetic mutations would result

from incestuous sexual relations. The ancestors in their so called "primitive" and "savage" state, terms which Sigmund Freud (1919:7) used in reference to traditional communities that practise totemism, knew that people of the same bloodline should not marry in order to prevent genetic disorders in children. Freud's description of societies that believe in totems reflects the unfortunate prejudice that Eurocentrism has always displayed in regard to other cultures. He says, "Thus these savages reveal to us an unusually high grade of incest dread or incest sensitiveness, combined with the peculiarity which we do not very well understand, of substituting the totem relationship for the real blood relationship". Freud expresses chagrin and surprise at the realisation that relationships in what he calls "totem races" are not based on the relationship between two individuals but rather on the relationship between an individual and his group. The African norm where individuals belong and relate to social groups baffles Euro-American scholars. It is even mind boggling that Freud and other Euro-American scholars thought that kinship associations and practices such as totems belong to primitivism and savagery. It is against such a background that they interpret the Christ Hymn in Philippians differently, rebutting and refuting any suggestions that the passage has a protreptic value for contemporary generations. The death of Christ on the Cross for all mankind can be understood in a more enhanced manner if it is interrogated through the Shona concept of heroic death represented in the sacrificial deaths of Mbuya Nehanda and other icons of the first Chimurenga uprising in MaShonaland. Hence, their holding tenaciously to the view that Jesus' death was not on behalf of mankind, that His death was a succumb to the powers of evil and not a redemptive act.

Freud (1919:10) is surprised that a man can call 'father' someone who did not biologically beget him. He says, "A man calls not only his begetter 'father' but also every other man who, according to the tribal regulations, might have married his mother and thus become his father; he calls 'mother' not only the woman who bore him but every other woman who might have become his mother without violation of the tribal laws; he calls 'brothers and 'sisters' not only the children of his real parents but also the children of all the persons who stand in the parental group relation with him, and so on". Although what Freud says in the above quotation refers to what he discovered among the Australian Aborigines around 1913, the same totemic pattern has existed among the Shona people since as far back as 500 A.D.

The importance of the totemic system relates to the very core of Shona culture. A totem bears the brand and identity of a people. Totems help in environmental preservation and protection of flora and fauna. Different animal species are protected from extinction through the practice of totems. Totems help in tracing genealogies. Through totems, the Shona people can identify and locate their relatives who are scattered all over the world. An example of the '*Mhofu*' (Eland) totemic metaphor has been selected for this study. The people who belong to the 'Eland' totem

are scattered all over Southern Africa. People who belong to the Eland totem are renowned for being fair skinned like an eland, self-sufficient and peaceful in their existence with others, caring, just and hard working. They answer to the title '*Shava*' as an address code which refers to their reputation as excellent hunters and providers for their families. Wherever the Eland people are, they are variably addressed as '*Shava*', '*Mhofu*', or '*Mpofu*'. Mpeperekwi (2014:4) stresses that the Mhofu people are spread all over Zimbabwe due to their enterprising lifestyle - they are scattered in marketplaces, shops, farms, ranches, estates, industries and even in public sectors of government. Each totem has a eulogy or praise poem attached to it. The totem eulogy recites the history, traits, fame, reputation, strengths and achievements of members of that tribe or clan. The *Mhofu* totem is a great unifier. History, as narrated in the *Mhofu* Eulogy, tells that the Eland people originated from a place called Guruuswa, a name that is linked to modern day Tanzania.

Shoko (2007:38) asserts that the *Mhofu* or *VaHera* people trekked down to Southern Africa from as far as Uganda and Sudan. It is held that when they migrated from the North, they had one ancestor by the name Mbiru. He was identified by the totem Mhofu with its cognates *Shava*, *Nhuka*, *Mhofu Yemukono* and *Mhukahuru*. It is said that when they settled in Southern Africa, they split into splinter lineages by adopting new identity codes or *zvidawo*. Those that settled in the eastern part of Zimbabwe in the environs of Odzi and Save, under Chief Marange assumed the identity code, Shava Nhuka Mukonde. Others settled on the south bank of the Upper Save River under Chief Nyashanu and assumed the code Shava Museyamwa. Some settled South of Buhera Offices towards Nyanyadzi under Chief Munyaradzi and assumed the code Shava Wakanonoka while those that settled in the Chivhu area under Chief Mutekedza assumed the code Shava Masarirambi. Furthermore, west of the central watershed of the country around Upper Munyati River stretching to the Munyati-Mupfure river confluences, Chief Mushava's people assumed the code Shava Musimvi as those under Chiefs Nherera and Rwizi assumed the code Shava Mazarura. Another group under Chief Chivero assumed Shava Mwendamberi while those on the West of Chivero under Chiefs Neuso, Muvirimirwa, and Chireya assumed the code Shava Mhukahuru Murehwa.

Those under Chiefs Njerere, Nemangwe, Nenyanga, Negonde, Nyavira, Neharava and Seke Mutema all assumed Shava Muramavi (although Seke Mutema later changed to Shava Vhuramayi after his acknowledgement of the land that he had acquired through his maternal lineage). Vhuramayi, means my mother's soil. Those under Chief Hwata assumed the code Shava Mufakose, while those under Chief Chiweshe assumed the code Shava Mutenhesanwa.

It should be noted that all the identity codes for the sons of Mbiru begin with '*Shava*' as a prefix to the code. In terms of the regulations governing totems, all men of the Mhofu origin are not

supposed to marry into anyone of the dynasties whose chidawo begins with 'Shava'. They treat everyone from those dynasties as their own fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. This researcher comes from the Nyashanu and Shava Museyamwa dynasty. In the early 90s, I came across a beautiful lady in the eastern town of Zimbabwe called Mutare and fell in love with her. The young lady originated from the Marange dynasty, and thus, was of the Shava Mukonde code. When she discovered that I was from the Mhofu totem, she suggested that we discontinued the relationship even though I was from a different chidawo as it was never going to be accepted by her parents.

The Mhofu totem constitutes a formidable kinship system whose tentacles spread beyond the national borders of Zimbabwe. If an Eland man meets another Eland man in any part of the world, they treat each as brothers and do not abandon or neglect such a brother and if it is a woman from the Eland totem, she receives the love of a sister. The people of the Mhofu or Shava totem are associated with hard work, care, entrepreneurship, social solidarity. Jesus Christ's identification with a Lion, belonging to the dynasty of Judah (Revelation 5:5) is similar concept to the Shona totemic system. Jesus had a mind of starting a great kinship of people whose lives like that of the Mhofu people, espouse virtues encouraged by Paul in Philippians 2:1-11 which are:

- Exhortation (παράκλησις)
- Comfort of love (παραμύθιον ἀγάπης)
- Fellowship of spirit (κοινωνία πνεύματος)
- Bowels or empathy (σπλάγχνα)
- Mercies (οἰκτιρμοί)
- Same mind/ oneness (ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε)
- Love for one another (τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες)
- Harmony (σύμψυχοι)
- Same mind/common values/social solidarity (φρονοῦντες)
- Lowliness (ταπεινοφροσύνη)
- Respect/esteem for others (ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν)

- Considering the welfare of others (σκοποῦντες τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι)
- Servitude (μορφὴν δούλου)
- Humane/in the likeness of a man (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων)
- Self-humbling (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν)
- Self emptying (ἐκένωσεν)
- Obedience (ὑπήκοος)

5.5 Ancestralism as an Orientational conceptual metaphor

In their ancestralism, the Shona uphold the strong belief that their dead relatives only transit into the spiritual realm but can still interact with the living through living human beings called spirit mediums. Furthermore, the dead can find embodiment in animals such as cattle, a lion or even a python. C. Hove (2013:1) describes the process of how a dead person becomes an ancestor.

After twelve months of a person's death, a special ceremony of bringing back the spirit of the deceased is conducted. The ceremony is called *Kurova Guva*, literally meaning, striking the grave. The *Kurova Guva* ceremony is not a ceremony that any member of the family's extended family clan can miss. Uncles, aunties, cousins, nephews, brothers, sisters and their families and neighbours congregate at the deceased's home. In the evening preceding the main ceremony day, a bull is driven to the centre of a *danga* (the cattle pen). The bull is ceremoniously introduced to the whole gathering as the sacrificial bull. The following morning, the bull is sprinkled with traditional beer which is brewed by an elderly woman who has gone past menstruation, before it can be slaughtered. The next morning, at the first cock's crow, everyone wakes up including children. The family head elder, accompanied by the deceased's wife or first wife, if the late was a polygamist, carries a calabash (*mukombe*) of frothing traditional beer to the grave of the deceased. When they reach the graveside, everyone sits and the head elder kneels, and places the gourd of beer besides the grave and inspects it to make sure that no soil or grass has entered it. If satisfied that no dirt has entered the beer, he nods to the crowd and women ululate as men clap hands. A brief moment of silence is maintained and then the head elder addresses the deceased. The words of the address are:

'My brother, it is me, and as you can see, I am accompanied by all, all of them, your blood. We have come to take your spirit back into the homestead so that from today, your spirit will not roam in the forest. You have had time enough to miss your family and those who went before you. From now on, your spirit is back with us. You are no longer dead. You are more useful for

us as you join those gone before you. Now when we pray, you are part of the stream through which we can reach the Great Creator, the sea of life, through those who went before you'.

As the head elder addresses the deceased, he intermittently pours some of the beer brew onto the grave before sharing the rest with those gathered with him following the hierarchy. All men, women, boys and girls must have a sip from the same gourd. After everyone has had a sip from the gourd, music and dance begin and continue the whole day and whole night back home as the family celebrates the elevation of the deceased into the level of an ancestor. It is the return of the living-dead to the living as well as to the dead-living. Those who die among the Shona therefore do not really die according to the beliefs. They only transfer into another phase of life less vulnerable than the living flesh. The slaughtered bull provides enough meat for all to eat and celebrate the return of the spirit back into the family. Its blood is not lost but is drunk by the mediums of the living dead. The living-living can also cook some of the blood and eat it apart from the meat. There is unity and harmony that binds the whole kinship. People celebrate death.

The after-life has elevation after all. We notice that the Shona conceptualisation of the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross does not invoke the intensity of sorrow and despondency as one finds among Westerners. It comes from their orientational conceptual metaphors of death. Through death, the deceased joins a stream or a hierarchy of authority and power. This is similar to the high exaltation that Paul says God gave Jesus in Philippians 2:9 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα (Wherefore, God also highly exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name). In the Shona mindset, Jesus is an ancestor. The celebration of Easter or Christ's death carries Shona traditional epistemic connotations.

Chikowero (2015:30), states that when a Shona man establishes a new home, he conducts a *bira* or *doro remusha* (family beer ceremony) to consecrate it to his ancestors, bringing their spirits home to bless and protect their progeny. A black bull without any blemish is consecrated with libations of beer (*kudira doro*). The bull is transformed into a *diramhamba*, a symbol of the family's protective patriarchal spirit and fecundity. The family ancestral bull or *diramhamba* was the visible representation (source domain) of the ancestor (target domain). Kovecses (2002:15) argues that people choose what they are familiar with to symbolise the invisible. The Shona see the ancestral bull as the presence of their family ancestor. This ancestral bull or *diramhamba* reaches a stage when it must be slaughtered during a special ceremony presided over by the leaders of the family under the guidance of spirit mediums. The meat of the *diramhamba* and its blood are eaten under special rituals directed by the clan elders and spirit mediums. All the

members of the family clan including all kith and kin are expected to be present during the special ceremony.

The *diramhamba* thus unites the extended family and the entire neighbourhood. During the obsequy, ancestral spirits manifest on the mediums and speak to the living humans. Directions are also given on how the slaughtered *diramhamba* should be replaced. The Shona who convert to Christianity continue with the practice of dedicating their new homes to a *diramhamba* but no longer a bull but rather Jesus Christ who is now purportedly, the new universal *diramhamba* whose body and blood Christians eat through the Eucharist or Holy Communion. In Chapter 6 the researcher will give a detailed discussion of the *diramhamba* concept in the light of how the Shona understand the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross as a victory and not a defeat by forces of evil as surmised by Western scholars such as Martin (1967:195) and Käsemann (1968:84). It is agreed with Sanders (2016:53) that the "the systematic use of conceptual metaphors structures the way we think about topics in science, music art, medicine, law, politics and religion." The Shona's understanding of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross derives and projects from their beliefs in their ancestors who guarded and guided them.

5.6 Homology between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona morality

In this section of the thesis, we argue that there is a homologous relationship or correspondence between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona morality. There is an amazing degree of conceptual harmony and symphony between the ethics/ morality of the pericope and Shona moral virtues. At the beginning of Philippians 2, Paul lists moral values which he admonishes his readers to espouse in their faith in Christ. The moral virtues are strikingly similar to the cardinal virtues of the Shona. Paul structures the moral virtues in his paraenetic discourse into two compartments, namely, of those of a functional ethos in one compartment, and those of a dysfunctional compartment in another compartment. Such an antithetical and dichotomous structure of morals is also found in the Shona cosmology. Paul lists moral virtues as follows:

5.6.1. Functional Category Morals

παράκλησις (consolation), παραμύθιον (comfort), κοινωνία (fellowship), σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί (bowels and mercies), αὐτὸ φρονῆτε (like-mindedness), αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες (having same love), σύμφυλοι (being of one accord), φρονοῦντες (being of the same mind), ταπεινοφροσύνη (lowliness, being humble), ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν (esteeming others above self), σκοποῦντες, ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι (considering the good of others), οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν (non-abuse of position), ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (self-emptying or humility), μορφὴν δούλου (servitude), ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων (simplicity), σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (being humane), and ὑπήκοος (obedience).

5.6.2. Dysfunctional Category Morals

ἐριθείαν (rivalry), κενοδοξίαν (vainglory, self-conceit), ὧν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες (selfishness), ἀρπαγμὸν (abuse of position).

When we look at the structure of Shona morals, we find that they also appear in antithetical form like the Pauline moral structure enunciated above. Gelfand (1973:52) finds that Shona morals are also divided into virtues and vices, good qualities and bad qualities, right and wrong, respectively. A number of the morals in Philippians 2:5-11 correspond with the Shona morals as the list below shows.

5.6.3. Functional Category Morals

Chokwadi (truth), *kuzvidukupisa* (humility), *rudo nevamwe* (love for others), *kuzvibata* (self-discipline), *tsitsi* (sympathy), *kuregerera* (forgiveness), *kunzwira urombo* (empathy), *kururama* (rectitude), *kupa vanoshaya* (charitable giving), *humwe* (oneness), *kuva nomoyo murefu* (patience, forbearance), *kushanda nesimba* (hard working), *kurangarira namwe* (unselfishness), *kuwirirana* (harmonious living), *kuremekedza vamwe* (respect for others), *hushingi* (courage), *kuva mutsvene* (living a blameless life), *kuva ne hunhu* (having good manners), *kuva munhu* (behaving according to expectations of the community), *kuyananisa* (peacemaking), *kumira nevamwe* (solidarity with others), *kuteerera* (obedience), *kuzvipira kubetsera vamwe* (sacrificing for others).

5.6.4. Dysfunctional Category Morals

Makuhwa (gossip), *kusvotesa vamwe* (gloat/show off), *kunyepa* (lying), *kuba* (stealing), *humbimbindoga* (being separate and uncooperative), *kupesanisa vamwe* (causing disharmony), *kuzvikudza* (pride, vainglory), *shanje* (jealousy), *kuchiva* (covetousness), *kutsiva zvakashata* (revenge), *daka* (irreconcilable hatred or rivalry), *hasha* (temper), *kurwisa* (assault), *kuzvida* (selfishness).

A close analysis of the moral virtues in Philippians 2:5-11 and those of the Shona reveals a strong homology and symbiosis between them. Both sets of morals aim to foster harmonious communal life where citizens respect each other and shun evil. We also observe that the Shona use words that resonate with the language of Philippians 2:5-11 to describe virtues and vices. The ideas of humility, self-emptying, considering others above oneself, avoiding strife and rivalry, being down to earth and humbling oneself in order to be exalted, echo in both corridors of morality. As the next sections of the thesis will show, the text we are dealing with matches the context of Shona culture in several other respects to include spirituality issues as well.

5.7 Cardinal virtues of the Shona

The Shona people highly value a virtuous lifestyle. The virtues that Paul alludes to in the Christ Hymn in Philippians 2 such as humility, sacrificing for others, social solidarity, unity, harmony, communal love and togetherness, are some of the virtues that are considered sacrosanct in Shona culture (Gelfand, 1973:65-67). The Shona people pursue an ethical code of behaviour which is strictly monitored. There are manners relating to every area of life, ranging from dressing to greeting, eating, marrying, and handling social problems and much more. There is an important place for good manners which is largely consistent with the virtues of humility, self-emptying and selflessness portrayed in Philippians 2:5-11. The village lifestyle of the Shona people demands that there be a moral etiquette that must be followed. As Michael Gelfand (1973:12) rightly observes, "In all contact between individuals, old or young, male or female, the impression must never be created that one looks down on another. Every man should be humble, never proud or aggressive. Though station, age and family position are respected, no one is allowed to create the feeling that he is superior for any other reason than that of his slot in the social hierarchy." Gelfand (1973:65) describes cardinal virtues of Shona life. I shall highlight some of them which are in sync with the ethical teaching of the pericope.

5.7.1 Humility / ἐταπείνωσεν / *kuzvidukupisa*: Philippians 2:8a

Humility among the Shona is key in social relations. According to Mandova and Chimombe (2013:103), "As a virtue, humility encourages harmonious co-existence in the Shona society. It encourages mutual assistance among the Shona people. Those members of the Shona society who are prosperous are greatly discouraged from boasting about their position in the society." Thus, the affluent and the powerful are expected to humble themselves. The Shona believe that statuses go through a see-saw pattern, (as the Shona saying "*hupenyu ivhiri*" implies, with the rich today ending up poor tomorrow and the poor today ending up rich tomorrow. It is therefore advisable that those that are well-to-do remain humble and respectful knowing that fate may turn tables against them. Gelfand (1973:65) aptly describes the foregoing dimension of humility among the Shona people when he says; "To the Shona, humility includes willingness to conform to traditional behaviour pattern in spite of an individual's personal qualities." The Shona people expect those with high positions to humble themselves before the less powerful. Bragging about one's achievements, reminding the lowly of one's authority over them, using offensive words when one is speaking to the young are all acts that are not expected in a leader. The concept of humility among the Shona people aptly captures the concept of ἐταπείνωσεν in the Christ Hymn. Words which are invariably used to describe this concept of self-abasement in Shona language are:

- 'Kuzvidukupisa' which means to belittle oneself. This word implies that one already occupies a senior position in society but chooses not to be pompous about that position. During public functions, a person who practises 'kuzvidukupisa'(ἐταπείνωσεν) will take a seat among ordinary people leaving high table seats. He waits for other people to show him the seat befitting his status. The etymological prefix 'kuzvi' means 'subjecting oneself to', while the suffix 'ukupisa' means to belittle or render one of low esteem.' Kuzvidukupisa therefore refers to a process of humility in which a person does not condescend as a result of pressure from external influence but voluntarily climbs down in rank. The idea is not for one to completely dispose of or relinquish the status of seniority but is a mode of good manners which constitute an essential element in Shona ethics.
- 'Kuzvipeta' which means to fold or bend oneself. Gelfand (1973:66) does not seem to accurately capture the idea of this type of ταπείνωφροσύνη when he says "Kuzvipeta means 'to fold oneself' or to take one's proper position in the social scale." The example that he gives of 'kuzvipeta' of a young man who must not wait to be greeted by an elderly person but greets the senior person is also an incongruous one. Gelfand's idea of 'kuzvipeta' is actually an inverse, a somersault, if not a topsy-turvy of the real idea of 'kuzvipeta'. The correct interpretation of this virtue derives from the Shona proverb which says, "Gudo guru peta muswe kuti vadiki akutyē" (Big baboon, coil your tail so that the younger baboons will respect you.) What the proverb means is that when an elderly person is among the young, he should behave exemplary, exercise self-control and restraint in matters and should not be forward, judgmental nor domineering. Even when spited or disrespected, the senior person is expected not to be abrasive in reaction; should return good for evil; be slow to anger and quick to forgive. 'Kuzvipeta' also implies the ability of the affluent and powerful to come down to the level of the poor and the lowly. As Gelfand notes, if an educated person goes to a village and finds elderly people sitting on the ground, he should not show disrespect by refusing to sit on the ground simply because he is smartly dressed. Instead, he should come down to their level and fit into their situation. That is the essence of 'kuzvipeta.'
- 'Kuzvibata' (self-control) is another form of ταπείνωφροσύνη (Philippians 2:8a). The translation of the word suggests 'to hold oneself' as the meaning of the term. It has two possible meanings. The first meaning suggests that a person who has the capacity to use his power for the purpose of vengeance voluntarily chooses not to use that power. The second meaning suggests that in a situation where the majority of people are falling prey to temptation, one practices self-restraint and manages to stay clear of such a temptation.

- The last idea of humility (ταπεινωφροσύνη) is encapsulated in the word, 'kuzvinyorovesa' meaning to 'make oneself wet' or 'to soften oneself'. Michael Gelfand (1973:66) misses the point completely when he says 'kuzvinyorovesa' means 'not to show off one's knowledge among one's elders; not to look down upon those who are less educated than one is; and not being ostentatious.' The actual meaning of the term 'kuzvinyorovesa' is 'being meek', 'being polite and self-restraining', being unimposing and being able to maintain calmness even where one is expected to react violently.

5.7.2 Sharing /μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι / *Kugoverana nevamwe*

Sharing is one of the most treasured ethic among the Shona people. Paul encourages believers to think of others instead of just thinking about themselves. Thinking about others constitutes an important ingredient in 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus'. The Shona people believe in '*kugoverana nevamwe*'. They believe that those who have more wealth or resources were selected by *Mwari* (God) and the ancestors to be the receiving and distribution points for the wealth that comes from *Mwari*. The 'haves' are expected to share with the 'have-nots'. The Shona people strongly believe that one should share what one has acquired with one's own people. They have a proverb which says, '*Chawawana idya nehama, mutorwa ane hanganwa*', 'Rather share your wealth with your own people because strangers tend to forget'. The proverb does not suggest that the Shona should not give to strangers but it says in that giving process, do not forget your immediate as they are the ones who will be with you in your time of need or sickness. Sharing is also encouraged in the adage, '*Kandiro kanoenda kunobva kamwe*' meaning, 'A good measure of mealie-meal given deserves another in return'. The adage encourages members of the Shona community to be generous when they give to others so that they can also be given in return. This idea among the Shona is very close to the teaching of Jesus Christ in Luke 6:38 where He says, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For, with the same measure that you mete withal, it shall be measured to you again'. Gelfand correctly explains that the law of meting out the same measure applies among the Shona only in cases of borrowing from one another. When giving is done, it is supposed to be for free. Those that have enough to spare are expected to give their poor kith and kin without being asked and without expecting to be given back what they have given to meet a need. Even where borrowing is done, the Shona people do not charge interest on what they have given. Gelfand accurately notes that the Shona people do not even have the concept of interest as one finds in Eurocentric contexts where nothing is for free. To quote Gelfand (1973:77), "The charging of interest was never practised among the Shona and there is no word for it".

According to Jackson (2004:28), referring to the concept of sharing in Africa, "A need for security in the face of hardship has provided a commitment to helping one another. However, it is likely that this value is not based on simple exchange, but as a result of a network of social obligations based predominantly on kinship". Jackson's view that sharing is as a result of a network of social obligations based predominantly on kinship is as pertinent elsewhere on the African continent as it is in Zimbabwe among the Shona people. Kinship ties make it mandatory that people share. This virtue of sharing is as old as the Shona society itself. Gelfand (1973:77) notes, "A virtuous Shona is expected to give without being asked if the situation should demand it. If a man of means sees that his brother or another member of his family requires help, e.g. bridewealth, food, clothes and implements, he is expected to come forward without being asked". One is expected in terms of the laws of kinship to begin sharing with members of his extended family as sharing with strangers while neglecting one's close relatives is viewed in bad light by the community. The Shona believe that every distressed member of the community must be helped with food and clothing. Those that do not have cattle for draught power during the farming season are assisted with oxen for ploughing their fields for free. Seeds for planting during the farming season are also given for free. If one family has a water well at their homestead, the community freely draws water from that well without paying for it. These values are in sync with 'the mind that was in Christ Jesus' as explicated by Paul when he says in Philippians 2:4, *μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι* (Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others) The 'mind of Christ' is that mind which sacrifices for one's own people and neighbours. Generally speaking, all things considered, the Shona people do not have a problem with sacrificing for others. When they engage in acts of love, they do not just say but actually do it. An essential component of their manners is not to be vociferous about benevolence and benignity but to actually do the right thing without mentioning it. Thus, the Shona people will not have problems with understanding, let alone, living according to the letter and spirit of the Christ Hymn.

5.7.3 Unselfishness

In Philippians 2:3 Paul says, *μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲν κατὰ* that is to say, according to the New American Standard Version Bible, "Do nothing from selfishness". The King James Version renders the text, "Nothing should be done out of strife", and the International Version renders the text, "Do nothing for self-interest". The word that Paul uses to depict selfishness, *ἐριθείαν* is a word that usually applies to contexts of political gerrymandering and outmanoeuvring of one's opponents as one pursues personal gain or self-interest. The word appears elsewhere within the Pauline corpus for example, in Romans 2:8, 2 Corinthians 12:20, Galatians 5:20 and in Philippians 1:17 where it denotes either strife or selfish ambition. In the Shona society, acts of generosity and magnanimity are not done for self-interest or mileage boosting. Van der Watt

(2006:55) says that African traditional society is not characterised by one's own rights but by duties towards others. This is Paul's call to the believers not to pursue self-benefits but to place others' interests before themselves.

Gyekye (1998:333) says; "If I carry out a duty to help someone in distress, I would not be doing so because I think a person has a right against me, a right I should help to fulfil. I would be carrying out that duty because I consider that person worthy of some moral consideration by me". Wiredu (1998:305) avers that African Traditional morality is "quintessentially social". Referring to the Akan idea of a good person, Wiredu (1998:312) says; "The communalistic orientation means that an individual's image will depend rather crucially upon the extent to which his/her actions benefit others rather than him/herself, not of course, by coincidence, but by design, an individual who remained content with self-regarding success would be viewed as so circumscribed in outlook as not to merit the title of a real person". In a stunning denial of the fact that African traditional communities espoused sound philosophies of social governance, Gelfand (1973:101) argues that the morality of the Shona people is instinctive rather than organised consciously. Gelfand likens the way the Shona respond to the teleology of their culture to the lymphatic system of a human body which spontaneously regulates the human anatomy. Chimuka (2001:23) rebuts Gelfand's view and says, While Gelfand, "on the one hand admits that the Shona had commendable moral values, attributing that to mere instincts appears to contradict this notion. By appraising the Shona as having moral values and at the same time arguing that these were mere instincts is contradictory". The Shona people are raised in a cultural framework where they are taught to help others who need assistance. A virtuous Shona person renders help without expecting anything in return. Gelfand rightly captures the attitude of the Shona people when he says; "An unselfish person is one who is ready to help people in need of assistance. He gives what he can without expecting anything in return. When he is asked to help, if he can, he does not mind even though by doing so, he might make the other person better off than himself". Gelfand (1973:81). From a young age, children among the Shona people are taught to share with others. If they are eating food, no matter how little it is, they are taught to share with others. A small child is taught to share even basic things like wild berries and by so doing, a spirit of sharing is inculcated in them from a tender age.

Gombe (1998:47) explains that the Shona had a special rendezvous for men and boys where they would sit and pass social norms and values into the teenage and adolescent young men. The place was called *Dare Revarume* (Court of the Men). Senior elders of the community would take turns to teach young men cultural values such unselfishness, charity, peace, kindness, courage, gallantry and hunting skills. Gombe says the Court of Men and Boys was a replica of the modern school. The syllabus of the school included lessons on manual work such

woodwork, building huts, farming, courtship, problem solving, works of charity and defence among other subjects. Gombe says that the school was continuous throughout life as explained by the Shona adage which says, "*Kudzidza hakuperi*" (learning never ends). Young men were taught unselfishness through hunting escapades. When they went out hunting, they faced dangers in the process; dangers ranging from attacks by wild animals, snake bites or getting lost after being affected by vertigo. They went through thick and thin to catch game for women and young ones who remained in the homes. In the process of hunting, the young men were also taught patience. When the game was not easy to catch or kill with dogs, knobkerries and catapults, the hunting would at times last the whole day. They would not give up easily as they were encouraged by the proverb, "*Sango Rinopa Waneta*" (the forest rewards the patient and resilient). If it was a fishing expedition, the fishermen would spend the whole day expecting to catch something. They were again motivated by the proverb; "*Hove huru dzinodyira kwovira*" (Big fish bite the bait towards the evening). In all efforts, the men worked for others, for their families and for the community.

We therefore argue that unlike the Euro-American contexts where "each man is for himself and God for us all", in traditional African cosmology, no person lives for himself/herself. Paul places emphasis on the need of the believers to consider the things of other people other than their own. That is a practice very close to the way of life of the Shona people. Gelfand struggles to prove that the virtues of the Shona people were not a result of a conscientious, scientific and epistemological approach to issues of existence. He goes to the extent of mentioning that the concept of living together among the Shona people was only "a survival imperative" whereby the Shona men realised that if they did not live together, they were going to perish at the hands of their enemies and that those that did not have cattle for farming would not make ends meet.

5.7.4 Togetherness / κοινωνία / ἀγάπην ἔχοντες / *Kugarisana* or *Humwechete*

Paul admonishes the believers to have κοινωνία πνεύματος (fellowship of the spirit). Such a fellowship is descriptive of the element of togetherness, also captured by the Greek phrase, ἀγάπην ἔχοντες. The quality of love that Paul enjoins the Church to defines the essence of the Christian community. It is the highest Christian virtue. Elsewhere, in the corpus, we find this nature of love described in 1 Corinthians 13:13, Galatians 5:22, Romans 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 8:7. Paul regards this moral virtue of love as the yardstick of one's Christian walk. Paul is encouraging believers to have a disposition of kinship, to possess a type of love that is not stringed but arises out of mutual longing for one another. It is not a quality that should be found in individuals only but in the universal community of the cosmos. The same virtue is also highlighted in Johannine literature and in the General Epistles (John 15:10; 17:26; 1 John 4:8, 16; James 5:42,2, Peter 2:13, Jude 12). The type of love was demonstrated in the early church where love feasts were held, bringing together Christians to eat and enjoy together regardless

of social status. Acts 2:44-46 describes the agape feasts that were held in the early church, keeping the body of Christ. *"And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."* The concept of togetherness among the Shona people can also be described as oneness.

The oneness of the Shona people has spiritual aspersions of a very profound nature. The togetherness of the Shona people is stringed to the '*ukama*' (relatedness) concept whereby the kinship ties that connect and bind the people constitute an essential ingredient in the immortality of moral values. The well-being and sustenance of social values among the Shona people is largely dependent on the togetherness, oneness and relatedness of the people. That togetherness brings together the natural and the supernatural, the physical and the metaphysical in a chemistry of philosophies for the security not only of the past and the present, but also of the future. To guarantee the health and continuity of future generations, togetherness, oneness and relatedness are intrinsically ensconced in Shona cultural cosmology. Prolific African fictional writer, Achebe (1958:125) says; "A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to redeem them from starving. They all have food in their own houses. When we gather together in the moonlight village ground, it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. Therefore, let us continue with the team spirit and enjoy the power of togetherness. Let's smile not because we don't have problems but because we are stronger than the problems". Achebe's words contain key African thought forms on the subject of togetherness. Togetherness is the anchor of team spirit and kinsmanship. Even if an individual is self-sufficient in everything, he/she is still expected to belong together with others.

Murove (2007:1) argues that Shona life is based on concern for others and for the natural environment. The Shona ethic of *ukama* (relatedness) has an outlook of life as an interconnected whole in which the ultimate well-being of the individual can hardly be disentangled from the well-being of others. Murove (2007:2) contends that togetherness or oneness or solidarity guarantee immortality of values and gives assurance that the future is certain. One observes that human social, spiritual and ecological togetherness among the Shona people are anchored on the relatedness of the people. When the people have a sense of togetherness, belonging to one another, shunning divisiveness and schisms, the immortality of values is assured.

African metaphysics is highly welded into the relatedness or togetherness or oneness of the people. This is the concept that Paul brings into his hortatory teaching on the 'mind which was in

Christ'. A mind which was in Christ accommodates and thinks about others. Imafidion and Bewaji (2014:81) intimate that the relatedness, or togetherness, or oneness among the Shona people is enmeshed in a hierarchy that includes the family level, village level, societal level, the level of ancestors, environmental level up to the level of God.

Imafidion and Bewaji (2014:81) note, "Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, being or existence has certain moral obligations attached to it such that the Shona person is incomplete morally without recognising his/her moral linkage with other beings that form a chain up to the supreme Being, *Mwari*. Thus, in recognition of this moral chain, an individual, while pursuing that which promotes his good or well-being, must also take into account, the good or well-being of others, which includes the environment". Gelfand (1973:106) notes that living in togetherness is a survival imperative among the Shona people. According to Gelfand, "The imperative to live together had great survival value not merely through the fact that the members of the extended family had such a sense of unity, based on their kinship, and that they were as one in their defence of themselves against all that was hostile in their environment". There is an element of Eurocentric intellectual bias in Gelfand's description of the virtue of togetherness among the Shona. He seems to aver that the togetherness of the Shona people was a dictate of the need to survive from their hostile environment, the need to rely on each in times of lack and suffering. To him, the Shona people lacked rational thinking. Chimuka (2001:27) argues that Gelfand's view of the irrationality of the Shona value system reveals the basic suppositions underlying European intellectualism, namely that Africans in general and the Shona in particular, were qualitatively not different from other non-rational animals. Such a skewed judgement on African cultures has yielded a gross drought and deprivation of hermeneutical insights from non-Euro-American environs.

Gelfand observes that living together among the Shona people fostered a deep sense of belonging as the living kinsmen continue in an ongoing relationship with their deceased relatives. We assert that the sense of togetherness among the Shona people is inculcated into the members of the society from birth and is nurtured through a cluster of associations that involve members of the nuclear family, the extended family, the village and the community at large.

Togetherness among the Shona people means sharing the same values, the same concerns, the same problems, the same frustrations and joys and confronting life's vicissitudes and idiosyncrasies together. The birth of a child, the death of a member of the community, celebration or lamentation and rejoicing or sorrowing are all done in a spirit of togetherness among the Shona people. According to Mwalimu Shujaa and Shujaa (2015), "togetherness in harmony among a people ensures and enhances a people's ability to bring good into the world

and receive goodness from the world. This pattern of reasoning is expressed in similar fashion in the traditional wisdom of the Shona people, who have a saying, '*chara chimwe hachitswanyinda*', translated 'a single finger cannot kill even a louse'. This means that individually, fingers are weak but clenched together into a fist, they become stronger. Africans of Uganda would say, 'separate teeth chew tender meat. Tough meat is for those with full teeth'. The Shona would add, perhaps even more clearly, 'one hand cannot wash itself'. The mind that was in Christ Jesus which the Christ Hymn exhorts in the lives of believers is a mindset which advocates for believers belonging to one another in a formidable spirit of harmony, solidarity (κοινωνία πνεύματος). The fellowship of the spirit is not just circumscribed to uniting in speaking in tongues (γλωσσά). One observes in today's Church a strange phenomenon whereby believers speak together in tongues but they harbour animosities, grudges, rancour and vindictiveness against each other. The κοινωνία πνεύματος is a profound spirit that makes people feel like they belong to one another; they are fortified by realising that there are others who exist for them, to take care of their interests in the past, present and future. We notice that kind of spirit of togetherness, oneness or relatedness among the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

5.7.5 Love / ἀγάπης / Rudo

Paul alludes to παραμύθιον ἀγάπης (comfort of love) in his catalogue of values which he exhorts believers to espouse in their walk in Christ (Philippians 2:1). *Rudo* (love) among the Shona people is a very key virtue which belongs to the core of moral ethics of the community. According to Gelfand (1973:67) the Shona people show love more by deeds than by words. Parents who love their children show it through what they do for their children. Although the Shona are not too expressive in matters of love, they demonstrate their love through action. Gelfand, after a close scrutiny of the practice of love among the Shona, had this to say, "The love between a brother and a sister may appear less close than is the case with Europeans, but this is not so. The eldest brother is virtually a 'father' and the eldest sister a 'mother' to the younger members of the family. The relationship between a European brother and sister seems freer and more intimate but the Shona shows his love for his brothers and sisters by the respect he accords them". Love among the Shona is therefore demonstrable through deeds. Meeting other people at their points of need is a more acceptable way of showing love than the habit of sentimentalising the love without doing anything. The Shona live under the comfort (παραμύθιον) of the love (ἀγάπης) of their kith and kin. The love fosters a sense of belonging together.

Moyo (1973:53) states that the Shona exude a sense of belonging together, of being a community of related persons who share what they have with the needy in the community. The Shona subscribe to the nuance that love is not love until one gives it away through action. If there is a funeral, all members of the community are expected to share in the grief of their neighbour. They do not attend the funeral empty handed but are expected to bring food items

such as bowls of mealie-meal, vegetables, firewood etc. Men are expected to participate in manual work at the funeral including digging of the grave. Rich people are expected to show their love for others by going out of their way to help without being asked.

Love is expected not only between siblings in a nuclear family but from the whole community. Moyo observes that "within the extended family system, members eat together from the same plate, and uncles and aunts treat their brothers' and their sisters' children as their own". Love thus keeps the Shona community going. It is important to note that the Shona do not just show love to their relatives only. The virtue of love is extended to strangers as well. It is considered very important to look after strangers. A stranger who passes through or strays into the community is supposed to be looked after very well. The Shona believe that ancestors do not take stinginess lightly. Vulnerable and marginalised groups of people such as widows and orphans are catered for through programmes such as *Zunde Ramambo* (the Chief's Communal Project), whereby members of the whole community meet at the Chief's fields to cultivate crops which are harvested and kept in barns which are opened during times of hardships to meet the food needs of the poor. Love among the Shona is also expressed through charity acts, for example, if one family does not have cattle for draught power, a family with oxen to spare can give the poor family their cattle to use during the farming season. Similarly, the wealthy are expected to show love and care for the poor without being approached or coerced.

5.7.6 Bad Manners and Vices among the Shona

We notice that Paul's catalogue of virtues includes some vices which he encourages Christian believers to eschew. Such vices include rivalry (ἐριθείαν); vainglory (κενοδοξίαν); selfishness (ἐαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες). One observes that there are also some vices among the Shona people. Chimuka (2001:26) says; "Gelfand correctly identified a number of virtues upheld by the Shona such as truthfulness, humility, love compassion, self-control, forgiveness, mercifulness, sufficiency, trustworthiness, strength, courage and industriousness, among others. He also identified some vices such as detraction, lying, pride, covetousness, revenge, hatred, ingratitude, negligence, aggressiveness and selfishness". At this stage of our discussion of ethical issues among the Shona people in terms of the subject of the 'mind which was in Christ Jesus', we shall isolate a few vices that the Shona people consider bad manners.

5.7.7 Pride / ὑπερήφάνια / Kuzvikudza

The Shona people abhor the vice of pride. Self-exaltation (ὑπερήφάνια) is the direct opposite of humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) in that whereas the person with pride exalts himself, the one with humility humbles himself. The antithesis between humility and pride is best expressed in the following statement by Akoto-Abutiate (2016:89), "the ethical status of humility is very different in different value systems, whereby while individualist and non-egalitarian systems despise

humility, those for whom pride is a sin esteem humility as one of the greatest goods". Akoto-Abutiate emphasises that for the Ghanaian Eve people, humility is also considered as selflessness, respect, self-examination, making sacrifices in the face of difficult and tedious tasks, giving credit where credit is due, faithfulness and lack of pride, among others; distinguished from pride which describes a state of a person who has boastfulness and an excessively favourable and high opinion of himself relative to others. Among the Eve people of Ghana, as is among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, pride, is frowned upon because it is associated with arrogance and self-assertion. Pride is a vice due to its tendency to degenerate into a severe state of vainglory (κενοδοξίαν) called (ὕβρις) a tendency in which one defies norms of behaviour due to inflated self-perception, superego and exaggerated sense of self-worth in comparison to others. Psychologists have observed that hubristic people tend to destroy close relationships and end up with no one close to them. That is not tolerated in the Shona context where kinship ties and relatedness are the juggernaut in the moral fabric of society. Pride is associated with aloofness and haughtiness. Gelfand (1973:90) says, "The elders of the Shona generally regard young educated Africans as possessing too much pride and believe they have been spoilt by Western civilisation. For instance, they get upset when young men address them with hands in their pockets or stand to speak instead of sitting on the ground as is customary". This statement by Gelfand hints on how the colonial education system has eroded moral values of the Shona people by creating deep status cleavages between the age groups.

Among the Shona, pride is associated with refusal to accept advice from others, especially from the elderly. The Shona call such a person, "*Ndambakuudzwa*" (the obstinate one). They also have a proverb which says, '*Ndambakuudzwa akaonekwa nembonje pahuma*'. (the obstinate one who refuses advice is often seen with an injury on his forehead.) They also have another adage for warning the recalcitrant and renegade which says, "*Matama evakuru haawiri pasi*" (the words of the elderly do not fall on the ground)," Or, "*Zvichakupinza muna taisireva*" (What you are doing shall plunge you into a regrettable situation where you will blame yourself for not heeding advice). The proud are usually those that do not have many achievements to show but would like to give a false impression of themselves in public. Among the Shona people, those who have properties and much wealth assume a low profile. As Gelfand rightly asserts, "Not infrequently, one who is rich (this usually means a man who has many cattle or even few wives) is usually retiring, silent and humble about his possessions. An arrogant person (*anozvikuza*) is one who thinks highly of himself and tries to claim qualities which, in fact he does not possess". Usually such potted words of wisdom are said as the elders give warning to the proud to leave his/her deviant ways.

In this thesis, I argue that the value of social solidarity which is distinctly different from the Cartesian individualism of Western cultures, is a *sine qua non* of orderly contact among the

Shona. As I explain below, the ethical issues precipitated by the Christ Hymn are of immense value and relevance to the African reader.

5.7.8 Covetousness (ἐπιθυμῆτις, πλὴωνεξία, ἐπιθύμια, φιλαργύρια / *Kuchiva*

In Shona cosmology, '*ruchiva*' is to want something belonging to another, to become attracted to what does not belong to one (Gelfand, 1973:92). The Shona are so much incensed by the vice of covetousness because it is associated with other subsidiary vices such as adultery, theft, malice, witchcraft, murder and cruelty. Greek etymology is very close to the way the Shona view the vice of covetousness. The verb, ἐπιθυμῆω, which means to fix one's desire upon, long for, lust after with burning passion, perfectly describes the Shona idea of a man lusting after someone's wife. There are some people who can be driven by an impulse to sleep with someone's wife or husband in what the Shona people call '*unzenza*' (lasciviousness/lack of sensual restraint). Some people also have the propensity to desire things that belong to others in an evil manner, resulting in cases of stealing. A man who lusts after someone's wife gets lured by the woman's coquettish behaviour until an obsession inebriates him beyond self-control. This man becomes a victim of ἐπιθύμια (*kuchiva*), hence, he becomes filled by so much lust that he can only be described as ἐπιθύμῆτις (a person who covets).

Another Greek word that captures the Shona understanding of covetousness is ζῆλοϛ which means to covet earnestly or to desire earnestly (source? you can cite Kubo). This type of covetousness aptly describes a person who pursues a desire to sleep with a girl or a woman to the extent of using witchcraft or *juju* to fulfil such a desire. It also describes an act whereby a man covets the healthy crops of his neighbour and goes to a divine healer to get evil medicine for harvesting the neighbour's crops by magic. Such magic is called *divisi* (evil harvesting power) in Shona. The other Greek word which describes the vice of covetousness as conceived among the Shona is ὀρέγϛ (*kusveerera*) (to reach after, or to stretch after). This word describes a form of covetousness that results in one having to steal or misappropriate someone's belongings. ὀρέγϛ also describes that form of avariciousness whereby one person takes the other's domestic animals that stray into his own yard by force. According to Gelfand (1973:93), "Another form of covetousness is the claiming of another person's belongings as one's own, e.g. fowls feed together in the village and by mistake some may wander into the fowl run of a neighbour who then claims that all fowls in it belong to him. It also occurs that a man's cattle stray and mingle with those of another man, who thereupon claims them".

πλὴωνεξία (*undyire*) (greed) is another form of covetousness that occurs among the Shona people. This refers to an unmitigated desire to accumulate or have more. This vice is seen in some leaders who gather material possessions but never appear to have enough. There are also instances where at a funeral or public function, some people may ask for food two or three

times gluttonously before others have been served. The term also covers extortion, whereby a person who is supposed to give certain prescribed quantities of maize grain, sorghum or millet may decide to cunningly reduce the quantities along the way and claim that some fell on the sideways when he knocked his feet against a stone. All acts whereby someone may take advantage of the vulnerable or the poor to gratify one's selfish desires is a form of covetousness that is unacceptable among the Shona e.g. one rich person might invite a poor widow to his fields ostensibly to offer assistance with food stuffs but then demand to sleep with her after giving her what she needs.

The word *πληωνηκτης* (*utsinye*) or (malice) also captures the act of someone spearing or axing a neighbour's cattle under the cover of darkness, or, one may see a neighbour's cattle straying and then drives them farther into a thick forest where there are marauding predators. Gelfand (1973:93) aptly describes this form of malicious covetousness when he says, "What is meant by the vice of malice is clear from this proverb, '*Nyoka ino utsinye inouraya chaisingadyi*' (A snake is malicious, it kills what it does not eat). The vice of malice is also manifest when a man sets a neighbour's granary of crops on fire or may drive a herd of cattle into a neighbour's fields at night in order to destroy the crops. The last Greek word which has a consanguineous relationship with the Shona concept of the vice of covetousness is *φιλάργυρια* (love of money) (*kudisisa mari*). The love of money which is excessive often leads to ritual murders in which a man may commit murder for the purpose of harvesting body parts prescribed by a diviner for boosting his businesses. Such lovers of money are hated by the Shona very much. They are known to be so evil that they are called *matusvuramoyo* (heart-mutilators).

5.7.9 Rivalry / *επιθειαν* / *Daka*

Rivalry (*Daka*) is expressible in two Greek words, *ἀνταγωνισμός* and *ἐριθειαν*. *ἀνταγωνισμός* is the direct derivative of the English word 'antagonism' which means active hostility, friction, enmity, antipathy, opposition, dissension, feud, conflict, discord, or contention. *ἐριθειαν* describes the tendency for one to pursue an ambition by discrediting others; self-seeking, factional spirit, an out-manoeuvring disposition. In his prelude to the pericope and hinging on the 'mind which was in Christ Jesus', Paul encourages Christians to avoid rivalry, that is, antagonisms, feuds and factions. Rivalry among the Shona is discouraged because of its accompanying repercussions such as outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, strife, seditions, scandals, malignity, malice and even physical harm, revenge, vindictiveness or death when opponents clash. Rivalry entails individuals pursuing self-ambitions at the expense of others. Rivalry can be so negative to the extent of degenerating into irreconcilable hatred between parties. Some people may end up evoking evil powers and witchcraft against their opponents. The Shona strive to promote harmonious relations among themselves at all times such that people who are seen feigning

rivalry are deemed social miscreants. Other vices that are concomitant with rivalry which are discouraged among the Shona are provocation and assault. People who provoke (*kudenha*) others are not welcome in the Shona society. Those who brew skirmishes at public functions, beer parties and informal gatherings are viewed as troublesome elements that deserve to be ostracised.

5.8 Relationship between the Christ Hymn Moral Code in Philippians 2 and Shona (particularly the Zezuru clan) Ethics

From the above navigation of moral values of the Shona people, it is clear that social cohesion among the Shona is a product of sound ethical values. Chimuka (2001:26) states that the Shona observe a litany of virtues which include truthfulness, humility, love compassion, self-control, forgiveness, mercifulness, sufficiency, trustworthiness, strength, courage, and industriousness, among others. There are also notable vices among the Shona which threaten social cohesion as already noted above and these include detraction, lying, pride, covetousness, revenge, hatred, ingratitude, negligence, aggressiveness and selfishness. We notice that the Shona culture lacks the attributes of savagery and irrationality which Euro-American scholarship has tended to associate with cultures other than their own. The interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11, and in this case, the morality of Christian communities as encapsulated in the 'mind which was in Christ', is well reflected in the moral virtues of the Shona people. The Shona culture is a well-knit, rationalistic and scientific outfit that is otherwise better organised than some European social systems where anomie and anarchy reign. Civilisation that promotes privatism and lack of concern for others is what the Christ mindset discourages. Chimuka (2001:28), Samkange and Samkange (1980:9) and Ramose (1999:49) argue that contrary to Euro-American scholarship thought, "The Shona people had, prior to colonisation, developed effective social institutions and had evolved an elaborate religion". The Shona had a functional legal system, which found its expression in the *Dare* or traditional court of justice; had an ethic; thus the Shona evolved a complex culture of their own which was not, and indeed should not have been expected to be, akin to those found in Europe in order for it to be recognised. The moral code that Paul presents in Philippians 2:5-11 does not significantly vary from the ethical code of the Shona people which we have studied so far.

5.9 Conclusion

Chapter 3 has shown that there are conceptual textual and contextual proximities between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona cosmology. Paul emphasises on virtues of social solidarity, metaphorically called bowls and mercies (*σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί*), considering the welfare of others (*σκοποῦντες τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι*), lowliness (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*), self-emptying (*ἐκένωσεν*), same

mind/oneness (ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε), love for one another (τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες), harmony (σύμψυχοι), same mind/common values/social solidarity (φρονοῦντες) and obedience (ὑπήκοος). All these moral virtues are replicable in the catalogue of Shona moral values. Gelfand (1973:65-80) produces a list of Shona cardinal virtues of life which include all the moral virtues that Paul encourages his readers to espouse in their community. The manner with which the ethics of Philippians 2:5-11 welds into Shona cosmology demonstrates that the text livens and quickens its interpretation in the Shona community of readers.

While some Western scholars and notably Käsemann (1968:45-88), Sanders (1969:280) and Martin (1983:36) contend that the text is not intended to lay an ethical foundation for the Church and further arguing that the ethical interpretation only held sway until the 1920's (Strimple, 1979:252), we find the text with a cogent moral teaching in the Shona context. Martin (1983:37) refers to the ethical interpretation of the text as a "thin thread". Perhaps, that may apply to the Western context. It should be noted, however, that the ethical versus the salvation-historical view has been regarded by both Strimple (1979:255) and Silva (2005:97) as a false dichotomy. This study takes the trajectory that the ethical value of the text to the African context in general, and to the Shona context in particular, is unfathomable. In a context of socio-economic and political upheavals like Zimbabwe's situation, the text's thrusts on peace, harmony, oneness, selflessness and adoption of kenotic and servant leadership models, the text presents a clarion call on both the secular and ecclesiastical communities to espouse the virtues of morality contained in the pericope under this study. In the next chapter, the researcher goes into detail of how the pericope can be interpreted in new ways if subjected to analysis from the Shona perspective.

CHAPTER 6: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11: A SHONA CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter laid out the Shona cultural framework as a build up to the study of the key themes from that cultural perspective. In this chapter, the key aspects of Philippians 2:5-11 are studied from Shona morality worldview. The Zezuru ethnic grouping of the Shona is the subject of this study as explained in Chapter 1. As Schreiter (2002:4) argues, the pericope has themes such as "son of God", "servant of God" and "death and resurrection" which are found in some African tribes such as the Shona, Ndebele, Shilluk, and Dogon. Ukpong (1995:6) proposes an approach to hermeneutics in which the biblical text is interpreted from a contemporary context. In this chapter, the Shona cultural values are the contemporary context in which salient themes of Philippians 2:5-11 shall be studied. Since the study suggests a homology between the text and the Shona culture, a parallel outline of the text is presented hereunder, in English, Greek and Shona versions for easy reference.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Table 6-1: Greek-English-Shona parallel translation

GREEK	ENGLISH	SHONA
<p>⁵ τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ</p> <p>⁶ ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,</p> <p>⁷ ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος</p> <p>⁸ ἑταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ·</p> <p>⁹ διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,</p> <p>¹⁰ ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων</p> <p>¹¹ καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ</p>	<p>V5 for, let this mind be in you that(is) also in Christ Jesus,</p> <p>V6 who, being in the form of God, thought (it) not robbery to be equal to God,</p> <p>V7 but did empty Himself, the form of a servant having taken, in the likeness of men having been made,</p> <p>V8 and in fashion having been found as a man, he humbled Himself, having become obedient unto death-death even of a Cross,</p> <p>V9 wherefore, also, God did highly exalt Him, and gave to Him a name that (is) above every name,</p> <p>V10 that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow- of heavenlies, and earthlies, and what are under the earth-</p> <p>V11 and every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</p>	<p>V5 ivai nomoyo uyo, wakanga uri muna Kristu Jesu vo;</p> <p>V6 iye, kunyange akanga akafanana naMwari, haana kuti kuenzana naMwari ndechinhu chinofanira kubatisiswa;</p> <p>V7 asi wakazviita usina maturo, akazvitorera chimiro chomuranda, akaitwa nomufananidzo womunhu.</p> <p>V8 akati awanikwa anomufananidzo womunhu, akazvinipisa, akateerera kusvika parufu, irwo rufu rwemuchinjikwa.</p> <p>V9 saka Mwari wakamukudza zvikuru, akamupa zita rinopfuura mazita ose;</p> <p>V10 kuti muzita raJesu, mabvi ose apfugame, ezviri kudenga nezviri panyika, nezviri pasi penyika,</p> <p>V11 kuti ndimi dzose dzibvumire dziti Jesu Kristu ndiyeShe, kuti Mwari, baba, arumbidzwe.</p>

6.2 Philippians 2:5: the mind that was in Christ Jesus / φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ / moyo wakanga uri muna kristu: (verse 5)

The word φρονεῖτε, translated "mind" in English and "moyo" in Shona, literally means "heart". As discussed in Chapter 3, the conceptual metaphors of the Shona consist of the use of animals,

objects and even body parts to represent abstract concepts. The Shona use the heart to represent a plethora of concepts. When the Shona say "*ivai nomoyo uyo wakanga uri muna Kristo Jesu*" (have that mind which was in Christ Jesus), they could be saying a number of things as described below. Gelfand (1973:73) states that the Shona ascribe both good and bad attitudes as well as mercifulness and cruelty to a heart (*moyo*), for example, if the Shona say *ane moyo munyoro* (he/she has a soft heart) they mean that the person has empathy for other people and even animals in trouble. Such a person who has a soft heart does not use their position of power or strength to maltreat the weaker parties. The mind that was in Christ Jesus, in Shona might therefore mean that Jesus Christ possessed the virtue of pity or compassion towards the weak and the vulnerable. What the King James Version Bible calls "mind in Christ Jesus" and the Greek calls, φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, the Shona describe as "the heart that was in Christ Jesus". From the King James Version, what is to be followed is the "thinking" that was in Christ Jesus, a pattern of philosophy, but in Shona cosmology, there is focus on the "heart" and not on the "mind".

Machakanja (2006:97) argues that the Shona metaphorically use parts of the human body to convey deep meanings. Thus, the Shona version of verse 5 of the text evades the word 'mind' and uses 'moyo' (heart) to depict a broader picture of Jesus' attitude towards humanity. The meaning of φρονεῖτε is thus amplified from the realm of thoughts and ideas to the level of Christ's overall human relations policy and attitude towards authority and power. Whereas Western scholars have interpreted "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" within the confines of His humility and selflessness, the Shona go ahead to conceptualise "compassion" and "mercy" which they expect in leaders and those who have power and authority over others. The attribute is expected mostly in traditional leaders like chiefs who exercise hegemony over the powerless and the voiceless. The Shona might therefore understand Philippians 2:5 to be saying that believers should exercise compassion and mercy towards one another as well as to those who lack the capacity to defend themselves. Such was the heart that Jesus had. He could have used His power to destroy His persecutors but instead, He prayed for them whilst bleeding to death on the Cross. The Shona would think in terms of a Chief who exercises compassion towards His subjects. Thus, Christ Jesus' "*moyo*" or "heart" (φρονεῖτε) is a virtue ascribable to the highest echelons on the social strata. "*Moyo uyo wakanga uri muna Kristo Jesu*" (the mind which was in Christ Jesus) was not an ordinary or common heart. It was that heart that ought to be in a Shona Chief or leader. Thus, the Shona would view Jesus as a Chief. Chimhanda (2014:314) states that the Shona use theophoric names in which Christ is viewed as 'Chief'. Such names are prefixed with 'Ishe' (Chief) or are suffixed with 'She' (Chief). Examples of such names include '*Isheanesu*' (God is with us), '*Tinashe*' (God is with us), '*Munashe*' (God is with you), '*Simbarashe*' (Strength of God), and '*Kudakwashe*' (Will of God).

The opposite of "*moyo uyo wakanga uri muna Kristo Jesu*" (the heart which was in Christ Jesus" would be "hard heartedness" or "cold heartedness". When the Shona say to a person, "*ano moyo wakaoma*" (he or she has a hard heart), they are saying that the person is ruthless, autocratic or despotic in disposition. He who has a cold heart (*ano moyo wakatonhora*) is one who has no feelings, sympathy or empathy for others. Through Shona eyes, Paul was calling upon the believers to emulate the compassionate heart of Jesus for the vulnerable. When the Shona interpret verse 5, they understand Paul to be directing His paraenesis towards the powerful members of the community who show no mercy or compassion on the poor and the weak. This view of the tenderness of Christ Jesus' heart towards the weak finds corroboration in verse 6 where Christ is said not to have used His equality with God to His own advantage (οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν). According to the Shona, the heart is the central metaphor of morality. Pearce (1990:146) attests that the concepts moral goodness or moral depravity among the Shona are nuanced through the 'heart' metaphor. Emslie *et al* (2001:207) state that in Western culture, the heart has a special psychological significance summed up in the expression "the heart of things" which refers to the centre of activity in both the English and the French. In Philippians 2:5-11, reference is made to the "mind" and not to the heart. Those who translated the Bible from English into Shona chose the word "*moyo*" (heart) over "*ndangariro*" (mind). The reasoning from Shona epistemology is that Jesus' morality welled from the heart (*moyo*) and not from the mind (*ndangariro*). The "mind" is associated with humanity and rationale while the "heart" is associated with the divinity.

Another way of interpreting Philippians 2:5 from a Shona perspective is by building on the view of Fee (2007:372) that verse 5 has a paradigmatic role in the pericope. This view holds that verse 5 is a bridge between Paul's ethical exhortations contained in verses 1-4 and verses 6-9. Hammerich (1966:28-29) and Hooker (1975:152-153) point to verbal similarities between verses that precede verse 5 and those antecedent to it. For example, one notices continuity in discourse between verse 3 and verse 6 in the use of ἡγούμενοι (regard one another) v3 and ἡγήσατο (did not regard) v6; κενοδοξίαν (empty conceit) v3 and ἐκένωσεν (he emptied himself) v7. Continuity is also noticeable between ταπεινοφροσύνη (humility) v3 and ἐταπείνωσεν (he humbled himself) v8. Thus, verses 6-9 are an escalation of the moral exhortation in which Paul is encouraging oneness, fellowship, thinking of others, communal love, harmony and unity.

The Shona would understand the "mind which was in Christ" to be referring to His unifier role. In Shona culture a great leader is considered an agent of unity. The communal spirit of togetherness and kinship revolves around great leaders and the ancestors. The moral values of the Shona define and epitomise them. This view is corroborated by Chimhanda (2014:318) who argues that "Shona (*unhu*) moral values are axiomatic to life affirmation and diametrically opposed to Western type individualism and consumerism". In the text, Paul is emphasising on a

moral code that will serve as the identity flag of those who believe in Christ Jesus. Similarly, the Shona are a highly ethical people whose history is a narrative of virtuous living. Gelfand (1973:11) found that the Shona people extol virtues of solidarity, fraternity and equality. In their daily lives, the Shona are wedded to the virtues approved and passed by their ancestors from generation to generation. Beattie (1964:10) also avers that the Shona have a formidable kinship and communal lifestyle through patrilineal and matrilineal lines. A person born in a Shona clan has many fathers, brothers, siblings and sisters through the paternal line. Similarly, through the maternal line, one has many mothers and uncles. Such a life is what Philippians 2:5-11 advocates for. The Shona place emphasis on a network of communal and kinship ties in which togetherness, equality, fraternity and harmony in humility and love are key to their livelihood. This is different from the Western view which is hinged on individualism and privatism. The "mind of Christ Jesus" is therefore, the mind of togetherness, the mind of tranquillity and solidarity. The 'mind of Christ' which is translated 'moyo' (heart) in Shona constitutes the hub of one's relationships with others. How one regards, relates to or treats others in the Shona community depends on the state of one's 'moyo' translated 'mind' (φρονεῖτε) in the pericope. Thus, a Shona person will understand 'the mind of Christ' to be that heart which considers others' welfare or well-being. Such a heart, they call 'moyo wakanaka' (a good heart) (Gelfand 1973:71)

Gelfand (1973:11) says that the Shona have "a deep-seated loyalty to their kin and condemn any kind of violence among relatives." Verse 5 is an acme of Paul's advocacy for peace, unity, selflessness and care for others which he encourages in verses 1-4. Shona etymology would depict the sense of μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν (let nothing be done through strife or rivalry) and, ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν (regard others above oneself), and, μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι. (look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others). The sum of the ethical teaching is social solidarity, oneness, unity, harmony, humility and kinship, which virtues are paramount in Shona cosmology. Moral virtues found in Philippians 2:1-11 are thus immanent in Shona moral systems.

Communalism as the mind of Christ

The mind that Jesus had as inferred by Paul in verse 5 is a mind of establishing a community of people who are concerned with and about one another, a communal life in which feelings of love, solidarity, togetherness and kinship are shared. Moyo (1973:50) observes that "African traditional thought cannot comprehend life apart from the extended family community. A child is born into a family community. His or her life is seen as a gift to the larger family and not just to the father, mother and immediate brothers and sisters". In the Shona setting, individualism and

isolationism are taboo. Children are raised into and for the community. A strong kinship system based on strongly bonded and fortified ties is maintained by all members of the community. In the traditional Shona homestead, children eat together, share meals from the same plate, sleep in the same bed and play games in groups and teams. Formidable and indomitable bonds of solidarity are therefore welded into their fabric from very early stages of their lives.

Every member of the Shona community is expected to always live in fellowship with the family community. When there is a new born, that child's life is celebrated by the entire community. The immediate family members of the family raise the child on behalf of the community.

Davis (2017:1) states that rites of passage play a central role in African socialisation because they demarcate a person's stages of development and role to broader community. Davis further argues that in most African communities, the child is initiated into communal life through rites of passage and some customarily sanctioned secondary socialisation drills. When a Shona is born, he or she lives in the tripartite presence of *Musikavanhu* or *Mwari*, of the living dead (Mbiti, 1969:1) or ancestors and of the community of the living of which he or she is part. A Shona is accountable to those three presences in his being. This establishment is unlike the privatism and atheism that typical of Western cultures. The exhortation by Paul for believers to espouse communal love, fellowship, concern for others, empathy and sympathy towards others, selflessness, solidarity and to avoid acrimony, divisiveness, rivalry and vainglory as "the mind which was in Christ"; the mind which the believers must have (*φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*), is not sufficiently highlighted within Euro-American scholarship.

The symbiosis of Philippians 2:5-11 to Shona culture negates the view of Western scholars that "the mind which was in Christ" should not be read as suggesting that the virtues of selflessness, humility and communal love which Christ displayed are for imitation by the universal Church. Lohmeyer (1928), Käsemann (1968) and Martin (1983) argued that the virtues alluded to in the life of Christ cannot be attained by a living mortal, relegating the virtues to a sublime, high type of Christology which is not possible, save in the other life beyond the physical. The Shona follow the "mind of Christ" type of life. While there is not so much emphasis on communal life and kinship ties in Euro-American social life, the scenario is different in the African setting. As Moyo (1973:52) says, "African existence is existence in community, and apart from one's community, one is a nonentity".

An essential ingredient in the "mind that was in Christ" type of life is the concept of sharing. A well-resourced person who has a lot of wealth is expected to share with those who are less fortunate. It is believed that the one who possesses a lot of wealth was entrusted with the wealth by *Mwari* and the ancestors in order for him or her to share with other members of the

community. Similarly, this is as Paul admonishes the believers in verse 4 of Philippians 2, 'each not to your own look ye, but also to the things of others' (μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι). The mind that considers the welfare of others above one's own is treasured among the Shona people. Every member of the community among the Shona is responsible for the other and is thus obligated to provide for the welfare of the other. The "mind which was in Christ" is a direct opposite of the "mind which was in Cain of Genesis 4:9" who when God asked him, "where is Abel thy brother?" he said to God, "I know not, Am I my brother's keeper?". The "mind which was in Christ" obligates one to be their brother's keeper. As Moyo postulates, "A child is born into a community, into a family of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and other relatives. It is a very large family in which there is no distant relative and every member of that family is at home in every part of the family community".

While in a European context, a person who walks through another person's homestead or property is labelled a trespasser, intruder or stranger, in the Shona community, people walk freely through each other's fields as land is communally owned. Likewise, a passer-by passing through a village can turn to any homestead and ask for food. One can also help oneself to mealies, watermelons, sweet canes from the fields of villagers, as long as they eat in the field without taking them to their own homes. When one passes by a homestead where they are slaughtering an ox, one can assist in skinning the animal and upon '*chishavapavarume*' meaning an 'opportune portion' for a wayfarer. There is thus a sense of belongingness, togetherness, oneness and solidarity which compels members of the Shona community not only to live in fellowship with one another, but also to cherish the good welfare of each other. The kinship system of the Shona people is fortified by lineage ties that foster consanguinity among large groups of people.

As a conclusion to this section, it is important to note that Philippians 2:5-11 harmonises with the Shona ethical code. According to Gelfand (1973:8), "the rich beauty of the Shona ethical code stands out in sharp contrast to the material individualism of the West. The Shona possess much that is worth retaining and the prospects are that they will save a good deal of it for succeeding generations. They will have to devise a means of blending this with what the West has brought them". The Shona read Philippians 2:5-11 with consanguine and intimate analogy to their own way of life. Gelfand (1973:8) says, "Africa has something to offer the world in human behaviour and this, the Shona man and woman can give by their fine example". As can be noted from the discussion in this section, the concept of brotherhood, the love of a good family life, with close support for its members and good neighbourliness are the pillars of Shona culture. Such are the virtues at the centre of φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (the mind in Christ Jesus).

6.3 Form of God / μορφῆ θεοῦ / Kufanana NaMwari: Analysed in terms of Shona ancestralism and morality

From the Shona perspective, there are two possible directions of meaning for the phrase μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God/ kufanana naMwari)¹². The first direction of meaning is when the Shona say, "Uyu munhu ndiMwari zvake" (This person is God himself). When they say that about someone, in essence, they will be endorsing that person's innocence in the face of some serious accusation. God is thus used as a conceptual metaphor of innocence and blamelessness. The use of the word μορφῆ in this first direction of interpretation has the element of similitude and likeness in character. To say, "uyu munhu ndiMwari zvake" (this person is God himself) is a metaphor that expresses a deep conviction about that person's integrity. It is a way of saying that we have thoroughly studied the character of this person and we have concluded that he or she is too innocent to be blamed for any wrong doing. Likening the innocent person's personality to that of God tells us something about the Shona's idea of God. The Shona believe that God is a morally clean or holy God; one who does not have any blemish. If a person dies, the Shona comfort the bereaved by saying, "Nyadenga/ Mwari vanoziwa, havakanganisi" (God knows and He does not make a mistake". The Shona thus believe that God is perfect in His judgements and determinations. A person who has the 'form of God' (*akafanana naMwari*) has the attributes of goodness and moral uprightness ingrained in their personality. This interpretation is close to what Paul articulates in Galatians 2:20 when he says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". The person who is blameless and innocent is an embodiment of good mannerisms and impeccable personality. A person who has μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God) is highly prized in the Shona community. The person who bears the "form of God" has the following traits:

- Does not practice witchcraft or sorcery.
- Does not bear grudges and is not quarrelsome.
- Is favoured by the ancestors and *Musikavanhu* (God).
- Does not succumb to evil powers because it is believed only those that entangle themselves in evil get trapped in the snares of evil.
- Lives a chaste life. Usually children, girls who are still virgins and elderly women who no longer sleep with men and have since gone past menopause are associated with moral

¹² While the Manyika ethnic group of the Shona would prefer "kuenzana naMwari", the Zezuru group uses "kufanana naMwari" hence this contextual rendering.

uprightness akin to having μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God/*kufanana na Mwari*). Ancestral spirits often choose such 'innocents' to prepare their traditional brews and ceremonial meals.

The second direction of interpretation of ἐν μορφῆ θεοῦ (in the form of God/*kufanana na Mwari*), relates to the beliefs of the Shona on life and death. Along the generic interpretation of μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God/*kufanana na Mwari*) as denoting the pre-existence of Christ with God in the beginning (αρχῆ), the Shona add another dimension to that interpretation by asserting that even other human beings, like Jesus Christ, come from *Mwari* before they incarnate through the wombs of their mothers. The Shona believe that, before one exists in the physical, one firstly exists in the spiritual realm with, and like God.

According to Kamudzandu (2007:253), "the life cycle of the traditional Shona worldview comprises three realms: the yet unborn, the living, and the living dead (whose bodies are dead but whose spirits live on)". Those not yet born are believed to be with God in the spirit world, are born into this world, and then return to the spirit world after death. The Shona therefore believe in pre-existence of humanity in the nature of God both before the physical being and after the physical being. Before birth and after death, a person is in the invisible world where they do not have flesh and bones but still have 'being' which is also called, μορφῆ θεοῦ form of God/*kufanana na Mwari*. When in the physical body, there is a ὁμοίωματι ἀνθρώπων (likeness) with mortal flesh but the three phase cycle is only completed when the person dies and goes back to the community of the living dead. When a person joins the community of the living dead, such a person is believed to have one leg in the land of the living dead and another leg in the land of the living. The land of the living dead is the land of the ancestors. Transference into the land of the ancestors takes one closer to the aboard of God or *Mwari*. One who joins the land of the ancestors has the new status and privilege of mediating between *Mwari* and the living. This is the Mediator role that is associated with Jesus Christ according to 1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time". The Shona believe that the ancestors, like Christ, also play a mediatory role between the living and *Musikavanhu* (the Creator).

Kahari (1981:87), argues, "A Christian penitent could appeal direct to his God, whereas the traditionalist could appeal to *Mwari* only through his intermediary grandfather and his remote great-grandfathers whom he asks to intercede with *Mwari* on his behalf. He worked, in other words, through the community both living and dead". It is important to note that the pre-colonial Shona traditional religious system was anchored on the belief in one God. The mistaken belief that European Missionaries had about Shona religion was to confuse mediation of the ancestors for polytheism. The Shona had always believed in one God prior to colonialism.

Gelfand (1973), critiquing the stance of European scholars on Shona religion, writes, "Indeed many people today still consider that the Shona have no religion at all. But anyone who studies the Shona religion sympathetically will soon discover that he is dealing with a deeply religious people. So complex and developed in fact is the cult that one day, the Shona religion may come to be accepted as a form of monotheism". Whereas the Shona reached the One God through a longer route of going via their living dead as mediators, Christianity in its Western form introduced a shorter route whereby an individual can communicate with God directly (although others would argue that the Christians also approach God through Christ as the mediator). The communication pattern or cycle between *Mwari* and the Shona people demonstrates the critical importance and role of the living dead or ancestors to the Shona.

6.4 The Shona Ancestors

According to Anders (1993:26), the term 'ancestors' refers to "those who have died yet continue to exist in an unknown place". The Shona believe that when people die, they go to an abode for the dead. The place where they go is metaphorically identified with the air, hence they are called "*vekumhepo*" (those of the air) (ἐπουρανίων). The dead are also metaphorically associated with the underworld, hence, they are called, "*vepasi*" (those who belong under the earth). The latter designation "those who belong under the earth" is similar to Paul's idea of the knees of those under the earth bowing to Jesus' name (πάν γόνυ κάμψη καταχθονίων) (*nemabvi evari pasi achapfugama*). Philippians 2:10. In verse 10 of the Christ Hymn, Paul presents a cycle of communication between God and mankind which includes "those under the earth".

On "those under the earth" (καταχθονίων), the Shona custom provides the answer which is more intrinsic in scope than that of Western and American cultural settings where life after death beliefs are less pronounced and practised. "*Vepasi*" (those under the earth) (καταχθονίων) whose knees shall bow to "the glory of God the Father" (εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός) (*kuti Mwari vakudzwe*); are those that died and were buried in the earth, but whose spirits are still alive and active in the affairs of the living. Thus, when the Shona talk about ancestors, they are not talking about the dead and extinct. They are talking about those who died in the flesh but are the living dead. Although the idea of the living dead is also found in Western cultural traditions (Fee, 1995:224; Bockmuehl, 1997:146), the Shona concept of the living dead is deeper in application and scope. The Shona believe that their dead relatives participate in the physical realm in a more profound manner than when they were alive. For example, the ancestors are responsible for rain making, harvests, preservation of natural heritage, fertility and social order. As Makaudze (2014:92) states, the ancestral spirits are the torch bearers who give direction to the living and resolve conflicts in day to day running of the community. The traditional Shona people believe that the living souls are guided by the ancestors, whose wisdom and pronouncements

they implement. The Western Christian world might believe that the dead are still living in Christ but do not generally subscribe to the belief that the dead participate in the daily routines of life of the surviving relatives.

Kamudzandu (2007:258) argues, "Ancestors are people who have died in old age, vested with power and authority and are still involved in the life of the living, especially the life of their kinsmen". Such an observation agrees with what this writer has observed during epideictic or obituary speeches where one hears many a mourner asking the dead person not to give the surviving children and relatives his/ her back but to return and guard, guide and protect them. Michael Bourdillon (1987:227) refers to a deceased head of an extended family whose duty is to bring together the clan or extended family group on ritual occasions and ensures that the clan continues as a closely knit group. A deeper description of such ancestral ceremonies has already been covered under the discussion of the *bira* (ritual vigil) which culminates in the slaughter of the '*diramhamba*' (ancestral bull). Another cultural anthropologist, Fortes (1987:66) argues that an ancestor is a named dead forbear who has living descendants of a designated genealogical class representing his continued structural relevance". Fortes' definition of an ancestor is very interesting in that; he brings to the fore the New Testament concept of 'genealogy'. Matthew 1:1 speaks of "the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ" (βίβλος γενεθεῶς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The genealogy (γενεθεῶς) of the Shona is the tracing of their family ancestral line. Those that live have an ancestral line or genealogy. The Shona believe that a person's genealogical line is traceable to *Mwari* or *Musikavanhu*. As found in Luke 3:23-38 where Jesus' genealogy is traced from Joseph all the way to Adam and finally to God (*Mwari/Musikavanhu*); Shona cosmology inherently believes that every person born has an ancestral line (γενεθεῶς) that produces them.

Paul's concepts in Philippians 2:5-11 resonate with Shona thought systems, for example, when he speaks of the knees of those in heaven (ἐπουρανίων) (*vekumhepo*) and those of the earth (ἐπιγείων) (the living) (*vapenyu*) and those under the earth (καταχθονίων) (*vepasi*). When the Shona speak of those of the air or heavenly, they describe them as '*vari kumhepo*', meaning those who belong to the spiritual world or those who subsist in the air. Such a metaphor is used in direct reference to the ancestors, referring to those who have gone to meet with God ahead of those of the earth (*vapenyu* or *vepanyika*). As we have already noted above, those of the air or of heaven in Christian language, designate, in Shona cosmology, all the dead but living, who are variably called '*vepasi*' (of under the earth), a metaphor that is derived from the process of burial of the body underground. This writer also surmises that the designation of those who die as '*vepasi*' (of the underground) (καταχθονίων) arises from lack of precise knowledge where exactly the community of the living dead is situated.

The New Testament itself is somewhat ambiguous on the exact location of the place where the spirits of the departed go. According to Paul, every knee shall bow (πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη), of the living who are still earthly (ἐπιγείων) and of those who dwell in the spiritual realm whose aboard can either be in heaven (ἐπουραίων) or under the earth (καταχθονίων), to the glory of God the Father. It is apparent that the original Shona beliefs about the dead were not remotely related to the biblical positions as to where the spirits of those that die go. There was apparent agreement also as to the reporting structure between God and mankind in their two categories of the living and the dead. Whether they are living or they are dead physically but alive in the spirit, they all ultimately report to God. In that cycle of communication with God, one observes that those that are dead share one attribute in common with God, that is, they are spirits just as God is also Spirit. Spirits can communicate faster at spiritual level and in Shona cosmology, the belief is that the living that want their petitions known and to be received by God who is Spirit, can gladly relay such petitions through the mediation of their ancestral spirits. When the New Testament Church describes Christ as the mediator between men and God, the Shona will understand such a designation of Christ from the position of their ancestors who also have a mediatory role. Such a thought has resulted in Christ being viewed as an ancestor. The Shona in their world view would rank Christ as a great ancestor who can receive the petitions and supplications of the living and relay them to God, the Father (θεῶ πατρός).

The Shona believe that the spirits in their mediatory role follow a referral system in order of rank and seniority until they get to God. Thus when Jesus says in John 14:6 "No man cometh to the Father, but by me", He declares Himself the greatest ancestor who alone can relay the petitions of all humanity to God the Father. According to Gombe (1998:129), "the God of the Shona is a transcendent God who can only be addressed through special spirit mediums called '*masvikiro*' (point of arrival) who go to special shrines, usually trees in the groves, from where they speak to God via their ancestors." Gombe further explains that addressing God directly without observing protocols is an affront to hierarchy. Such a position as explained by Gombe would help us explain why the Christ Hymn places so much emphasis on the need to approach God, the Father in the Name of Jesus Christ, who Himself, according to Johannine literature, declared Himself the only way to the Father.

The Shona use a metaphorical name '*Zame*' which means 'the transcendent one' to underscore the point that their God cannot be reached through shortcutting the communication protocols. The conferment of the greatest name on Jesus in post resurrection exaltation renders His name a referral name before one reaches God, the Father. When the Shona spirit mediums are sending requests to *Mwari*, they begin by referring the petition to the lowest ancestor in terms of rank, usually the one who was last to join the rank of the ancestors until they mention the name of the greatest ancestor who then conveys the petitions to '*Zame*' (The Transcendent One). The

system of observing protocols during prayers to *Mwari* is, in itself, a critical ingredient in the morality etiquette of the Shona. Respect for seniority in age and rank is an essential trait in Shona mannerism. At a traditional Shona court, special procedures have to be observed when one wants to introduce a motion on an important subject matter or if one wants to ask the health of elders. Among the *VaHera* or Eland clan, all protocols are opened by a *muzukuru* (a senior nephew who is usually the son of the daughters of the clan). The *muzukuru* has to know the ages and ranks of his uncles so that he opens the protocol properly starting with the least when introducing the matter. Once he has relayed the matter to be dealt with to the least in rank, his role is done. The one served with the motion will also relay it to the next in rank or seniority and the process continues until the most senior person has received the petition or request. A son-in-law (*mukuwasha*) who visits his in-laws cannot ask the well-being of his in-laws directly. The hierarchy and protocol must be followed for the greeting to be accepted. When the most senior elder has been informed that the son-in-law wants to greet the court, he beckons his assent and that is followed by a rhythmic clapping of hands amidst proclamation of totemic eulogies (*chidawo*) of those present, including that of the son-in-law who would have asked to greet the elders.

The pattern of worship among the Shona is therefore embedded in their moral fabric which emphasises respect and veneration of those senior in rank. Gombe (1998:130) observes, "The practice (of worship) translates into social ethics whereby bureaucracy has to be respected even in greetings. One has to do obeisance to the elders in order of age, that is, from the youngest to the oldest." The ranks among the Shona therefore begin at the level of the earthly (*ἐπιγείων*) (the living) (*vepanyika*) and then translates into the realm of the heavenly (*ἐπουραίων*) (*vekumhepo*) and of the under earth (*καταχθονίων*) (*vepas*). Gelfand identifies five main categories of spirits among the Shona namely: the '*mhondoro*' which he calls the tutelary spirit; the '*mudzimu*' (family spirit); the '*shave*', the '*n'anga*' (healing spirit) and the spirit of witchcraft (Gelfand, 1973:39). Gelfand places *Mwari* (God) above the five categories of spirits among the Shona. Gelfand (1973) and Gombe (1998:130) agree on the designation of the '*mhondoro*' spirit which they both describe as a territorial spirit that takes charge of a large area. The *mhondoro* spirit looks after the welfare of the people as a whole and is responsible for the following tasks: bringing rain, production of good and bountiful crops (fertility); chieftainship succession, security of the nation and defence from enemies. Examples of *mhondoro* spirits of the Shona are Chaminuka and Nehanda. The spirits of Chaminuka and Nehanda were highly instrumental in providing inspiration and guidance during the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. I give the example of Chaminuka and Nehanda as national spirits without mentioning other national spirits in the same fold with them such as Mzilikazi and Lobengula among the Ndebele because this thesis is focusing on the Zezuru tribe of the Shona. Chaminuka and Nehanda rank together with

Dzivaguru, Mutota and Karuva as the “supratribal mhondoro spirits” (Auret, 1982:173-185). The *mhondoro* spirit does not possess a bull like a family clan spirit. It possesses a lion which symbolises power and kingship. The Shona believe that when great kings die, they automatically assume '*mhondoro*' status. It is thus believed that leaders like former President Mugabe automatically become '*mhondoro*' when they die¹³. Mugabe would qualify for recognition as king because he belongs to the Zvimba royalty under the Chidziva chieftaincy (Kunambura, 2019)¹⁴.

The reference to Christ in Revelation 5:5 as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" correlates with the Shona idea of a *mhondoro* spirit. The reference to Christ as “Lion of the tribe of Judah” resonates with the idea of Shona totems. Thus when the Shona consider the universal soteriological mission of Jesus Christ, they view him as a mhondoro spirit that takes charge of the whole earth. The pericope alludes, in verse 10, to every knee of those on the earth, bowing to Christ as a King. This πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπιγείων (every knee of things on earth) is akin to the Shona belief that a mhondoro spirit covers a large territory that transcends boundaries (Gombe, 1998:132). It is therefore culturally correct to think of Christ as a great ancestor, '*mhondoro*' or '*gombwe*' (another designation for a territorial spirit). The idea of identifying Christ as an ancestor in the African context arises from indigenous christology which does not see Jesus as an alien or stranger to the continent. There is a symbiotic relationship between African christology and African anthropology which is anchored on Jesus' experiences with Africa. Ukpong (1984:501-536) suggests the use of functional analogies in Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics whereby certain titles such as 'ancestor' and 'king' can be applied to Christ. As Pobee (1992:15) argues, there is an inseparable connection between the experience of the people of Africa and Jesus' relationship to that experience. My linking of Jesus with Shona ancestralism is informed by Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics' thrust of removing the alienation between Jesus and African culture. Cook (2009:681) argues that a close examination of Jesus' life reveals that from birth to death he went through and practised cultural rites which reduced the gap between him and African culture to the extent that instead of Africans viewing him as a stranger they should now view him as kin. Cook (2009:681) further argues that Jesus' observation of what was instituted by his forefathers in the flesh was an affirmation, in principle, of the cult of ancestors. I also argue that the relationship between Jesus and the Africans is both experiential and a dictate of faith. The Shona are basically a people of faith and deep spiritual convictions. Their identification with Christ as their *diramhamba* arises out of a deep

¹³ Gombe (1998:130) states that those who die saving national or territorial interests receive elevation to '*gombwe*' or mhondoro status.

¹⁴ In the aftermath of his death, it has emerged that Robert Gabriel Mugabe was offered the Chidziva chieftaincy when it was his family's turn to inherit the throne in 2012 but he turned the offer down as he was too busy with state duties as national President.

conviction and faith that God (Musikavanhu) solemnised through a ritual of blood, a brotherhood between them and Jesus. It is on the bases of faith and cultural convictions, therefore, that the Shona would accept Jesus as a brother and ancestor. The *mhondoro* spirit has a special holiday set apart for it every week, called '*chisi*'. A *chisi* is a day when no person is allowed to do any work in the field or gardens. In most Shona communities, the *chisi* is fixed either on a Thursday or Friday. Chiefs strictly enforce observance of the *chisi* and stern measures are taken against anyone who breaches the *chisi* regulations. One may be fined a certain number of cattle for breaching the *chisi* holiday. It is believed that failure to observe *chisi* may result in natural disasters and calamities such as famines or strange deaths in the community. The Shona view Jesus as a *mhondoro* who, like their own *mhondoro* spirits, fixed Sunday as a *chisi*, a sacred day when no one is expected to go to work.

The other form of spirit that the Shona believe in is the '*mudzimu*' (ancestral spirit) which looks after the needs and welfare of a family unit. The spirit of family grandfather is usually the *mudzimu* of the family. In modern Shona, the spirits of one's immediate parents, both of one's father and mother, can also become *mudzimu*. The *mudzimu* is mostly responsible for the protection of the immediate family members. When the Shona say, '*mudzimu wakufuratira*', they are saying that one's family ancestor have forsaken or abandoned one in times of need. It is also believed that witches or wizards can only inflict harm on a person whose *mudzimu* has allowed them to carry out such harm. For any witchcraft to take effect on a person, those who want to do such harm have to seek permission from the '*vadzimu*' (ancestors) of that victim. The witches usually have to access communication with their victim's ancestors through the latter's close relative who must be a reliable accomplice in the stratagem. The close relative must know how to address the hierarchy of his ancestors when permission to harm the victim is sought. If permission is granted, and the ancestors turn their backs on the targeted victim, witchcraft becomes effectual and at times you hear that a person has died of witchcraft.

The family ancestral spirits constitute the lesser spirits in the hierarchy of the ancestral spirits. They are important in Shona prayers in that they are the first to be addressed in the prayer chain that passes through serial ranks up to '*Zame*', '*Nyadenga*' or the Transcendent One (God). Murphree (1969:49) lists several other names for *Mwari* (God). The names include: *Nyadenga* (the Great One of the sky), *Chipindikure* (He who turns things upside down), *Chirazamauya* (The One who provides for good or for bad), *Musikavanhu* (the Creator of the people), *Dzivaguru* (the Great Pool) and *Mutangakugara* (the One who existed in the beginning).

The *vadzimu* (ancestors) and the *mhondoro* (rain making spirits) insist on strict observance of moral values of the society. They can mete out punishment by causing sicknesses, deaths or

drought for such infringements as incest, adultery and despoiling of unmarried girls, (Gelfand, 1973:38). The *mudzimu* or family ancestor possesses a bull which assumes the name of that grandfather. The bull, in Shona conceptual metaphorical philosophy, symbolises strength, power, fertility, belligerence and chieftainship. That bull, as alluded earlier, is called a '*diramhamba*', to mean that it was anointed with beer as an element in the consecration process. Gombe (1998:132) explains that beer was usually used to consecrate the bull just as Christianity also uses such objects as 'wine and the wafer' in the Eucharist. Gombe argues that Shona tradition, like Western Christianity, although believing in one God or *Mwari*, uses some objects in the process of worship, such as beer, snuff, rods, beads, a spear or a sword. The practice of using objects in worship is also rife in Judaeo-Christian circles. Other critics have found offense with the use of beer as an anointing element. African scholars would argue that Christianity has also used wine that has alcohol content in the Eucharist. Putting aside the rudimentary elements characterising Shona religion, I agree with Gelfand's observation that Shona traditional religion does not belong to primitivism and barbarism.

Carothers' (1972:90) description of African forms of religion as belonging to a lower form of belief does not apply to the Shona religion which has traits that almost replicate the mainstream doctrines of Christianity. Carothers says, in reference to most African traditional religions, "In religion, the Native is expected to jump from animism to an idealistic Christianity". The Shona believe in revelation, inspiration, incarnation, life after death, good and bad spirits, heaven and above all, they believe in one God, the creator of the universe, the Super Being whom they call *Musikavanhu*. The Shona also believe in eternity, that there is a place where the spirits of the dead go to after death. Such beliefs are very close to the major tenets of Christianity such as that to relegate Shona traditional religion to the level of animism is prejudicial.

Gelfand's statement that, "But anyone who studies the Shona religion sympathetically will soon discover that he is dealing with a deeply religious people", (Gelfand, 1962:37) is an obvious indictment on his fellow European scholars and anthropologists who viewed Shona beliefs as mere animism and barbarism. We notice that when the Shona refer to Christ as '*diramhamba redu*' (our ancestral bull), there is deep theology that undergirds such a metaphor. As we noted in Chapter 4 above, a *diramhamba* is an ancestral bull that is imbued with the spirit of the clan ancestor. The ancestral bull is an embodiment of power, potency, fertility and when it is slaughtered, it unites all members of a lineage. The blood of the sacrificial bull is important in sealing the covenant between the living and the ancestors. The meat of the sacrificial bull is partaken as a symbol of unity in the extended family. When the ancestral bull is slaughtered, a great communion takes place, almost in the structure of the Christian Eucharist. The blood of the ancestral bull plays the symbolic role that is played by the blood of Jesus Christ in Christianity. In the Shona religion, the blood of the sacrificial bull is spilt as a sign of connectivity

of the living to the living dead. Such is the same role that the blood of Jesus plays in Christianity in that by His blood, Christ unites mankind with the Creator (*Musikavanhu*). Jesus remarked that those who do not drink His blood will not have any place in His Father's kingdom. Similarly, those who partake of the blood of the ancestral bull belong to the extended family.

Another type of spirit that the Shona believe in is the 'Shave' (stranger or foreigner's spirit). Etymologically, the word '*shavi*' originates from the verb, '*kushava*' (to toil for a living). A person who excelled in farming or hunting is usually described as having the *shavi* of such an activity or as *mushavi* (ones who works hard for a living). Possession by a *shavi* spirit follows a special initiation procedure as follows:

- The medium candidate suffers from a prolonged sickness which is diagnosed by a special diviner as having been caused by a *shavi* spirit that wants to possess the victim.
- The diviner prescribes a special ceremony for welcoming the *shavi* spirit. The ceremony usually consists of a beer brew, and special paraphernalia demanded by the *shavi* spirit such as a rod, snuff, beads, a sword, jewels, special cloths or regalia.
- At such an obsequy, the *shavi* spirit would manifest and announce its mission with the medium. If the spirit failed to manifest, the process would be started all over again as some technical procedure might have been bungled.

I have included a discussion of the *shave* spirit in my reflections on Philippians 2:5-11 because in Shona cosmology one might regard Jesus as a stranger to African culture (Cook, 2009:681). As detailed *in fra*, a *shave* or stranger's spirit was often welcomed into the Shona family if that spirit brought good fortunes such as creation of wealth, hunting skills, healing powers or excellence in farming. The Shona would readily welcome Jesus' spirit with its healing and miraculous powers just as they have always traditionally welcomed those spirits of strangers (*mashave*) that have benefited them through special gifts conferred on those that they possess. In this vein, the Shona describe the spirit of Christ as '*Mudzimu Unoyera*' (sacred spirit). They use the same word '*mudzimu*' to describe their ancestral spirits. This etymological intercourse between Shona traditional beliefs and Christ's spirit illumines on how the Shona will receive the 'mind that was in Christ' without any qualms or trepidation.

The Shona describe the 'Shave' as the spirit of an outsider who died in their territory and was buried there. The foreigner might have been a sojourner, a worker from another land, a hunter from another land or a person working for the prize of a wife from another tribe. After some time after the foreigner's death, his spirit possesses someone and makes that person do supernatural things. The spirit of such a person chooses anyone in the community and possess

that person. Gelfand says that the *Shave* spirit is that of a talented foreigner, a Matebele or Senna, who died many years ago, a stranger in MaShonaland and had not been decently buried. The spirit of that stranger will have wandered for a long time until it settles on a medium of its choice through whom it speaks. Once the *shave* spirit takes possession of a person, it enables that person to do extraordinary things. For example, if the deceased stranger was a hunter, the medium of that spirit begins to excel in hunting. A *shavi* spirit can enable the person it has possessed to do wonderful things such as: excellence in industry, accumulation of wealth, blacksmithing, welding, craftsmanship, or farming. This kind of belief is also not foreign to the Judaeo-Christian tradition where for example, according to Exodus 31:1-6 God is said to have filled Bezaleel with a spirit "of wisdom, understanding, and all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship". The story of Bezaleel shows that prior to receiving the spirit referred to in the verses cited above, Bezaleel was not able to perform such great works. In similar manner, a person who gets possession of a *shavi* spirit does things that are extraordinary in character. A person possessed by a *shavi* spirit can also become a prominent '*godobori*' (healer and diviner.)¹⁵

The dichotomy of good and evil is thus seen in morality issues both within the Shona tradition and Christianity. The Shona understand that when a foreign spirit comes upon a person, it enables him or her to do extraordinary things due to the supernatural power that has come upon them. Whereas Eurocentric scholarship doubts the ability of mortals to imitate the extraordinary feats of power and endurance achieved by Jesus, the Shona believe that if the Spirit of *Mwari* or of the ancestors or of a *shavi* comes upon a person, that person will be able to do unimaginable things. Thus, the ethical virtues demonstrated by Christ such as humility and self-emptying are attainable if one gets possessed by an external spirit or *shavi*. The Shona will view one who has the spiritual gift of healing in the same way they view a *n'anga* (divining herbalist). This thought

¹⁵ This researcher's uncle (father's elder brother) was possessed by a *shavi* spirit that specialised in acts of healing and divination. The spirit demanded occasional appeasement through special beer brews identified with its name, Sithole. We often heard that there was Sithole's beer night vigil at the end of which uncle would be possessed by Sithole's spirit and announce his further demands. It is important for us to understand that a *shavi* spirit can also cause dysfunctional behaviour such as stealing, witchcraft, violence, evil magic, lasciviousness and other vices. Often one hears someone saying, this or that one has a *shavi* of lying, a *shavi* of stealing, a *shavi* of gossip, implying that a foreign spirit that influences negatively has taken hold of the person. It is a noteworthy point that the rites of passage that are observed in the initiation of the *shavi* spirit have some replication in the Christian process of attaining salvation. The process that begins with the sinner receiving conviction, then regeneration, followed by Water Baptism and Holy Spirit Baptism depicts rites of passage in one's Christian life. We notice that in Christianity a person can receive the Spirit of Christ and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, faith, longsuffering, self control etc. (Galatians 5:22) while the contrast is also possible when the other person can receive a spirit that leads towards the works of the flesh such as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness and revellings. (Galatians 5:19-21).

arises out of the fact that in Christianity, one who operates in the gift of healing does so under the enablement of the Spirit of God while at the same time the *n'anga* also operates under the influence of the *shavi* of healing. Michael Gelfand notes that a *n'anga* is the medium of a healing and divining spirit. The spirit of divining and healing can be a familiar spirit which used to function in a great ancestor many generations ago. The *n'anga* has a special ability to diagnose diseases and their causes and to prescribe medicines that will help cure the diseases. If the person possessed by the spirit of a *n'anga* dies, the spirit can possess one of the children of the dead medium. The spirit is a good one and has to be retained in the clan. The *n'anga* is also addressed as '*chiremba*', a term also often used in reference to medical doctors.

6.4.1 Gleanings from Shona spiritism

Western scholarship has had a challenge with parts of Philippians 2:5-11 which deal with supernatural categories such as pre-existence and the incarnation of deity (Strimple, 1979:256). The questions of One who is equal with God (ἴσα θεῷ) dying in gross humiliation, the cursed death (θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ) on the Cross (Galatians 3:13), His self-emptying (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), obedience unto death (ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου) and post resurrection exaltation (ὑπερύψωσεν) as well as reference to things in heaven (ἐπουραίων), and things in earth (ἐπιγείων) and things under the earth (καταχθονίων) remain a challenge to Western scholarship. Käsemann (1950:313) dissociated God from the process of Jesus' humiliation and death on the Cross by suggesting that Jesus did not die in obedience to God but in obedience to forces of evil. Questions are asked among western scholars such as, how can One equal to God who went as far as death on the Cross truly be a model for modesty and humility? How can self-deprecation and crucifixion be linked together as normally, the self-humbling would not be crucified? How can One who took himself down to the lowest death truly become an example of humility? These questions which have boggled the minds of western scholars can be unravelled through application of Shona spiritual teleology.

The Shona view death as a means to a higher status just as Paul would say, "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). The Shona believe that death ushers promotion into the powerful realm of the ancestors. The ancestors are described as the living dead. Dying is not nihilistic. There is no extinction when one transits into the spiritual realm. There is continuation of life after death. Those that die join the hierarchy of the immortal ones who have the capacity to influence and control the destinies of those who still live in the flesh. The attachment of humiliation and shame to the death of Jesus Christ in Western exegesis is a different matter in Shona cosmology. The Shona believe that those who die in pursuit of the good of others especially for the interests of the masses attain higher ranks in the spiritual realm. Thus, as the Shona interpret the death of Christ on the Cross for all humanity, they see his death catapulting him to the highest level in the rank of the ancestors. When verse 9 says διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν (wherefore God

highly exalted him), the Shona would understand that to mean that God conferred the highest honour on Jesus for having sacrificed his life for the redemption or emancipation of all humanity. In the Shona culture, when one dies, they attain a new status and a new name altogether. It is quite interesting that even a person who did not have any material possessions in physical life will be accorded a higher status after their integration into the ancestral realm.

The Shona mourn their dead but with some degree of envy and admiration for them as they believe that the latter now assume a higher status than them who still walk on earth, called *ἐπιγείων* (*vapenyu*) (of the earth) in verse 10. Those who die are invariably called *vekumhepo* or *vepasii* of the air or of the underworld, herein called *ἐπουραίων* and *καταχθονίων* respectively. That Jesus got a superior rank that qualifies him to receive obeisance (*πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη*) of those in heaven and those in earth and those under the earth is testimonial to the level of sacrifice that he made for the good of others. The traditional Shona will see Jesus as a supreme and ultimate hero. This view is derived from traditional Shona epistemology on heroism that arises from acts wrought by individuals for the good of others. They would associate the heroism and exaltation of Jesus Christ with the order in rank just above their mhondoro spirits of great ancestors like Nehanda Charwe, Chaminuka, Kagubi Gumboreshumba and Nehoreka. It will help illumine the importance the Shona cede to the death and exaltation of Jesus Christ as the Greatest Ancestor close to *Musikavanhu* (the Creator) if a discussion of how Nehanda Charwe, one of the Shona celebrated territorial ancestors could be tabled at this stage.

The table below summarises the differences between Euro-American and Afrocentric perspectives on the concepts of pre-existence of Christ, the kenosis, death, post death exaltation and post-death life of Christ in relation to the aeonic semantics of the pericope. In the table, EAS stands for Euro-American perspective while AHS stands for Afrocentric Hermeneutical standpoint. The Gap in the centre refers to limitations or shortcomings in the Euro-American viewpoints which the Afrocentric hermeneutical lens seeks to address in a complementary way. The table shows how engaging Philippians 2:5-11 from a Shona cultural perspective stimulates new views on the interpretation of the text.

Table 6-2: Comparison between Euro-American and Shona cultural views on pre-existence, death and exaltation of Christ.

EAS	GAP	AHS
1. Some deny that the kenosis of Christ is for imitation by his followers. 2. Acknowledges the dual nature of Christ.	1. Lack of appreciation of the eternal past of the human spirit and its ability to incarnate in fleshly form. 2. Limited understanding or alternatively, lack of thorough	1. Posits that Jesus, like other human beings was originally with God in spirit form. Jesus later assumed the nature of ultra-spiritual beings in order for Him

<p>3. There is commendable scholarship on the post-exaltation of Christ (ὑπερύψωσεν) (πάν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουραίων) every knee of those in heaven and (καταχθονίων) of those under the earth but more avenues of interpretation can be developed through the Afrocentric method.</p>	<p>research on the possibility of immortality to co-exist with mortality.</p> <p>3. Inadequate understanding of death and post death dynamics or alternatively, insufficient research on the aftermath of the death experience. Treatment of Christ's death as a defeat, humiliation or loss possibly arises out of a superficial understanding of the destiny and fate of the soul of a dead person.</p>	<p>to relate with humankind. The Shona believe that all human beings emanate from Musikavanhu (God) and return to Him at death. Thus a new way of understanding pre-existence and incarnation is opened.</p> <p>2. The Shona believe in spirit mediums (masvikiro) who exist within both the spiritual and physical realms. The Shona thus, do not doubt the twin nature of Christ as God-Man because they already believe that their spirit mediums are representatives of the spirit world among the living just as they also represent the living in contact with the dead who are also called the living dead.</p> <p>3. The Shona belief system provides a new lens of understanding the death of Christ as transition into a better level where as a proto-ancestor he relates directly with Mwari Musikavanhu (God the creator of mankind), heroism is attached to the death of Christ, those in heavenlies refer to the dead whose spirits have been initiated into the level of senior ancestors who act as intermediaries close to Mwari Musikavanhu; those under the earth refer to the dead who are yet to transition into the enviable level of becoming ranked ancestors. Jesus is thus placed in the hierarchy of ancestral spirits where He qualifies to be the head or proto-ancestor through whom all petitions go to God the Father of the whole creation.</p>
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6.5 Philippians 2:6b οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ / Thought it not to be robbery to be equal with God / haana kutora kufanana namwari sechinhu chingabatisiswa

Fee (1999:94) states that there is growing consensus among scholars that οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ means that Christ Jesus had a preincarnate, glorified state which He did not grasp or claim for Himself. Fee (1999:94) sums up the general interpretation of ἀρπαγμὸν as referring to the act of Jesus not grasping equality with God (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ) for personal gain or advantage. Johnston (2015:11) finds that Christ did not use His preincarnate omnipotence for His personal advantage and suggests that Paul uses the example of Christ to encourage the Philippian Christians not to do things for selfish ambition, conceit or gain. A study of the meaning of this phrase οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ from a Shona cultural perspective,

enhances its fulcrum of selflessness as a leadership virtue. From the Shona cosmological perspective, Jesus' decision not to take advantage of His position of power fits into the concept of an ideal chief or king. Moyo (1973:53) points out that "the family concept and concern for all extends to the level of the chief or king". A Shona king or chief is expected to champion the moral virtue of caring for the welfare of others beyond one's own needs. As Moyo (1973:54) states, a Shona traditional leader is obligated to share his belongings with the needy members of his domain. Just as Christ did not use His position of equality with God to establish a worldly oligarchy and amass grandeur and riches for Himself, a Shona chief must ensure that material things are understood in terms of communal or kinship ties. The Chief is also expected to ensure that the concept of sharing material resources is extended to strangers who visit or sojourn in the national family community.

Gelfand (1973:150) states that a Shona village head is not expected to favour himself in the distribution of farming land and that in his dealings with his subjects he must avoid the temptations of profiteering and usury. Just as Christ Jesus embraced a likeness with all men (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων), a Shona chief is expected have a status of equality with his people. Gelfand (1973:153) observes that that the Shona chiefs he sampled for his study "behaved in much the same fashion as their clansmen throughout MaShonaland". Thus, οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ can be understood in greater light if it is interrogated through the Shona leadership etiquette. The selflessness of Christ has remained a conspicuous example for all people in authority to follow. Both Christian and secular leaders can draw rich lessons from Christ's attitude towards positional authority. While it is laudable that the Shona are inherently predisposed towards selflessness as a leadership ethos, one observes that some Shona leaders who have assumed positions of power at national levels have tended to abuse their positions of privilege for personal gain. Machingura (2012:223) analyses the political messiahship of the former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe whose administration represented megalomania and kleptomania at their highest levels. Machingura contends that 'Mugabology' thrived on positional abuse and self-aggrandisement. In the same vein, John Mbiti (1971:23) argues that comparison between the messiahship of Jesus and that of African leaders appears a craziest thing to do, given the sharp contrasts one notices thereof.

6.6 Philipians 2:7a-8a: An appeal for selfless leadership paradigms

In this section the thesis, I explore the meanings of ἐκένωσεν (2:7a), μορφὴν δούλου (2:7a), ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (2:7b) and ἐταπεινώσεν (2:8a). The meanings of the terms are explored relative to the values of the Shona Zezuru people in leadership epistemology.

The direct translation of *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* into Shona would be "*wakazvidurura*" (He poured Himself out). Pouring oneself out means sacrificing one's life, full dedication to service for the benefit of others, unreservedly rendering service to others. The Shona Bible translation translates *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν* to *wakazviita usina maturo* (made Himself nothing). The participle "*kuzviita usina maturo*" (made Himself nothing) is an ironic understatement or litotes in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary. *Kuzviita usina maturo* (made Himself nothing) actually suggests that Jesus was not what He made Himself to be. When Jesus emptied Himself, He was not demoted or rendered nothing by other people. Among the Shona, one who inflicts degeneracy upon oneself actually gains accentuation and acceleration in status. Humility is expressed through self-abasement among the Shona. Mandova (2013:361) states that those members of the Shona community who are prosperous are discouraged from boasting about their position in society. "The Shona are aware that nobody praises himself but the lowest among them", (Mandova, 2013:361). The Shona believe that the way down is up and the way up is down. If one is to rise in status, one is expected to be humble and not be haughty and presumptuous. This virtue of the Shona is expressed in the following proverbs:

- *Aiva madziva ava mazambuko* (What used to be pools are now fords). This proverb warns those that are prosperous today to treat the less privileged with respect because they may find themselves poor tomorrow and begging from those they ill- treated yesterday.
- *Gudo guru peta muswe kuti vadiki vakutye* (Senior baboon should fold its tail in order to earn the respect of the little ones). This proverb warns those that are powerful not to be haughty and boastful before the weak in order for them to continue earning the respect of their subjects.
- *Chaitemura chava kuseva* (One who used to eat morsels of thick porridge without relish now dips morsels into gravy). This means that those who were less privileged in the past now live sumptuously (Mandova, 2013:362).

To the Shona, life is a see-saw in which down portends up and vice versa. By emptying Himself, Jesus actually paved His way for God to highly exalt Him (*ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν*). Shona wisdom holds that when one is on top of a mountain, the next location is a valley. "Above" precedes "beneath" and vice versa. Euro-American scholars see "humiliation", "shame" and "defeat" when Jesus took the form of a servant (*μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*), humbled Himself (*ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν*) and died what Euro-American scholarship calls "shameful death" on the Cross (*θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ*). In that journey of self-sacrifice and pain, the Shona actually see aggrandisement, gallantry grandeur and heroism.

Whilst Euro-American scholars see the death of Jesus on the Cross as the lowest ebb in His humiliation, the Shona actually believe that death marks the beginning of a more honourable and venerable life in the spiritual realm. Gelfand (1973:111) observes that the Shona believe that once in the land of the ancestors, a dead relative begins to play an intermediary role between the living, the great ancestors and *Mwari* (God). As the Shona read about the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, their philosophy echoes Paul's statement in Philippians 1:21 when he says, "to die is gain" (τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος). The Shona believe that there is improvement of life after death. While Paul might be saying to die is gain because He would then be with Christ (τὸ αναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι (Philippians 1:23), the Shona would wish to die and gain by joining the ranks of ancestors. There is homology and resonance between Paul's idea of gain in death and the Shona belief in elevation after death. To the Shona, Jesus died and joined the superior rank of great ancestors. Hence, Paul would be understood in the context of Shona culture as saying if he dies, he will join "ancestor Jesus". Nurnberger (2007:29) and Beyers & Mphahlele (2009:2) argue that a phenomenon which is common among most African traditional communities, thus, including the Shona, is the belief that when a person dies, he or she acquires supernatural power and a sacred status which enables them to mediate between the living and God to protect the living from danger, guard cultural traditions and ethics.

Jesus became like a slave (μορφήν δούλου), lived as a vulnerable and ordinary mortal (σχήματι εὐρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος) and ostensibly further ebbed downward by dying the cursed death of the Cross (ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ). From a Shona perspective, Jesus' seemingly descent in honour was actually an ascension into unfathomable potency. Mwandayi (2011: 223) avers that the difference between the living and the "living dead" is that the "dead-but-living" now wield much more power than they had during their terrestrial existence. As we have stated in the opening of this section, in Shona epistemology, the way up is down. Jesus' descent into the grave was a mere prelude to His exaltation and glorification. Mokhoathi (2018:1) argues that the likening of Jesus to a Great or Pro-Ancestor is a vain attempt to use the person of Christ to venerate ancestor worship. This researcher maintains, as do other African scholars such as Eze (2008:106), Loba-Mkole (2000:1119-1120) and Stinton (2004:112-142) that the crux of the matter is not ancestral worship but it is making Christianity more communicative with African cultural heritage. As Beyers and Mphahlele (2009:1) say, the names or titles given to Jesus by African Christians are in line with their belief of what they think Jesus can do for and to them, what He can be, who He is and who He is not. Such an approach is not peculiar to the African communities in general and to the Shona in particular, but is even found in Jewish history where the Jehovah names of God took the complexions of dynamic *sitz im leben* of the Jewish people. In times of war, plenty, plagues, disasters, harvest, festivities and jubilation, the Hebrews gave their God contextual names. It is also a philosophical fallacy and gap to

associate the term "ancestor" with profanity. The New Testament uses the term "genealogy" in Matthew 1:1 to refer to Jesus' "ancestors" who include David, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob among others. The Shona translation of the Bible uses the term "*madzitateguru a Jesu*" (the ancestors of Jesus). Nyamiti (1984:28-29) traces the ancestry of Jesus to Adam, arguing that He had to be a member of the Adam genealogy in order to rescue all humanity from the scourge of sin. The Gospel of Luke, chapter 3:23-38 traces the genealogy of Jesus to Adam. If Jesus had parents and great parents, He therefore joined an ancestral line after His death. Jesus was born into the royal family of David, into the lineage of Adam. Nyamiti (1984:28) concludes that Jesus is the brother of all humanity in Adam. Nyamiti (1984:22) describes Jesus as a brother-ancestor since He shares a common parentage with the whole humanity in Adam. Jesus convincingly satisfies the criteria for ancestorship according to Shona cosmology. One should have lived a virtuous life to qualify as an ancestor (Nyamiti, 1984:15; Kabasele 1991:118). According to the Shona one who qualifies to be an ancestor should have been a law abiding citizen, not wrathful, not quarrelsome and should have been an advocate for peace and harmony.

The following table summarises reasons why the Shona would interpret the death of Jesus as a promotion to ancestor status. The table presents similarities between the roles of Jesus Christ and those of a Shona great ancestor.

Table 6-3: Similarities between Jesus and the Shona great ancestor

JESUS	SHONA ANCESTOR
1. The role of mediation between God and men is ascribed to Him (1 Timothy 2:5).	1. The role of ancestors is to mediate between Mwari (God) and the living (Kabasele, 1991:123-124, Bediako, 1992:217, Gehman, 1999:178).
2. He died and received exaltation after death. (Philippians 2:9).	2. Those who die earn a new elevated status in the spiritual realm (Bujo, 1992:79).
3. Jesus continues to influence His Church family even after death (Philippians 2:5).	3. The ancestors participate in the affairs of the living hence their designation as "the living dead" (Wanamaker, 1997:293).
4. Is respected by those under the earth (καταχθονίων) (Philippians 2:10).	4. As a proto-ancestor and ancestor par excellence, all other ancestors pay homage to Him (Bujo (1992:79).
5. Jesus' death meant His transition from the physical to the spiritual realm (Philippians 2:8).	5. One can only be considered as an ancestor after death (Nyamiti, 1984:26)
6. Jesus was highly exalted after resurrection, ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν (Philippians 2:9).	6. The dead among the Shona earn the ancestor title after their spirits are brought back in a <i>kurova guva</i> post death ritual (Healey & Sybertz, 1996:210).

From the above table, we notice that Jesus' death did not deserve pity. The elements of humiliation and shame attributed to Jesus death by Euro-American scholarship are invalid when one interprets the death from a Shona perspective. Jesus' supposed abnegation was apparently

a rise to glory and honour. This researcher does not agree with Mokhoathi (2018:13) that Ancestor Christology is a non practical paradigm that only justifies the veneration of ancestors under the name of Christ. In Shona cosmology, there is no competition between Jesus and the ancestors in rank. Jesus is recognised as next in rank to God the Father in the hierarchy of the ancestors.

6.7 Kenotic and servant leadership models: ἐκένωσεν, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν and μορφῆν δούλου λαβών

Nthamburi (1992:108) argues that the problem of inequitable distribution of wealth and power in third world countries and particularly in Africa is essentially "a moral question". This researcher agrees with Nthamburi's view that selfishness in African elites and political leaders is the main reason behind the suffering of the majority of the people on the continent. Philippians 2:5-11 offers important lessons from the life of Christ for African leaders to emulate and imitate. Narcissism, selfishness and self-aggrandisement in Zimbabwean leaders triggered sanctions by Europe and America resulting in the once bread-basket nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate dropping to -17.20 between 2013 and 2017 (Tradingeconomics.com, 2018). The Berean Study Bible quotes Jesus in Mark 10:42-44 saying to James and John, *"You know that those regarded as rulers of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their superiors exercise authority over them. But it shall not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all"*. The latter confirms that humility and the putting of others first is what Jesus wished for His disciples as opposed to following a leadership path focused on power, authority and control. The self-emptying (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν) and self-humbling (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν) demonstrated by Christ are moral keys that unlock God's mind on leadership and governance. In Philippians 2 verses 3 and 4, Paul admonishes the Philippians to order their lives around a set of values in which they place others before self. From verse 6 to 9 Paul then uses the perfect example of Christ to demonstrate how believers should handle leadership positions.

Jesus' swing from the divine to the human and back to the divine demonstrates that for one to assume a divinely approved greatness, one should empty and humble oneself, get to the level of those one leads and by doing so, bounces back into loftiness with both divine and human approvals. Thus, the initial descent from the divine to the human is only a prelude to a stronger and more reinforced leadership that cannot be shaken. From the perspective of transformational hermeneutics (Adamo, 2015:31), the self-emptying and self-humbling of Jesus Christ presents a challenge on contemporary leaders in Africa generally, and in Zimbabwe in particular, to approach leadership from kenotic and servant paradigms. As Bass and Steidlmeier (1999:181), argue, a transformational leadership is one that calls upon leaders to assess their moral

character and concerns for self and others. Philippians 2:1-11 advocates for an approach to leadership that is based on ethical values of self emptying, humility, self-giving, selflessness and a deep sense of love for others. A leadership that Zimbabwe and Africa at large need is one that emphasises on looking on the welfare of others as opposed to caring for oneself only. (μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι) Philippians 2:4.

The kenotic and self-humbling leadership encouraged in Philippians 2:5-11 resonates well with Shona leadership philosophy. As Mandova (2013; 359) argues, the Shona traditional society is against individuals who seek fulfilment beyond the context of the group. A person who aspires to take up a leadership responsibility ought to enshrine in his or her philosophy of leadership, the mantra, "I am because we are and since we are, I am" (Mandova, 2013:359). A Shona leader is thus expected to pivot his or her leadership on such moral values as reciprocity, participation, harmony, hospitality, solidarity, connectedness and cohesion. Leaders in a Shona context are therefore expected to view their positions in relation to the broad aspirations of the community. The Christ model of kenotic and servant leadership with its thrust on promoting the good of others as opposed to self fits in very well within the traditional Shona ethical tapestry. Ringson (2017:54-55) describes how traditional Shona chiefs care for the disadvantaged people in the community namely those with disabilities, poor people, strangers, widows, orphans and vulnerable children by running a social welfare programme called *Zunde RaMambo* (The King's Granary). The chiefs set apart a piece of land which is tilled and farmed by the whole community at designated times during the cropping season. All the members of the community under a particular chief take turns to prepare the land, weed and harvest the crops from the *zunde* or communal field. The harvested crops are then stored in the Chief's granary where they are kept until times of food shortages when the grain can be distributed to the needy as mentioned above. Ringson (2017:55) asserts that "in addition to other benefits such as solidarity, networking, empowerment and social cohesion, the *zunde raMambo's* main purpose was to ensure that the community had adequate food reserves that could be used in times of food shortage or special occasion such as rituals for the clan or rain ceremonies". From the *zunde raMambo* concept, it is noticeable that a leader within Shona worldview is someone whose mind should be similar to the mind which was in Christ Jesus (φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Such is the mind that considers the good of others including the weak, the poor and the vulnerable. As noted under section 4.2 above, the *zunde raMambo* concept has been politicised by the ruling ZANU P.F. party and converted into a vote buying and gerrymandering tool. The departure from the original purpose for which the *zunde raMambo* project was instituted due to patronage and megalomania is in itself an antithesis to the kenotic leadership which was exemplified by Jesus Christ. Thus, as argued above, the absorption of traditional leaders into

ruling party structures in Zimbabwe for the purposes of mileage in elections negates the moral ethics that formed the bases of traditional leadership philosophy.

Kenotic leadership among the Shona is exemplified in an observation by Gelfand (1973:150) when he points out that a good traditional leader or *sabhuku* is not expected to have "ukukutu" (despotism). Such despotism could manifest through the *sabhuku* taking or keeping the best fields for himself. The traditional leader is expected to motivate those with exceptional skills other than begrudge or rival them. In disputes, the traditional leader of the Shona is also supposed to arbitrate and unite the bickering parties without taking sides. Gelfand further observes, "For harmony to exist, all bad will and selfish motives must be removed from the society". When one observes the greed that characterised the regime of Robert Mugabe's ZANU P.F. party in the redistribution of land, the conversion of donated food to a political tool and the general politicisation of civil services, one rightly concludes that Mugabe's style of leadership was a departure from traditional Shona leadership values. Gelfand (1973:150) observes that the Shona excluded the profit motive in all its forms. The removal of profit or gain by the Shona is a troupe of selflessness element in the kenotic leadership style of Jesus Christ. Another cultural trait of the Shona that resonated with the kenotic leadership style of Philippians 2 is the dislike of usury and interest. Those who engage in trade in the Shona community use rates of exchange that are well known and are standard. Gelfand (1973:151) highlights that even in matters of borrowing from one another, it does not matter how long a debt may stand, the lender may not charge the borrower for the use of the original capital. Shona moral ethics thus discouraged avariciousness in all its forms. As Gelfand rightly observes, such cultural values reduced the likelihood of tension, strife and jealousy in the community.

Jesus' decision in Philippians 2:6 to climb down to the level or form of a servant (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών) resonates with the Shona virtue of subservience as a virtue of leadership. The Shona expect their leaders to act like servants to the community. As Gelfand (1973:153) observes, the traditional leader of the Shona is expected to set an example by not living differently from the rest of the people. Gelfand (1973:153) notes that the chiefs in MaShonaland (land of the Shona) are expected to behave in the same fashion as the ordinary man. This is the same attitude that was in Christ who took on the fashion of an ordinary man (σχῆματι εὐρεθεῖς ὡς ἄνθρωπος). A chief of the Shona is not supposed to create an impression of superiority above other members of society. His style of life, including that of his family, must not appear different from that of his subjects. The chief's subjects actually respect him more if he humbles himself (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν).

In his study of the lifestyle of the children of the Shona chief, Gelfand (1973:154) notes with awe that the sons and daughters of chiefs followed the same pattern of life lived by the children

of their clansmen. This is unlike the current leaders in Zimbabwe who live sumptuously while the rest of their countrymen wallow in abject poverty. The current leaders in Zimbabwe have formed into an elitist aristocracy whose lifestyle is characterised by flamboyance and reckless extravagance. The former first lady of Zimbabwe, Grace Mugabe, earned herself a reputation for privilege and extravagance during a period of economic turmoil in the country. Forbes magazine columnist, Guy Martin (2017, November 18) describes Grace Mugabe as having a decadent history of luxury shopping, a regular in the world's fashion capitals and well known for her jewellery, designer shoes, dropping rock-star levels of cash in the best shops of Paris, Rome, and London, earning herself the derisive nickname "the first shopper or Gucci Grace". Analysts have rightly described the Mugabe regime as a kleptocracy. The leadership philosophy of the Shona does not approve of lavishness while the majority are languishing in penury.

The social inequalities caused by unequal distribution of wealth in Zimbabwe are a result of egocentric and selfish leadership models that must be discarded and replaced with the servant and kenotic models of Philippians 2:5-11. As observed by Gelfand (1973:154), the children of the traditional Shona chief were not accorded any special favours due to their parentage. That is no longer the case in modern Zimbabwe where the children of those in power learn abroad in Europe, Asia and America while the children of the poor majority swell the ill-equipped and dilapidated classrooms countrywide. Thus, the current scenario warrants the pericope's clarion call on the Zimbabwe political leadership to espouse servant and kenotic leadership models for the benefit of the majority of the country's citizenry. Leaders in Africa in general, and in Zimbabwe particularly, should understand that humility is not diminution of honour.

Utley (1997:180) argues that when Jesus took on the form of a servant by becoming a man, He did not lose His position of being equal with the Father (John 10:30). Jesus needed to come down to the level of humanity in order to minister among them. This writer agrees with Utley that humility is a requisite virtue for effective service. If a leader is to serve among ordinary people, he or she has to come down to their level through self-humbling (*ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν*). Roof (2013:6) argues that Jesus' humility consisted of Him making a choice to humble Himself by becoming a man and adding manhood on His existing divinity. The manhood enabled Jesus to assume servanthood down to the point of dying on the Cross. Jesus demonstrated that in an environment where everyone is pursuing honour and high statuses, a believer ought to act differently by choosing the downward path for the sake of others. The servant leadership model teaches leaders to come down to the level of those that they lead. Coming down to the level of one's subjects enables the leader to understand the followers well. The researcher agrees with Jowers (2006:740) that it was expedient for Jesus to take on the form of a man so that He could understand the human condition. After Jesus understood the human condition, He appreciated the seriousness of the need to die for humanity on the Cross in obedience to the will of His

Father. The problem in the world today is that leaders do not understand the conditions of their followers. In Zimbabwe, leaders only mingle with ordinary people when they are soliciting for votes on the eve of elections. As soon as they 'win' the elections, they are not seen until the next election campaigns. That is unlike the servant approach of Jesus Christ. Jesus became one as men (, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). Gelfand (1973:154) noticed that the Shona chief has to mix with his people, attending functions such as beer parties with them. The chief is expected to mix well and to meet with many people. Gelfand confirms that, "he must be part of the people and not live on a different plane". Jesus was on the same plane with humanity to the extent that He could sacrifice His life for them by dying on the Cross (ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ).

Servant leadership demonstrated by Jesus consists of putting the needs of others first, sharing His power with all humanity through identifying with mankind and empowering all who believe in Him by setting an example of how exaltation is earned. The servant leadership model of Christ turns the traditional leadership pyramid upside down. Whereas in most traditional leadership scenarios, it is the leader who is served by his followers, in the Jesus model, it is the leader who serves the followers. In Mark 10:45 Jesus declares that His mission was to serve and not to be served. His mission was to pour out His life for the salvation of many. Zimbabwe and Africa at large need leaders who pour out themselves for others. When they pour out their lives for those they lead, the followers will feel obliged to honour such sacrifice by loving them and upholding their moral principles. The opposite has been the case whereby those in leadership positions have used their power to impoverish their countries and their people. Philippians 2:5-11 presents a fresh view of power, authority and altruism which puts to test the relevance of the master-servant, king-subject and boss-subordinate designations in both secular and ecclesiastical organisations.

As a conclusion to the discussion on the contextual implications of Jesus' self-emptying and self-humbling, the following points stick out from the foregoing analysis:

- Instead of viewing the kenosis of Jesus Christ with awe, consternation and pity, it is soothing to note that the 'from divine to human and from human - back to divine' itinerary of Jesus as depicted in the pericope, is in fact a leadership model that can be adopted for social transformation in Africa.
- The pericope shows that the lower down one goes in protecting the interests of others, the higher up one is catapulted in exaltation. Kummel (1973:153) supports this observation when he argues that following the extreme humiliation that He went through, "for this reason, God has exalted the humiliated One even above His previous divine nature and

has given to Him the highest name, the name of Lord, so that now all beings in the world should confess Jesus Christ as Lord and thereby honour God".

- Euro-American scholarship meets with Shona cosmology in premising Christ's humility before his exaltation. The Afrocentric paradigm views what Christ experienced as part of an initiation process in which one moves from an inferior status to a much higher status with new rights and responsibilities. In African cosmology, a person meant for greatness passes through initiation stages which might include going through dishonour, purification rights and imposition of a new name. Schreier (2002:8) argues that Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection can be interpreted as part of His initiation into the Higher (κύριος) office.
- It has also emerged from the foregoing reflection that there exists conceptual and philosophical proximities between the kenotic message of the pericope and Shona leadership epistemology.

6.8 In likeness/fashion as men/man / ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων/σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος

The phrases ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος (being made in the likeness of men) and σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (being found in fashion or appearance as a man) are an endorsement of the historical Jesus at the beginning of His earthly life, having existed before as a divinity (Marshall, 1968:116; Sanders, 1971:66; Hamerton-Kelly, 1973:168). Kummel (1973:153) states that Jesus was in essence like God but chose to surrender His likeness to God as a sign of obedience to God. Jesus assumed the human form of existence thereby, subjecting Himself to the powers of the world. Kummel (1973:153) further notes that Jesus' obedience to the Father's will made Him descend further to dying the shameful death on the Cross.

The word γενόμενος (was made) comes from γένομαι which means to become. It means that Jesus assumed a new form when He became a man. He had always existed in the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ). ὁμοιώματι (likeness) is from ὁμοίωμα which means a form or resemblance. In addition to referring to Jesus being made in the visible likeness of men, it also captures the sense of Jesus actually having the human likeness of men. It means that when Jesus entered the realm of human history, He was in the actual form of a man and was a man in every respect. Galatians 4:4-5 and Hebrew 4:15 both explain that Jesus Christ became a man so that He might understand the real situation and circumstances of mankind, that is, their sins, infirmities and depravity. As we have noted above, Jesus' becoming like men (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) and his being found in fashion as a man (σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος)

presents an important leadership lesson in modern governance. In becoming like a man, Jesus demonstrates that leaders can climb down to the level of their followers in order to remove gaps and schisms between the leader and the led. When the leader walks in the shoes of those that He leads, collective bargaining processes become irrelevant because leaders will meet the needs of followers without being asked as he or she already knows their needs. Paul confirms in Romans 6:8 that Christ died for all believers even before they repented.

6.9 Jesus as man / ἄνθρωπος / Jesu Semunhu in Shona epistemology

When the Shona say, "*akaitwa nomufananidzo womunhu*" (He was made in the likeness of men) (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) in reference to Jesus Christ and, "*akawanikwa anomufananidzo womunhu*" (found in fashion as a man) (σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), they are saying things that are vastly philosophical, metaphysical and epistemological. The discursive engagements by Euro-American scholars on the two phrases, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος and σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος have tended to be confined around the sense of One who was God becoming a human being, His humanity as an expression of humility, His humanity as an assumption of slavery to worldly powers, leading to a shameful death on the Cross. In this section, I discuss the various shades of interpretation that the Shona would sculpture from the two phrases.

What is "*munhu*" (man) (ἄνθρωπος) or "*vanhu*" (men) (ἄνθρώπων) in Shona philosophy?

Before I attend to the meanings attached by the Shona to the term "man", it is important to explain that the Shona belong together with the Ndebele, the Zulu, the Xhosa, the Sesotho and the Ndaou to dialectical family called *Bantu* languages (Battle, 2009:2, Mangena, 2012:11). In Shona, *Bantu* (people) is *vanhu*, a plural form for *munhu*, translated man in Philippians 2:7-8. A *munhu* (man) is expected to show *unhu* (humaneness). In Southern Africa, the idea of '*hunhu*' or '*ubuntu*' connotes community, communalism, moral attributes of a person in relation to others and how individuals relate with societal norms and values. *The New World Encyclopaedia* (2018) states that the concept of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* among African communities captures the ideas of humanity towards others, a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity, human generosity, having consideration and being human towards others. Mandova (2013:100) defines *unhu* as a social philosophy which embodies virtues that celebrate the mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust and sharing, unselfishness, self-reliance, caring and respect for others among other ethical values.

When the Shona read the phrase ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων (likeness of men) which they translate "*mufananidzo womunhu*", the following ideas flash in their mental faculties.

Samkange and Samkange (1980) argues that in Shona philosophy *unhu* (being a man) means that one recognises the humanity of others and on that basis, seeks to establish respectful human relations with them. Samkange and Samkange (1980) further state that one who has *unhu* (humanity), is one who, if faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, the one should opt for the preservation of life. Samkange and Samkange (1980) further aver that the king owes his status and all the powers associated with it to the will of the people under him. Thus, in relation to the pericope under this study, when Jesus was made in the likeness of men, in Shona philosophy that means that He identified with human beings and regarded them as belonging to the same status and esteem as Himself. The Shona would, in that sense, view Jesus as one of them, perhaps as an elder brother (Sawyerr, 1968:72; Schreiter, 2002:121.). According to the second maxim of *unhu* (humanity) given by Samkange and Samkange (1980), one who has *unhu* (humanity) will choose to preserve human life over wealth or self-benefits. This is exactly what we see in Jesus choosing to become a man, taking on the form of a slave, a dying the death of a criminal on the Cross instead of clinging to His equality with God (ἴσα θεῷ). The Shona believe that kings are kings because of the people.

Another version of the meaning of *unhu* (humanity) is given by Gelfand (1973:139). Gelfand says *unhu* refers to a person's character and personality (Gelfand, 1973, *ibid*). *Unhu* is a very critical requirement for every member of the Shona community. An ill-mannered child is said to lack *unhu*. The parents of a child who misbehaves are blamed for failing to train their child. Gelfand (1973:139) writes, "*Unhu* is the correct way of living according to the teachings of the Shona elders. A person with *unhu* behaves in a good way, respects his parents and sets a good example." In the pericope, Jesus sets a good example as a son who is obedient to His Father. He maintained His obedience to the point of dying on the Cross. A child who is rude and does not respect his or her parents is said to be devoid of *unhu*. Jesus had *unhu* in that He did what pleased His Father, who in turn rewarded Him by giving Him a name which is above every name (διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα). Shona parents have a custom of rewarding their sons who display *unhu hwakanaka* (good manners). When God saw what Jesus had done by demonstrating humility and obedience to the point of death, He rewarded Him with the name κύριος (Lord). What God the Father did is typical of what is done to a male child who excels in acts of bravery especially as a hunter. Such a child is given the name *hombarume* (distinguished hunter). One who excels in farming is given the name *hurudza* (master farmer) (Gombe, 1998:130). The Shona reward *unhu* with names that speak to achievement and outstanding personality.

The other sense of *unhu* among the Shona refers to maturity. A grown up child is said *ava munhu* (has become a man) Gelfand, 1973:140). As the child grows, his *unhu* also increases.

Such an increase in maturity is depicted in Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man". From that perspective, it can be argued that Jesus increased in wisdom to such an extent that He reasoned that if He humbled Himself to the point of dying on the Cross, His Father was going to reward Him with a glorious name and status which would exceed the one He had before He became a man.

The Shona describe Jesus' condescension by saying, "akazova munhu kuvanhu" (He became a man among men). In that sense, the Shona will be claiming that Jesus became an embodiment of *unhu* which encompasses all those virtues that maintain harmony and the spirit of sharing among members of a community (Samkange & Samkange, 1980). The phrase "kuva munhu kuvanhu" (becoming a man among men) (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) means that one becomes an exemplary figure, one who shows everyone else the way. Thus, when Jesus was found in fashion as a man (σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), He became the perfect embodiment of moral virtues that are approved by the people, the ancestors and God (Gelfand, 1970:1). There is also a sense in which Jesus' becoming a man among men might mean that He actually became a kinsman, a close relative who can take care of the concerns of His relatives. The Shona believe that only kinsfolk can settle spiritual enigmas for one another. Gelfand (1970:3) explains that if an avenging spirit (*ngozi*) is haunting a certain family, only a member of the family's clan can appease or placate the anger of that avenging spirit. In that vein, the Shona would view Jesus Christ as a kinsman redeemer when He sacrificed His life on the Cross. This kinsman redeemer concept is also found in the Jewish tradition where it refers to a male relative, who according to laws found in the Pentateuch, had the privilege or responsibility to act for a relative who was in trouble, danger or need of vindication.

The Shona also conceptualise "man" in terms of the philosophy that a man is part of a whole and therefore cannot make decisions for himself and disregard society (Gelfand, 1970:5). In this sense, when Jesus became "munhu kuvanhu" (a man to men), He could not make decisions for Himself but had to bow His own will to the needs of mankind at large. Gelfand (1970:5) sums up his article on *unhu* by observing that Shona philosophy revolves around "munhu" (the human being) with an almost complete neglect of the material aspects of life, a feature of the Shona way of life that contrasts so greatly with that of the Euro-American world. Gelfand's view illumines our appreciation of how the Shona understands the humanity of Christ.

To the traditional Shona, *unhu* (virtue or character) is more precious than material wealth. When Jesus emptied Himself (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), of the loftiest of all statuses as an equal to God (εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ) choosing instead, to live in fashion as a man who dies without anything to His name (καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), He qualified as *munhu kuvanhu* (man among men) (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) in Shona epistemology. Christ could have used His power to

establish Himself as a superhuman oligarch but chose to humble Himself (*ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν*), holding on to the virtues of humility, obedience and selflessness. To the Shona, that which Christ did constitutes *unhu*, hence Jesus was *munhu kuvanhu* (man to men). If Jesus had chosen glamour and splendour instead of the virtues of humility, obedience and selflessness, the Shona would say *arasha unhu* (He has lost good manners). A child *anorasha hunhu* (who loses good manners) does not represent his father well in public and brings reproach and shame upon his family. Gelfand (1973:139) notes that a child who pays no respect to his parents and disobeys them is devoid of *unhu*. Thus, in obeying His Father even unto death, death of the Cross (*ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ*), Jesus displayed *unhu* as an obedient Son.

In Shona cultural cosmology, it is noticed that Jesus' humanity is a lot more than Him appearing in human flesh. His humanity is to do with His moral standing, His relation to the whole human race, all creation and to His Father. Euro-American scholarship has commendably reflected on the humanity of Jesus but has tended to limit the notion of His humanity to the level of *σωματική ἐμφανίση* (bodily appearance) or outward form (*εἶδος*). The Shona do not ascribe the designation *munhu* to every person. To be conferred with a *munhu* status like Jesus, a person has to pass the test of goodness or virtuous living of which the major attributes include communalism, solidarity, kinship, sharing, humility, harmony, unselfishness, connectedness and cohesion. This scenario is different in Euro-American cultural settings where competition, individuation, distinctiveness, privatism, classes and status symbols define life (Mandova, 2013:100).

Moessner (2009:124) observes that in the background of Paul's writing was the Roman Empire with its status symbol conscious culture where every person pursued *cursum honorem* (honour and status). Moessner (2009:124) further states that even the non-elites who did not qualify for honour joined the competition for *gloria* (fame) and *famae* (*reputation*). Such a pursuit of fame, honour, reputation and status symbols was captured in the words of Cicero, one of the most famous orators of all time in European philosophy when he said, "Nature has made us enthusiastic seekers after honour, and once we have caught, as it were, some glimpse of its radiance, there is nothing we are not prepared to bear and go through in order to secure it". Another first century European intellectual, Seneca, who tutored and advised Emperor Nero also said, "The one fixed principle from which we proceed to the proof of other points is that the honourable is cherished for no other reason than because it is honourable". Against that background where fame, honour, reputation and status were so fashionable, Jesus distinguished Himself as *munhu* by opting for what Euro-American scholarship has termed shame and defeat by the powers of the world. As we have noted above, in Shona etymology, *unhu* is a great attribute. When Christ became a man unto men (*ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων*

γενόμενος), He qualified for conferment of the most conspicuous honour from the God (διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα).

The Shona believe that real honour is conferred on a person who has *unhu* by the ancestors and *Mwari* (God). Such honour, in Shona cosmology, does not consist of material possessions which they believe are transient. The Shona believe that real wealth is in *unhu hwakanaka* (commendable character). Poverty is not determined by lack of material wealth but by lack of *unhu*. This explains why the Shona encourage their children to choose a spouse not on the basis of their family's possessions but on the *unhu* factor. How a family relates with others and responds to the communal call to solidarity, kinship, harmony and togetherness determines whether suitors want to marry from them or not. Jesus was the ideal and perfect *munhu* (man) with unquestionable *unhu* (acceptable ethos and virtue). To conclude this section, the following points stick out:

- Jesus' being made in the likeness of men (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) constitutes the first step in His path towards receiving the highest honour from God (διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν).
- Christ's *unhu* (humanity) is intrinsically a shining example of humility, selflessness, solidarity, obedience and servant leadership.
- Jesus fits well into the scope of elder brother and kinsman within the context of Bantu speaking communities.
- By appearing in fashion as a man (σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), Christ identified with the situation affecting all humanity.
- The *unhu* (character and attitude) demonstrated by Jesus Christ in humbling Himself challenges all leaders and in religious organisations, politics and industry to self-introspect on their moral choices.

6.10 Summary

The main thematic issues of the pericope were isolated for in-depth analysis from a Shona cultural perspective. Thematic issues discussed were namely, the mind that (was) in Christ Jesus (φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) verse 5; the form of God (μορφῇ θεοῦ) verse 6a; thought it not robbery to be equal with God (οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ) verse 6b; self-emptying (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν) verse 7a, form of a servant(μορφὴν δούλου) verse 7a, verse 7b, he humbled Himself (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν) verse 8a; and made in the likeness of men(ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) verse 7b, being found in fashion as a man (καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος) verse

7b. There are two ways of interpreting the mind which was in Christ according to Euro-American scholars, the soteriological or kerygmatic interpretation on the one hand and the ethical interpretation on the other hand. The kerygmatic interpretation dismisses the moral teaching of the pericope, arguing that the mind of Christ being referred to in verse 5 is a once off salvific experience that happens to a person at the time of receiving Jesus as saviour.

The ethical interpretation is premised on the argument that verse 5 functions as a conjunction between issues Paul raises in verses 1-4 and matters that arise in verses 6-9. In verses 1-4 Paul is admonishing the Philippians to live in harmony, unity, to be humble, to think of others more than they think about themselves, to avoid rivalry, selfishness and self-esteeming. The paraenesis picks up momentum in verse 6 with a clarion call to imitate the humility of Christ and reaches its crescendo in verses 7-8 where after descending to the level of a mortal man, He exercised obedience to the point of dying like a slave on the Cross. The mind which was in Christ Jesus is viewed in graphically novel ways from a Shona cultural perspective. In Shona etymology, the mind (φρονεῖτε) could refer to attributes of compassion, mercy, empathy, love, longing or fondness, hospitality and sharing. There is a shift from the meaning of the "mind" as a location of ideas or thoughts, in Euro-American philosophy, to the "mind" as an embodiment of attitudes, feelings, sentiments and temperaments in Shona epistemology. As it were, the concept of mind (φρονεῖτε) migrates from the head to the heart. Ironically, the Euro-American scholarship's hermeneutical approach to Philippians 2:5-11 is anchored on "heady" views while the Shona interpretation is "heartly" in texture.

Μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God) also assumes contentious trajectories of interpretation based on two axioms namely the pre-existence and hypostatic views respectively. The pre-existence view holds that Jesus pre-existed his appearance in human history. The argument holds that before His entrance into human history, Jesus existed as God and with full attributes of divinity. The use of ὑπάρχων (being) in verse 6 is interpreted as suggesting that Jesus possessed the attributes of divinity in the eternal past and continues to do so in the eternal future. On the other hand, the hypostatic argument holds that Jesus was a human being like any other human being but was visited by the "form of God" as a mediatory figure. This argument holds that there was a point in history when the nature of God rested on a natural man, the historical Jesus of Nazareth. This view holds that there was a pre-Pauline practice of conferring divine attributes on non-divine objects or beings such as angels and humans. Jesus was therefore lucky to have been favoured by God as one such being as to receive divine attributes. The view is also known as Adam Christology whereby it is held that Jesus of Nazareth did not have equality with God prior to the moment in history when He chose not to take advantage of the μορφῆ θεοῦ (form of God).

Euro-American scholarship wrestles each other along these two axiomatic arguments with the pre-existence forte winning the majority of support. Generally, it is observed that Euro-American scholars are averse to those aspects of the pericope which deal with pre-existence and supernatural phenomena. As a result, those scholars who cast doubt on the pre-existence of Christ also dismiss His self-emptying, question His obedience unto death and exaltation. The Shona lens of interpretation introduces fresh possible meanings of the term μορφή θεοῦ. The tentacles of the meaning in Shona epistemology border around Christ having attributes of innocence, blamelessness, moral uprightness, integrity, chastity, eternal existence of the human spirit as it originates from Mwari (God), hence, the view of Jesus as an ancestor. Shona interpretation relates Jesus' mediatory role between God and men to the duty of their ancestors to channel their petitions to *Mwari* (God) through a hierarchy of spirits of the departed. Jesus is assigned the role of the most senior ancestor or proto-ancestor through whom all the other ancestors can channel their supplications. Jesus' death is viewed as Jesus' passage into the community of ancestors. The magnitude of Jesus' self-sacrifice is interpreted as having earned Him the Head ancestor position. Those who die in feats of heroism for the cause of many people like Nehanda Nyakasikana and Jesus receive promotion from Mwari (God) and their names are changed in terms of the size of territory that their power of attorney covers. Jesus rose above all other ancestors because His territory of influence encompasses many nations while Nehanda Nyakasikana has the rank of a *mhondoro* (rain making and national protection spirit). The language of the pericope is consanguine to Shona death and afterlife beliefs. Jesus is highly exalted after death. This is consistent with Shona belief that those who die assume higher statuses in the spiritual realm. The pericope refers to those in the heavens (ἐπουρανίων) (*vari kumhepo*) and those on earth (ἐπιγείων) (*vepanyika*) and those under the earth (καταχθονίων) (*vepasi*) (verse 10). The above categorisation of beings resonates with the categorisation of people in Shona cosmology. The Shona believe that there are three categories of people namely, those who are still living in the flesh (ἐπιγείων), secondly, those who have died but their spirits have not been repatriated through post death obsequies (καταχθονίων) and those whose spirits have been redeemed from the underworld and now occupy positions of rank among the ancestors (ἐπουρανίων). Jesus' resurrection is viewed by the Shona as part of His part of initiation into the ranks of the ancestors where He takes position as the proto-ancestor who reports directly to *Musikavanhu* (creator of mankind). Christ's death on the Cross is regarded as a type of Nehanda Nyakasikana death for the cause of her people. Jesus is thus called *diramhamba redu* (our sacrificial bull) because He died for the cause of all humanity including the Shona.

The chapter also analysed οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ (thought it not robbery to be equal with God). Although Christ was in a position of power and authority, He chose not to use

such power and authority to His personal advantage. His attitude to power and authority is discussed in comparison with the abuse of power and privilege by African and Zimbabwean leaders in a way that reinforces the ethical value of the pericope. Zimbabwe leaders have paradoxically claimed the messiahship role during times of social crises such as famine and other natural disasters which include cyclones. The chapter in pages 107-110 compared the Messiahship of Christ with that of African leaders in general and of Zimbabwean leaders in particular. In a sharp contrast to the leadership of Jesus Christ, Zimbabwean leaders have used power and authority for personal aggrandisement and gain. While Jesus did not regard His equality with God (ἴσα θεῷ) as something not to be grasped, Zimbabwean leaders, typical of most African leaders, have used force, hook and crook and brutal stratagems to cling to power. The chapter has also revealed that the Shona philosophy of leadership agrees with the stance of Jesus not to use power and authority for personal advantage. Shona traditional leaders are expected not to live sumptuously above the level of their subjects. Scholarship surveyed in this chapter revealed that the style of leadership that Mugabe's government adopted from 1990 was a departure from the Shona ethos of leadership.

The chapter further analysed Christ's self-emptying (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), His assumption of a form of a servant (μορφὴν δούλου), His likeness to men (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) as well as His appearance in fashion as a man (σχῆματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος). Christ's kenosis and descent to the level of humanity introduces a novel leadership philosophy herein called kenotic leadership. Kenotic leadership challenges modern leaders to put the interests of others first and theirs second. It is a leadership model that is anchored on moral values of self-sacrifice and selflessness.

The kenotic leadership model functions as a sister to the servant leadership model in which leaders serve their followers in an upside down fashion. The condescension of Christ reverses the traditional leadership pyramid. Leaders in the traditional model demand to be served. Leaders are encouraged to empathise with the led, to move into the position of the ordinary men just like Jesus did. The self-abnegation of Christ appeared in interpretational lens of Euro-American scholars as a demotion or drop in honour but in Shona cosmology, by going down, Jesus was actually on His way up. To the Shona, Jesus went through an initiation process which started with His looking like a man, followed by taking on the form of a servant, appearing as a man, dying on the Cross and then ended with His resurrection and exaltation. The culmination of Jesus' initiation process was His appointment to a position next to Mwari (God) as a proto-ancestor.

As the most senior ancestor among the living dead, all the living (ἐπιγείων) (*vepanyika*), those in heaven (ἐπουρανίων) (*vekumhepo*) and those under the earth (καταχθονίων) (*vepasi*) report to

Him before they reach *Mwari* (God) who is also called *Zame* (the transcendent One). Thus, the self emptying, humiliation and obedience of Christ to the point of death are viewed as steps towards the most superior status in comparison to the fleeting honour that citizens of the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus and Paul were pursuing. The humanity of Christ is viewed from Shona cosmological trajectories and new dimensions are generated to understanding His likeness to and appearance in fashion as a man. His humanity, for example, over and above the usual connotation of the historical Jesus, is found to relate to His moral traits which, in Shona ethnography, constitute the qualities of a man (*munhu*). The moral traits which constitute *munhu* (a man) (ἄνθρωπος) in Shona epistemology include humility, selflessness, harmony, compassion, kinship ties, solidarity, self-abasement and servant leadership. That all the above moral traits were found in Jesus Christ qualified Him to be called *munhu kuvanhu* (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων) (made in likeness of men). When the Shona read the pericope, they will understand ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος as saying that in Christ were found attributes of genuine humanity such as innocence, blamelessness, moral uprightness, integrity and chastity. To conclude this chapter, it is important to list in point form, the key issues it has unearthed in respect of the hypothesis of the thesis. The hypothesis is that complementarity between Euro-American scholarly views and an integrated Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm will bring forth new ways of interpreting Philippians 2:5-11.

6.11 Conclusion

Euro-American scholarship has unearthed and laid bare the worlds behind and inside the text. The influences of pre-Pauline Christology, Roman Empire classical philosophies, second temple Judaism, early Christianity and Hellenism in the texture of the text have been given commendable treatise. However, the Afrocentric hermeneutical trajectory in this thesis will demonstrate how the pericope (Philippians 2:5-11) relates to the world in front of the text. The Afrocentric model which we have applied through Shona cultural perspective has helped us to realise the following:

- Inculturation helps to make biblical interpretation alive to existential concerns of humanity and especially, but not confined to marginalised communities.
- Philippians 2:5-11 can assume new hermeneutical elasticity if it is viewed from the perspective of an Afro-optic lens.
- An interpretation arises which fosters social transformation as a filler of gaps created by the transcendental approaches of Euro-American scholarship.

- A hair-raising approach to the study of New Testament morality arises in which communalism combines with ancestralism to guarantee and promote the sustenance of God loving and united communities.
- A new approach is introduced to New Testament studies which challenges the notion that ancient texts are abstracted from contemporary situations by historical and time gaps. The proximity of Philippians 2:5-11 to Shona moral principles negates the belief in Western scholarship that the pericope offers no ethical code for contemporary communities.

CHAPTER 7: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 AS HYMN GENRE IN LIGHT OF SHONA HYMNODY

7.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, focus is made on the form of Philippians 2:5-11 as a hymn. The characteristics of the hymn genre in the Pauline corpus are discussed relative to Shona hymnody. The purpose and function of the New Testament hymn with a particular focus on Philippians 2:5-11 is discussed parallel to Shona traditional hymnody. Such an approach further illumines the meaning of the pericope.

7.2 The Pauline hymn genre

The word 'hymn' is translated from ψάλλω in the Pauline corpus where it refers to worship in religious song based on the Hebrew psalter (Hengel, 1978:174; Martin, 1982:38). Price (1937) defines a Christian hymn as "a lyric poem, reverently and devotionally conceived, which is designed to be sung and which expresses the worshipper's attitude towards God, or God's purposes in human life.". Price (1937) lists essential ingredients of a Christian hymn which include: a metrical poem, reverent and devotional in nature, poetic and literary in style, spiritual in quality, expresses the worshipper's attitude towards God and unites the congregation who sings it.

Martin (1982:40) states that Messianic Hymns were sung in Jewish-Christian circles in the first century Jerusalem church. Evidence of the use of hymns in the early church can be drawn from the Lucan canticles, the *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46-55; the *Benedictus*, Luke 1:68-79, the *Gloria in excelsis*, Luke 2:14, and the *Nunc Dimmitis*, Luke 2:29-32 and fragments which are found in the book of Revelation such as Revelation 15:30. Allen (1971:104), Martin (1982:40) and Reumann (2008:39) agree that the source of Paul's hymn genre is the Jewish-Christian early church liturgy. Jipp (2018:1) stresses that hymns in the Pauline corpus originated from the early church practice of celebrating and bestowing worship upon Jesus Christ the Messiah. Paul adapted the early Christian hymns to emphasise his discourses on the lordship of Jesus Christ. Jipp (2018 *ibid*) describes some features of the hymnic material in the Pauline corpus which include: parallel statements, vocabulary that is distinctive to the author, the frequent use of pronouns, and elevated prose. Jipp further highlights the contents of the hymns which were sung in the first century. The hymns dwelt on the bloody death of Jesus and how it procured humanity's salvation, the resurrection and enthronement of Christ, His headship of the Church and His return as the ruler of the universe. Jipp (2018:2) observes that the prominent hymns in the Pauline corpus are Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20 and 1Timothy 3:16. The purpose of

hymns in early church liturgy was to teach early believers the content of their confession and to socialise them into the hegemony of Jesus as the sovereign ruler of the universe.

The early church messianic or Christological hymns touched on the following aspects:

- Celebration the Christ event.
- Defence of the faith (apologetics).
- The sovereignty of God in the affairs of men despite suffering and persecution.
- The vindication of Christ's suffering through His resurrection and exaltation as Head of the Church.
- The glorification of Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, as the stone rejected by the builders but was now raised to the position of honour by God Himself.
- The worship of Jesus as the son/servant (παῖς) of God now highly exalted by the Father.
- Celebration of the *maranatha* or coming of the Jesus.
- Celebration of the triumph and victory of Jesus.
- Expression of gladness and joy (ἀγαλλίασις) in anticipation of the second coming (παροῦσιᾶ).

The major traits of early Christian hymns can be summarised as simplicity, depth of religious feeling, didactic elements, propositional, hortatory, commitment to patterns such as trinitarian, conversational, Hebrew based thesis, antithesis and synthesis, paradoxical, petitionary, litany, words of Jesus and penitence. Tobin (2006:91) argues that the Philippians 2 hymn should be understood within the context of how the church in the Greco-Roman period made use of early Christian literature to further its ritual interests. Sprinkle (2013:139) argues that another function of hymnic material is to contrast God's righteousness with man's sinfulness. The hymn genre thus, creates a platform which leads to anthropological pessimism in which the divine has an upper hand over the human. Sanders (2017:292) contends that in hymnic genre, the author usually magnifies human fallibility while at the same time amplifying the abilities of God. God's righteous acts are highlighted against humanity's wicked deeds. Sanders further argues that the hymn genre also highlights the righteous and perfect way that the deprave humanity must follow.

Martin (1982:44) states that Paul also introduced a hymn genre called 'the prayer-speech hymn' (1 Corinthians 14:15) which celebrates what God has done in human history through the ministry of Jesus Christ, praises God's power in Christ and reminisces the great exploits of God throughout human history. The saints of the early church prayed through singing. In the prayer hymns, they would mention their faith experiences, the progress of the Gospel in the world and the coming of the kingdom of God. Another form of hymn in the Pauline corpus is the παρακλήσις and served didactic purposes. The παρακλήσις were helpful for cascading teaching, correcting erroneous teachings and instructions on how to apply principles of faith as well as building the congregations spiritually. Martin (1982:44) states that the παρακλήσις hymns were spontaneously composed by spirit filled saints who sang under divine unction. Examples of such hymns are found in 1 Corinthians 14:15, Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18-20. Due to the prophetic nature of the hymns, those who composed the hymns were believed to be prophets.

Martin (1982:45) argues that Paul often took over pre-formed liturgical passages (hymns) and set them into the flow of his epistolary discourses. The famous three such hymnal texts are Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20 and 1 Timothy 3:16 (notwithstanding the Deutero-Pauline arguments in respect of 1 Timothy). As Philippians 2:5-11 is the pericope this thesis is focusing on, it is helpful for us to examine its hymnal characteristics as well as discuss its significance as a hymn. Martin (1997:xxiv) claims to be standing on firm ground in stating that Philippians 2:5-11 represents a hymnic specimen which Paul took over as a *paradosis* from an early Christian source that had a Jewish origin. Paul then used the specimen as a tool for addressing questions that faced the Church as it confronted the larger Hellenistic world of the Greco-Roman society. Features of a hymn found in the pericope include praises to a divine being, poetic characteristics and lexical repetitions. Although Martin, with the concurrence of a majority of New Testament scholars, have agreed that the pericope is a hymn due to its stylistic and poetic features, Reumann (2008:362) prefers to call it an *encomium* rather than a hymn (Groebe, 2013:18). The features of an *encomium* include: prose character, written in honour of an individual and praise to human subjects. Gordley (2011:100) argues that Philippians 2:5-11 should be called an *encomium* because it lists someone's origins, good deeds, service on earth, fame and titles conferred. The text was written against a background where heroic figures were celebrated and eulogies written to their account. Groebe (2013:20) argues in favour of the hymn categorisation of Philippians 2:5-11 on the grounds that the human attributes of Christ are discussed only in relation to His divine nature and that there are no specific acts of achievement highlighted in the fashion of an *encomium*.

Fee (1992:29) confidently describes Philippians 2:5-11 as a hymn when he says, "but the one place where there has been a general consensus is that it was originally a hymn; in fact, the

language "Christ-hymn" has become a semi-technical term in our discipline to refer to this passage in particular". Fee (1992:31) lists the following hymnal traits in the pericope:

- The $\delta\varsigma$ at the beginning of verse 6 is paralleled in other hymnic passages such as Colossians 1:15, 18; 1Timothy 3:16.
- The language is exalted and is rhythmic in character.
- There is structured parallelism typical of Hebrew poetry.
- The language and structure of the text bear some internal coherence that makes it peculiar in comparison to the rest of the discourse in the epistle.

Fee (1992:31-32) highlights some non-hymnic aspects in the text such: lack of Greek hymnody or poetry character, lack of the rhythm and parallelism expected in song material, exalted prose does not guarantee hymnic categorisation when one is dealing with Paul, who can introduce exalted prose whenever he thinks on the work of Christ and the poetic style departs from the usual balanced structures, parallelism and chiasmus styles of Paul. Despite such observations, Fee concludes that the pericope is best described as a hymn as it follows the Jewish poetry patterns in contrast to Greco-Roman hymnic forms.

Gloer (1984:115) identifies the following traits in hymns:

- Presence of a quotation particle.
- Use of the double infinitive and the accusative to express indirect discourse.
- Presence of certain introductory formula.
- Syntactical variances.
- Stylistic differences.
- Linguistic differences.
- Content of an excursive nature focusing on the Christ event including praise.
- Parallelism.
- Rhythm.
- Chiasmus.

- Antithesis.
- Participial style.
- Relative style.
- Arrangements in strophes, verses and stanzas.
- Highly stylised construction.
- The presence of different passages that contain the same basic form.

O'Brien (1991:189) summarises the criteria for identifying New Testament hymns into stylistic and linguistic categories respectively. Under stylistic category, the criteria deal with a certain rhythmical lilt when the passages are read aloud, the presence of *parallelismus membrorum* (an arrangement into couplets), the semblance of some metre, and the presence of rhetorical devices such as alliteration, chiasmus and antithesis. Under linguistic category the criteria a hymn includes, unusual vocabulary particularly the presence of theological terms, which is different from the surrounding context.

When one reads Philippians 2:5-11, the majority of criteria used in determining if a pericope is a hymn is cogently met. The pericope is a highly stylised construction with parallels elsewhere within the Pauline corpus. The language is rhythmical and antithetical in its contrast between divinity and humanity. One also observes some technical variances in style in a way that amplifies the intended meaning. The sentences are also crafted in strophic and stanza fashion. When a holistic reading of the text is done incorporating verses 1-4 as well as verses 12-14, the Christ event is highlighted including its benefits for humanity. There is participial style and theological terms such as kenosis, Lord and exaltation emerge. The righteousness and otherness of God in terms of righteousness and exemplary morality on the part of Jesus qualifies the text as a hymn. The text also contains hortatory messages for believers in terms of how they should conduct themselves in the community. Jesus Christ is presented as an icon of the faith movement who deserves honour and praise. The humiliation and shame of Christ is turned into triumph and victory. The characteristics of a hymn are therefore met in Philippians 2:5-11. It is also important to note that one of the intended purposes of hymns was to unite the Church members as they sang together. Philippians 2:5-11 encourages harmony, unity, solidarity, selflessness and humility, traits which were found in the early church members when they met and identified with one another, "speaking to each other in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19).

7.3 Features of Philippians 2:5-11 as a hymn

In terms of structure, Lohmeyer (1961) arranged the hymn into six strophes of three lines. Joachim Jeremias sought to improve upon Lohmeyer's structure by introducing three strophes of four lines. According to Fewster (2015:5) in his article, Lohmeyer delineated a strophic structure of the hymn as follows:

- ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ
- ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν
μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν,
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·
- καὶ σῆματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου
- διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν,
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα
τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,
- ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων,
- καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται
ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

It is noteworthy that Lohmeyer's delineation has six distinct strophes of three lines each. He also removes from verse 8 the phrase, *θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ* (death on the Cross), arguing that the phrase is a Pauline insertion given its disruption of the six strophes-three-line structure. Jeremias (1953:152-154) argues that Lohmeyer's arrangement of strophes disrupts clear verbal parallels in the hymn. Lohmeyer stands accused of blatantly ignoring the conceptual and verbal parallels between the phrases, *ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος* and *καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος*. Jeremias argues that the two phrases should not have been separated.

Jeremias also comes up with his own reconstruction of the hymn which accommodates parallelisms in the hymn as follows:

- ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγάγησατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ

ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν

μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,

- ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·

καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος

ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν

γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,

[Jeremias omits the phrase: *θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ* "death on a Cross"]

- διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν,

καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα,

ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντων γόνου κάμψη

καὶ πάντα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς

While Jeremias is commended for rationally fitting and knitting together the parallelisms in the hymn, he accomplishes his task by redacting some parts of the hymn. He removes part of verse 10 which says *ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων*, (of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth) and *δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς*. (to the glory of God the father); removes from verse 11. Just as Lohmeyer justifies himself for removing part of verse 8, Jeremias also justifies his removal of parts of verse 10 and 11 by saying those phrases are Pauline additions to the earlier hymn. Talbert (1967:143) also comes up with his own schema of the hymn's structure,

introducing four strophes with three lines each. Talbert, like Lohmeyer and Jeremias, excises the phrase, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. Talbert's schema revolves around two parallel lexemes, ὑπερύψωσεν and ἐχαρίσατο. The strophe structure follows the complete thought that develops from this parallel. Each strophe has three lines with the key term repeated. Martin also works on his own schema of the hymn's structure, emphasising an antiphonal form for liturgical chanting. Martin excises from the hymn the same phrases that Jeremias removed. His structure emerges with six strophes of two lines each. Martin's structure of the hymn is an attempt at reconstruction of the hymn's original social context.

It is important that we highlight the tendency by these scholars to excise one or more phrases from the hymn as it appears in the epistle itself. Fewster (2015:196) calls this habit "an unfortunate characteristic" while Hooker (1975:158) argues that an ideal structure of the hymn should maintain the hymn as it is without removing pieces of it. The idea behind the structuring and restructuring, constructing and reconstructing of the hymn's schema arises from the understanding that there is a close relationship between literary structure and meaning. Gundry (1994:272) also comes up with a chiasmic structure to the hymn based on finite and participial phrases. As he tries to reach chiasm C' in his formation which is based on finite verbs and participles, Gundry discovers that there is a shortage of participles and the chiasm can no longer hold at that point. Other scholars who attempt to structure the hymn along the chiasmic model are Breck (1987:72) and Moessner (2009:139)

Powell (2009:350) arranges the verses of the hymn to resemble a modern hymn as follows:

- Take on the mind which was in Christ
- Though He was in the form of God
- He did not regard equality with God
- As something to be grasped
- But emptied Himself
- Taking the form of a slave
- Being born in human likeness
- And being found in human form
- He humbled Himself

- And became obedient unto death even death on the Cross
- Therefore, God also highly exalted Him
- And gave Him the name
- That is above every name
- So that at the name of Jesus
- Every knee should bend
- In heaven and on earth and under the earth
- And every tongue should confess
- That Jesus Christ is Lord
- To the glory of God, the Father

Martin (1997:36) also arranged the lines of the hymn into six couplets in a way that suggests suitability for antiphonal chanting. Martin's rearrangement of the hymn starts on the sixth verse as follows:

- A. v6 (a) Who, though He bore the stamp of the divine image,
 (b) Did not use equality with God as gain to be exploited;
- B. v7 (a) But surrendered His rank,
 (b) And took the role of a servant;
- C.v8 (a) Accepting a human like guise,
 (b) And appearing on earth as the Man;
- D.v9 (a) He humbled Himself,
 (b) In an obedience which went so far as to die;
- E. v10 (a) for this, God raised Him to the highest honour,
 (b) And conferred upon Him the highest rank of all;

F. v11 (a) That at Jesus' name, every knee should bow,

(b) And every tongue should own that Jesus Christ is Lord.

7.4 Features of Shona hymnody

The history of Shona Hymnody is traceable back to the mid 1850's with the production of school readers, grammars, Bibles and hymn books, (Kahari, 1981:94). Kahari (1981:95), says, "Missionaries deployed themselves at various strategic points in the country: Dutch Reformed Church at Mogenster (1891), the Jesuits at Chishawasha (1892), The American Board Mission at Chikore (1893), the British Methodist Mission at Waddilove (1896), the Anglicans at St Augustine's (1897), and the United Methodist at Old Umtali (1898). The Protestant Churches soon translated the Bible (1911) and hymns, both of which were used in the fashion of traditional genres". Dube (1996:106) states that after the Second World War, musicologists from denominations such as the Methodist, Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Lutheran Church studied the characteristics of traditional music in Zimbabwe in order to determine how best the music could be incorporated in those churches. An Ecumenical Arts Association was formed in 1968 to look into how traditional music could be integrated into church hymns. Following that initiative, musicians such as Dumisani Maraire, Simon Macheke and Chawasarira wrote hymns that contained traditional cultural lyrics and morphologies. Hymns were written fusing biblical language and traditional philosophy. The fusion of traditional Shona music forms with Christian music from the West created a new, Afro-optic way of understanding the Word of God. Dube (1996:107) argues that the Christian Church provided a new context for the performance of African music. Euba (1989:17) argues that Africanised churches allowed syncretistic musical forms which blended African, African American European musical traditions. It is important to note that before the incursion of missionary activities in 1890, Shona tribesmen were already familiar with hymn genres after interactions with travelling hunters and traders (Chitando, 1999:334). The blending of music genres from different cultural backgrounds helped in making the message of the hymns clearer to the indigenous populations. In this chapter, Hymn Number 21 from the Shona Hymn Book of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe shall be studied as a model of a Christian hymn containing indigenous epistemology and philosophy.

Amanze *et al* (2010:171) posit that after the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965, the Roman Catholic Church took a radical position in support of a new form of church music which borrowed from both Euro-American and African music forms. The chief proponents of such an approach to church hymns were Father J. Lenherr, Father Joseph Kumbirai and Father Ignatius Zvarevashe who advocated for the production of a worship Shona hymnody which accommodated traditional beliefs and ritual. Father Joseph Kumbirai particularly sought for the

integration into the hymnody of the Shona ritual of *kurova guva* (bringing back the spirit of the dead). Father Zvarevashe also emphasised the monotheistic character of the Shona traditional religion insisting on the integration of the Shona belief in the intermediary role played by ancestral spirits. Chitando (2002:11) argues that the philosophy behind the Roman Catholic priests' advocacy for the assimilation of Shona traditional beliefs in the Christian hymns was to preserve those beliefs which were good and beneficial for posterity; to remove them from the list of those beliefs of the Shona which the Europeans had labelled as "primitive" and accorded them a place in the "religions of mankind". It is important to note, here, that the definition of what was "primitive" and fit to be in the category of "religions of mankind" came from Eurocentric philosophy that segregated against African philosophy.

Lenherr (1977:109) states that during the 1930s, there was discontent in the Roman Catholic churches in Zimbabwe about the Hymnody that was being used called '*Dzimbo Sande*'. The discontent arose from the realisation by the Shona converts that the songs sung in the churches did not address their desires. Mwandayi (2011:60) notes that as a result of the lobbying for inclusion of the interests of the Shonas in the hymnody, translation of hymns into Shona language started around the 1940s. Mwandayi states that some new hymns were actually composed with a solo chorus pattern borrowed from African musical form. Towards the 1950s and 1960s, there was increase in the momentum of incorporation of African forms of music in the Church hymns. Mwandayi states that in December 1964, 26 delegates from 10 African countries met in Kitwe, Zambia for a workshop on how to compose church music. At that workshop, it was resolved that drums and other African instruments of music such as *hosho* (rattles) and wooden clappers be allowed in the churches. It was further agreed that those who were going to compose and train others in music had to use the rural settings in order to ensure that the hymns maintained the African traditional flavour. After the successful Kitwe workshop on music composition, Abraham Maraire released nine hymns in February 1965. Maraire wrote the nine hymns in traditional African style and fitted Christian texts to traditional Shona songs.

What is interesting about this process of assimilating and integrating African traditional musical forms in the Shona hymnody is that later below when we start the inculturation of the Christ Hymn, we observe that Euro-American scholarship employed a strictly redactionist perspective to the hymn, purging it of what they perceived as unoriginal, Pauline material. Our stance is that when a hymn arrives in a community, it must address the desires and needs of that community. There was nothing amiss about Paul adapting the pre-Pauline version of the Christ Hymn to the situation prevailing at Philippi. Incorporation of indigenous musical forms into the church liturgy became a compelling agenda in many mainstream churches that include, apart from the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches. When we talk of a Shona hymnody, we are therefore talking about a Christian worship hymn written in the

Shona language and in a way that captures traditional Shona philosophy and religious thought pattern. In the next stage of this discourse on the Shona hymnody, we will give an example of a Shona hymn that borrows from both Western and African music forms. We shall identify African cultural thinking in the hymn and build on it to inculturate the Christ Hymn in Philippians 2:5-11.

7.5 The place of music in Shona community

Generally, music of the Shona people is a tool for social cohesion and solidarity. In Shona music, there is very little distinction between the performer and the audience as both are actively involved in the making of the music. Shona music is not just intended for entertainment. It has the following roles as well:

7.5.1 Informational role

When the Shona people sing, their music carries messages for the hearers to heed. The music carries useful information which is packaged in epigrams that constitute the stanzas of the music. Ezra Chitando (2002:22) notes that music among the Shona was used as an expression of dissent, correcting mistakes and for lamentation. The element of protest also punctuated the Shona song whereby the powerless and the downtrodden found expression of their resentment and disappointment with the status quo through song. An example of protest singing is music by popular singers Oliver Mtukudzi and Thomas Mapfumo whose music in the 1970s resonated with lamentation and revulsion at the political status quo. Their music ended up being called '*Chimurenga*' (war) music. The feature which dominated protest singing was an appeal to God or *Musikavanhu* for His divine intervention in crises situations. Kwaramba (1997:2) states that one of the functions of music in the traditional Zimbabwean culture was educational. Singing was meant to instil knowledge in the young and the adults.

7.5.2 Motivational role

Shona music is motivational in nature. In the wake of calamities, drought, war, bereavement and other sorrowful moments, Shona music plays an epideictic role. During funerals, the Shona people sing so passionately and dance throughout. The effect is that they forget the pain and misery they are facing.

7.5.3 Encouraging role

The Shona people sing to encourage participation and team work. They sing to encourage each other when they are doing corporate projects. When it is planting season they till their fields collectively during an arrangement called a *nhimbe* (which literally means combined effort). Each family leaves its own field and the whole village converges at the field of the family whose turn it is for the *Nhimbe*. If the purpose of the *nhimbe* is hoeing or weeding, the participants line up at the beginning of a contour. They are given a signal to start the hoeing. As they hoe, they

will be singing a song that everybody joins in rhythmically to the weeding. When they get to the end of the field, they assume another line facing the initial starting point and they again start weeding amidst song. The song gingers them into a spirited performance as they do the hoeing. The role of music during collective work is more exciting and captivating, especially when the Shona are threshing corn such as millet, rapoko or sorghum. The men surround a heap of millet to be thrashed for the purpose of separating the grain from the chaff. Each one of them will be holding a long thrashing stick. They have to thrash at the same time with all their strength until the chaff and the grains are separate. As they thrash, they sing in unison and when the thrashing reaches some crescendo, women usually ululate in appreciation of the spectacular display of strength by the men. The song is usually a repetitive rendition of a simple chorus. The sound of the threshing sticks performs the role of the music instrument. The effect of music at threshing floors is unitary.

7.5.4 Preservation of History

Chitando (2002:21) states that "despite the challenges that face musical research in Africa and in studying the musical traditions of the Shona in particular, through oral tradition and reconstruction from Portuguese documents and other sources, it can be established that musical performance has been engraved on the Shona collective consciousness since the very distant past.". Chitando notes that through the application of source criticism, Shona songs can also be a prime carrier of history in an African context. Citing Beach (1980), Chitando posits that since the 10th century when the Shona settled at Great Zimbabwe, music was important to that traditional society. The music that was sung in the traditional Shona society included war songs, signal drumming, as well as music and dance for weddings, funerals and religious events (Berliner, 1981:21).

7.5.5 Court Eulogies

Music also played a key role at the king's court where groups of singers were instituted to sing praises to the King of the Mutapa kingdom. Singing at the King's court was done mainly for the entertainment and praises of the King and his court officials. According to Chitando (2002:21) musical performance has been built into the way of life of the Shona people where it covered the social, political and social spheres. The tendency to use music to venerate kings or rulers does not necessarily belong to the past. Even in the contemporary Shona way of life, one notices that each time the then Head of State, President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, who himself is a Zezuru, was meeting with the people at political rallies, hordes of traditional singers and dancers perform music to the President's honour and for his and his court's entertainment.

7.5.6 Invocation role in ancestral cult

Music played a very important role during rituals performed in honour of the dead relatives, called a *bira*. A *bira* could be arranged for the purpose of appeasing an angry ancestral spirit whose wrath could only be placated through a special protocol intensive ceremony. The angry ancestral spirit would demand a special brew of beer and a night vigil of singing and dance was organised where the spirit mediums would be possessed by the spirits of the departed relatives. The manifestation of spirit possession would only take place after performance of special music by specialist *mbira* players called '*vana gwenyambira*.' *Mbira* music is the traditional music associated with the ancestors of the Shona people. *Vana Gwenyambira* were talented *mbira* players who were approved by the ancestors. Novices were not allowed to play at a *bira* and if the music was not played satisfactorily, the ancestors would not manifest. *Mbira* music features in different forms but the most eminent are the *Mbira dzevadzimu* (the *mbira* of the ancestors which have 22 keys).

During a *bira*, the *vadzimu* confirm their acceptance of appeasement by possessing a spirit medium and speaking directly to the family members through the spirit medium. The way the *mbira* instrument is played speaks to the value ascribed to unity and togetherness in the Shona society. The *mbira* keys themselves are arranged on a special wooden board in a way that denotes unity. When the instruments are being strummed, both hands and almost all fingers of the two hands are involved to again demonstrate the importance of togetherness in the Shona community. Those that are involved in the singing have to follow a prescribed formation that also depicts togetherness. According to Axelsson (1993:29), and with the concurrence of and Chitando (2002:22), vocal Shona music has three parts. These include the leading part called '*mushauri*' meaning the one who leads, or '*muvambi*' meaning the one who begins. Those who respond to the *mushauri/muvambi* are called '*vatsinhiri*' meaning those who agree or accompany. The third part is that of '*mahon'era*' meaning bass respondents. There are also other singing patterns whereby the singing parts alternate and in some cases all the parts sing at the same time. Berliner (1981:26) notes that sometimes, the singing is simply a matter of humming and yodelling.

Ghanaian ethnomusicologist, Kwabena Nketia (1992:121) states that African societies are united and bound together into a coherent whole by music especially during social occasions, community service projects, recreational activities, ritual events, festivals, putting out fires and building bridges.

7.6 The influence of eurocentrism on Shona music

As we have noticed, music accompanies the life of the Shona person from cradle to the grave. At birth, they sing songs of jubilation and at death, they sing songs of sorrow. From the womb of mother humanity to the womb of mother earth, there is the company of music among the Shona. Our Afrocentric hermeneutic asseverates that Euro-American hegemonic philosophies disturbed and disrupted African communalism which was highly entrenched in our music. We agree with other African critics when they aver that "where African communalism had thrived where no distinction between the sacred and the profane had been made and where artistic products were not pursued for financial rewards, the Europeans introduced individualism, new religious traditions and shameless commercialism", (Chitando, 2002:26). Much as Shona music was embellished with African philosophy, African history and African theology, Eurocentrism inevitably targeted Shona music for distortion and disruption. As Asante (2000:18) notes, "Zimbabwean dance is African dance, it is southern African dance, it is Zimbabwean history, it is religion, it is cosmology, and as such, it is a canon by which the cultural phenomena of the arts in Africa can be examined". Eurocentrism, whether caricaturing as colonialism, imperialism, Western or American scholarship, has never wanted 'other' cultures than their own to have a commendable history. Shona music binds people together into a formidable social force. Music that promotes social cohesion and belongingness in 'other' cultures was relegated to barbarism and primitivism. It is not surprising therefore that, even as Euro-American scholars approached the Christ Hymn in Philippians, they assigned to the past contexts such a lively hymn that speaks not only to the first century but also to contemporary times.

Eurocentrism introduced new attitudes to music, new instruments such as the guitar, accordion, the banjo, the harmonica, drum kits and cymbals (Zindi, 2003:17). Whereas in the traditional Shona cultural context music was for free consumption and enjoyment by the community, Europeans introduced commercialism and profiteering from music. Dube (1996:106) argues that there was a major shift even in the centres of entertainment. Whereas under the traditional system places like chief's court, farm lands, public domains, homes and villages, places of public works were entertainment points, Eurocentrism introduced a new approach to music whereby places like beerhalls, beer gardens, mission schools, churches and military bands became hubs and centres of music. Gone are the days when children in a village would dance the moonlight away in the night enjoying themselves to celebrate bumper crop harvests, weddings and other social achievements. The use of traditional musical instruments such as *chipendani* (flute), *hosho* (percussion), *mbira* (metal tines), *ngoma* (drums), *magavhu* (feet percussion) and *makandira* (wooden clappers) have since fallen by the way side or are completely forgotten. Musical talent was believed to be a gift from *Mwari* (God) and the ancestors and was not supposed to be commercialised but under Euro-American cultural

systems, musical skills are earned and one can make a living out of them. The Afrocentric perspective views special talents as gifts from the Creator.

The perspective of Euro-American scholarship on the Christ Hymn demonstrates Eurocentrism's regard of music as just any social art that has no roots into the supernatural realm. Our approach is different. The Christ Hymn has God's message for Africa and indeed a special message for Zimbabwe and its people. As noted above, to the Shona, music is a vehicle of wisdom, history and theology. Philippians 2:5-11 is therefore, approached from the understanding that hymnal music contains messages, instruction, reproof, rebuke and wisdom for the readers and hearers.

7.7 Homology between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona hymnody

In this section of the thesis, parallels are drawn between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona hymnody. The study reveals common aspects, characteristics, themes, styles and variances. The study will also discuss the ways in which Shona hymnody can be instrumental in the interpretation of key issues in Philippians 2:5-11.

Hymn 21 in Nziyo dze Apostolic Faith Mission muZimbabwe

Table 7-1: Shona Christological hymn translated into English

SHONA	ENGLISH
1. Tsitsi hedzi dzamira dzega Nezviriwado zvakamira zvoga Nengoni dzakamira dzoga Pamuchinjikwa.	1. Mercy here stands out And sufferings stand out And graces stand out On the Cross.
2. Ishe waburuka kudenga Akazova munhu kuvanhu Akava diramhamba redu Pamuchinjikwa	2. The Lord comes from heaven He became a man to men He became our ancestral bull On the Cross.
3. Rutendo rwedu rwomirepi? Kufunga kwedu kwomirepi? Norudo rwedu rwomirepi? Pamuchinjikwa	3. Where does our faith stand? Where does our mind stand? And our love, where does it stand? On the Cross.
4. Tsaona ingaperi yose Nemhaka dzose dzingaripwe Zvakaipa zvinoregererwa Pamuchinjikwa	4. Calamity is totally finished All trespasses are compensated All evils are forgiven On the Cross
5. Dzakaona ngirozi pasi Dzakati gwanangwana pasi Dzichiona mashura ayo! Pamuchinjikwa	5. The angels saw from above They bowed down on their knees As they saw those bad omens! On the Cross.

Hymn 21 in the Hymn Book of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in Zimbabwe is typical of the Shona Hymnody. I have chosen the AFM hymn because the AFM in Zimbabwe as a member of that denomination for 40 years, I am conversant with its music genres. In terms of structure, the hymn has five strophes and three lines each with the fourth line representing a solo chorus. The

strophic feature is basically Western while the solo chorus form is African. The language is to a greater extent, rooted in Shona funeral rites philology. The death of Christ as depicted in Philippians 2:5-11 shall be interpreted from the perspective of Shona hymnic language.

Theologically, the Hymn deals with themes that one also finds in the Christ Hymn of Philippians 2:5-11. Themes found in both hymns are:

- The Pre-existence of Christ
- Incarnation
- Kenosis
- Death on the Cross
- The Suffering Servant
- Soteriology

In addition to the above six themes, both the Christ Hymn and Hymn 21 deal with moral and ethical issues such as:

- Love in the Community
- Mercy towards others.
- Humility
- Servant Leadership
- Becoming a Man unto Men in the light of "munhu munhu nekuda kwevanhu" (one is humane because of others).
- Communal approach to issues of life and faith.

The two hymns also deal with the issues of the heavenly beings, life after death and the exaltation of Christ.

The aspects of Hymn 21 which we will discuss at this stage are:

- Death on the Cross (see strophe 1 and the solo chorus "*Pamuchinjikwa*" (on the Cross) as read with Philippians 2v8 "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

- Christ as the "*Diramhamba*" or ancestral bull of the Shona People.

The unimaginable, excruciating pain and suffering endured by Christ on the Cross is what the Shona Hymn 21 describes in the first strophe:

Hymn 21 Dziyo DzeApostolic Faith Mission MuZimbabwe

Table 7.2. Excerpt from Shona hymn 21.

SHONA	ENGLISH
Tsitsi Hedzi Dzamira Dzega	Mercy here stands out
Nezviriwado zvakamira zvega	Sufferings stand out
Nengoni dzakamira dzega	Grace stands out
Pamuchinjikwa	On the Cross

In both hymns, that is in the Christ Hymn of Philippians 2:5-11 and in the Shona Hymn 21 of Nziyo Dze Apostolic Faith Mission MuZimbabwe, the subject of suffering on account of others stands distinct and conspicuous. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul describes Christ's death on the accursed Cross as a mechanism through which righteousness might be earned by all humanity. That suffering on account of others defies ordinary understanding. The Shona thought pattern carries deeper meanings to the idea of suffering on account of others. In the Shona thought pattern, there is heroism in dying for the masses. The Shona people associate national heroism with suffering and dying for national interests. When one therefore reads the Christ Hymn from that perspective, and especially its description of Jesus' humiliating and shameful death on the Cross, the notion of heroism gets invoked into the reader.

7.8 Death on the cross in Shona traditional belief

While Euro-American scholarship has looked at the death of Christ on the Cross as Jesus' obedience or succumbing to the forces of evil and not to God (Marshall, 1968:104-127), the Shona people view Christ's death on the Cross differently. The Shona view death as an event that is pre-determined by *Mwari* (God and the ancestors). They believe that the *Musiki* (Creator) calls back home his people by separating the soul from the body. They are not afraid of death because they view it as a promotion to a higher level where one gets closer to the ancestors and *Musikavanhu* (the Creator of Human Beings). So, ideally the Shona do not die. Death is not the end of life. It is transformation into another and higher phase of life. While there is no explicit belief in resurrection per se, there is an explicit belief in life after death among the Shona. Among the Shona, a person who dies for the cause of others is a "*Gamba*" (hero/heroine). They thus see Jesus as a *Gamba* or hero who died to show that a member of a community can

endure pain and extreme suffering for others. The Cross of Jesus is likened to the tree on which the great heroine of the first Chimurenga or war against colonialism, Charwe Nehanda Nyakasikana was hanged by the Europeans on April 27, 1898. According to the Zimbabwe Herald publication of May 5, 2014, the architects of the First Chimurenga War, Mbuya Charwe, the medium of the Nehanda spirit, and Sekuru Gumboreshumba, the medium of the Kaguvi spirit also known as Murenga, (meaning war spirit), were hanged by the settler regime for daring to challenge colonial dispossession. Mbuya Nehanda was wrongly accused together with Zindoga, Hwata and Gutsa of murdering a brutal white native commissioner, one Henry Hawkins Pollard of the British South Africa Company who lived near Mazowe and terrorised people in the district. Charumbira (2013:207) describes Hawkins as "a colonial bureaucrat, Native Commissioner for Mazoe District".

Legal documents from the Rhodesian government cited by the Herald modestly describe Mbuya Nehanda as a Shona woman residing at Chitawa's Kraal in the Mazowe district. The four accused were arraigned in the High Court of Matebeleland that sat in Salisbury on February 20, 1898 and were subsequently convicted on March 2, 1898 in a case entered as "The British Queen against Nehanda". The sentence was death by hanging. The execution was authorised by the British High Commissioner for South Africa, one Alfred Milner, and endorsed by the British Imperial Secretary on March 28, 1898. The Presiding Judge was Judge Watermayer, with Herbert Hayton Castens, Esquire, "as the acting Public Prosecutor Sovereign within the British South Africa Company territories who prosecutes for and on behalf of her majesty". The warrant of execution for Mbuya Nehanda's death commanded that she be executed within the wall of the gaol in Salisbury between the hours of 6 and 10. A Roman Catholic Priest, one Father Richertz, was assigned to convert Mbuya Nehanda and her co-accused. The Priest failed to make headway with Mbuya Nehanda, managing to convert Sekuru Kaguvi, whom he baptised as Dismas, after the "good" thief who accepted Jesus as Saviour on the cross. The other convicts were also converted and hanged. According to Father Richertz's account of the story, "Mbuya Nehanda called for her people and wanted to go back to her own country Mazowe and die there. When I saw that nothing could be done with her, the time of the execution had arrived. I left Nehanda and went to Kaguvi who received me in good dispositions. Whilst I was conversing with him, Nehanda was taken to the scaffold. Her cries and resistance, when she was taken up the ladder, the screaming and yelling disturbed my conversation with Kagubi very much till the noisy opening of the trap door upon which she stood, followed by the heavy thud of her body as it fell, made an end to the interruption". It is reported further that before she was hanged, Mbuya Chahwe told the priest, "*mapfupa angu achamuka*" (my bones will surely rise).

It is from such a background of death by hanging, of the architects of the first War of resistance against colonial rule that the Shona people will understand the meaning of the death of Jesus on the cross. Mbuya Nehanda was hanged on a tree in a hill near Harare just as Jesus was hanged on a Cross on the hill of Golgotha. Mbuya Chahwe, the medium of the Nehanda spirit, was hanged on a tree not for her personal cause. She was accused and charged for challenging the oppression of the native Shona people. This is a replication of the circumstances, course and consequence of the trial of Jesus Christ at the hands of the Jews and Romans. The second chapter in the epistle of Philippians presents a moving illustration of vicarious suffering and death. As a prelude to the Christ Hymn, Paul says in Philippians 2:4, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι).

Mbuya Charwe did not confront the European colonial establishment for her own good but for the good of the masses of her people. This mind in Mbuya Charwe is the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus, the mind which Paul encourages the Christian community to have. Philippians 2:5 "For let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus" (τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Christ faced the gruesome death of the Cross (2:8) for all humanity. In Romans 5:8 Paul says, "God doth commend His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us δὲ τὴν ἑαυτὸν ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανέν) This is the same doctrine found in John 15: 13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (μειζονα ταυτης αγαπην ουδεις εχει ινα τις την ψυχην αυτου θη υπερ των φιλων αυτου). The parallels between the vicarious death of Mbuya Chahwe, the spirit medium of the Nehanda spirit, who died for her kinsmen and the vicarious death of Jesus Christ, who died for all mankind, creates an enlightenment to the Shona people on the meaning of the Christ Hymn.

Mbuya Charwe Nehanda's death is generally associated with selflessness and patriotism. Charumbira (2013:210) cites a magazine article published in March 1968 saying, "The history of our struggle for our liberation shows that women have not been a dormant section of the Zimbabwe nation. Even the first Chimurenga fought in 1896-97 is not without examples of women who distinguished themselves as heroic fighters for the liberation of the motherland, for instance, there may not be any Zimbabwean who has not heard of Nehanda. This woman urged a number of chiefs around Salisbury (now Harare) to rise against colonial usurpers who had just started spreading themselves in their midst. As a result of her activities, Chimurenga began in these areas with the wiping out of an enemy patrol unit and spread about like wild fire. Eventually, Nehanda was captured in a cave and sadistically murdered by fascist troops".

The term '*Chimurenga*' is an important Shona word which means to fight or to struggle. It has lately assumed fresh interpretation to include a struggle for human rights, political dignity and social justice. In the Zimbabwean context, the term '*Chimurenga*' captures a sense of a revolutionary struggle. That sense of a revolutionary struggle for the rights or good of the masses is an essential ingredient in Jesus' vicarious death on the cross. Just as the spirit mediums of the Shona people, through the leadership provided by such icons as Mbuya Charwe and Kagubi Gumboreshumba and others, championed the cause of suffering and dying for the good of the masses and future generations of Zimbabweans, Jesus' selfless death on the cross constituted a 'mind' (νοῦς) which Paul admonishes all Christians to espouse in Philippians 2:5. It is a revolutionary or '*Chimurenga* mind' that seeks to transform situations for the common good. The Shona people choral and poetic anthology during the war of liberation associated cadres of the revolution with selfless bravery, struggle and suffering.

Euro-American scholars have argued that Jesus' humiliating death on the Cross was an obedience and surrender to forces of evil and death and not to God (especially Martin, Käsemann, the Tübingen school and post-Bultmannians). The Shona '*Chimurenga* concept' explains Jesus' death on the Cross in a better way. In a *Chimurenga*, individuals die on behalf of masses. Great revolutions are understood among the Shona as feats that are concomitant with martyrdoms. Jesus' death on the Cross qualifies for a '*Chimurenga*' designation. Charumbira (2013:208) refers to Solomon Mutsvairo's poem 'O Nehanda Nyakasikana' in which an appeal is made to the revolutionary spirit of Nehanda Charwe to help root out suffering of the native Zimbabweans in the face of colonial domination. Mutsvairo's poem presented an irresistible clarion call to indigenous people of Zimbabwe to take on the mind which was in Mbuya Charwe Nehanda to resist and dislodge an oppressive colonial system. The process of executing such a struggle for the good and benefit of the masses would entail untold suffering. Hove (2013:53) narrates the words that were uttered by Mbuya Nehanda as she suffered excruciatingly at the hands of her persecutors:

"...you can torture me, spread my bowels for the jackals to eat, and tear them to pieces, mutilate my body with your anger, throw my brains to the vultures, leave the remains of my body in the playground for your children to play with, cut my ears to decorate your own ears, cut my fingers, use them to wipe your own sweat...my bones will rise in the spirit of war."

The amount of suffering inferred in the recreated lamentation of Mbuya Nehanda resonates with the Christ Hymn's tale of Jesus Christ's condescension to the level of humanity, culminating in His death on the Cross. The Shona people believe in the 'rising of the bones' of the dead. Rising of the bones of the dead speaks more than just the resurrection of the physical body. The rising of the bones denotes the resurgence of the dead person's values and goals. Thus, in

African religious understanding, when Paul tells his readers to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus, that means the readers have to pursue the goal and mission of Jesus Christ in pursuit of which he had died on the Cross. On the Cross of Jesus (*pamuchinjikwa*), suffering was distinct, it stood out, just as suffering of Mbuya Chahwe Nehanda was quite distinct and eventually stood out as an inspiration to all those who were moved to follow in her steps by joining the war of liberating Zimbabwe called the Second Chimurenga. Endurance of pain and suffering to the point of death for the cause of others is mind boggling to a European mind. Euro-American thought system is pivoted on individualism and privatism. However, in the Shona culture and tradition, it is possible for someone to sacrifice his or her life for the sake of others. Euro-American scholarship faltered and stumbled on the death of Christ on the Cross and His eventual exaltation. To them, Christ's death depicted some kind of defeat and shame. The exaltation of Christ was also contentious as they cannot understand how and why a pre-existent Lord would receive an exaltation after resurrection. The resurrection of Christ itself has remained an enigma and a myth to Euro-American scholarship. That kind of view of the death of Christ is antithetical to the Shona cultural perspective of death. One who dies on account of the interests of others, especially for the nation or simply, for many, does not die in vain. The death of that person enters the spotlight as a feat of courage, martyrdom and heroism. When one dies in a Shona community, that person receives some elevation or higher status. The deceased gets a place among the ancestors. In the case of those that die for a large number of people, the rank in the realm of the ancestors is also significantly higher. Charumbira (2013:215) describes the posthumous exaltation that was conferred on Mbuya Nehanda on the occasion of Zimbabwe's attainment of independence on 17 April 1980:

"On the morning of April 17, 1980, the soon-to-be Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation began transmitting day long radio and television news about the momentous event of Zimbabwe's independence - a 'new' and 'free' African nation. Among those who received prime attention from the broadcasters were the heroes of the 1896-97 uprisings, and in particular, Mbuya Nehanda. Again, she was the sole female remembered by name in a long litany of male heroes who had floated above the sea of men and women who had suffered or died during the 1966-79 war. Nehanda became the bridge between the past and the present, connecting the young nation with its ancestors". Thus from the above quotation, we see that the Shona people do not subscribe to a nihilistic view of death. Those that die in acts of heroism can still be recognised. They can still be exalted after death. Mbuya Nehanda was actually depicted as the matron of the new Zimbabwe posthumously. Her works of heroism survived after her physical death. There is also a street named after her that cuts across the city of Harare. Euro-American scholarship's use of terms such as "shame", "humiliation", "dishonour", "defeat", "condescension" in reference to the death of Jesus on the Cross; their insinuation that Christ did

not obey God but succumbed to the powers of evil on the Cross is an indication of that scholar's limitedness in unravelling the mystery of death. According to Masaka and Chingombe (2009), among the Shona, death has always been followed by a sequence of rituals that differ from group to group, but by and large, save the same purpose of ensuring a proper transition of the dead from a life of bodily existence to a life of spiritual existence. There is therefore no "shame", "humiliation", "defeat" or "dishonour" in death among the Shona. An alternative view therefore exists which sees exaltation and promotion in the death of Jesus Christ. A proper reading and interpretation of Philippians 2:9, διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὄνομα is therefore possible.

Euro-American scholarship sees Christ's death on the Cross as a stumbling block. It fails to see *υπερύψωσεν* (highly exalted) in the situation of death on the Cross. Few scholarly pockets in Euro-American scholarship have attached defeat and shame to the death of Christ on the cross. Their hermeneutic of Christ's death follows the Judaeo tradition of Deuteronomy 21:23 which prescribes a curse for one who hangs on a tree. Paul, in Galatians 3:13 reads the hanging of Christ on the tree in vicarious terms. Jesus dies on the tree on behalf of all sinners. He dies on the tree not for or on account of Himself but for all humanity. The Deuteronomist hermeneutic sees a curse where one dies on a tree for his own sins but Jesus' hangs on a tree vicariously. Paul therefore sees Jesus rescuing all humanity from the power of the curse. We draw interesting parallels with the hanging of the Shona legendary spirit medium, Nehanda Nyakasikana.

Charumbira (2012:1) notes that the felling down of the musasa tree which was along Josiah Tongogara Street in Harare, "made headline news because urban lore has it that it was the tree upon which Mbuya Nehanda (Charwe wokwa Hwata), the late nineteenth century spirit medium, was hanged by British colonial authorities". Charumbira further states that although there are conflicting accounts on the place of Nehanda's hanging, "scholarly and popular debates on Nehanda Charwe attest to the vigour of her connection with this tree and her larger place in history". In the case of Jesus Christ, the Pauline corpus refers to the Cross on which Christ was hanged as "a tree"(Galatians 3:13). In the case of Mbuya Charwe Nehanda, some reports say she was hanged on special gallows while oral history says she was hanged on the musasa tree referred above which was along Josiah Tongogara Street in Harare. The Cross-tree and gallows-tree narratives in the deaths of Jesus Christ and Mbuya Charwe Nehanda present "a tree" as a common denominator. Another common aspect in the deaths of the two is that those who executed Jesus on the "Cross-tree", like those who executed Mbuya Charwe Nehanda on the "gallows-tree" believed that the hanging method was the most belittling, deleterious, pernicious and savage ways of punishing those convicted of heinous crimes such as treason

and banditry. The method was intended to inflict excruciating pain on the victim and at the same time, treat the executee to extreme degradation and indignity. Just as Jesus Christ faced the charge of insurrection and rebellion, Mbuya Charwe Nehanda also faced the charge of inciting rebellion against the colonial authorities.

Writing in the Sunday Mail edition of 26 October 2014, in an article titled 'Mbuya Nehanda: The legacy lives on', Tendai Chara states, "Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana (1840-1898) was a spirit medium who provided the inspiration for the revolt against colonial white rule." In corresponding parallels, Luke 23:2 records that those who charged Jesus said, "We found this man subverting our nation, forbidding us to pay the tribute tax to Caesar and claiming that he himself is Christ, a King". Mbuya Charwe Nehanda's charge read, 'Nehanda versus the Queen of England.' She was, just as Jesus was charged for allegedly forbidding Jews to pay tribute tax to the Roman imperialists, also charged for discouraging the Shona people from paying hut tax which was introduced on the natives by the European colonialists in 1894. According to Davidson (1989:4), Mbuya Charwe Nehanda who was recognised nationally as one of the most powerful spirit mediums, was hanged for spearheading rebellion against the oppressive colonial regime.

Mbuya Charwe Nehanda's name was to become an emblem of struggle against oppression and colonialism during the liberation war of the 1960s to the 70s also called 'The Second Chimurenga'. Her image during the liberation war was a source of inspiration, a morale booster during the guerrilla war that led to Zimbabwean independence in 1980. There was a popular Nehanda song which was sung during night vigils by combatants from the predominantly Shona, Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) guerrillas of Robert Mugabe's ZANU liberation movement. The Nehanda song provided motivation and encouragement to the combatants in the face of white supremacist tyranny. The lyrics of the song were as follows:

Table 7.3. The Mbuya Nehanda crucifixion song

SHONA	ENGLISH
Mbuya Nehanda kufa vachishereketa	Mbuya Nehanda died wondering
Kuti tinitora sei nyika ino?	How shall we take (back) this land?
Shoko rimwe ravakatiudza,	The one word she told us was
Tora gidi uzvitonge!	Seize the gun and liberate yourselves

While the European colonial masters in Southern Rhodesia thought that by hanging Mbuya Charwe Nehanda, they had not only humiliated her but also dampened her fighting spirit and that her followers, they woke up to a rude awakening when an unquenchable conflagration of massive rebellion ensued as young men and women drew inspiration from her death on the

gallows/tree to take up arms against them. The intended humiliation boomeranged and ricocheted. The intended humiliation catapulted Charwe Nehanda's reputation to dizzy heights of heroism both during the course of the liberation war and after independence. The European settlers did not understand the religious essence of Mbuya Charwe Nehanda as a spirit medium. She was in the first place, a medium of a national spirit called "mhondoro" or lion spirit. The mhondoro or lion spirit is the spirit of a dead mighty leader that wanders in the forest like mighty lions awaiting incarnation. The spirit incarnates into a special medium and continues to lead and guide the people through that medium. According to Asante and Mazama (2009:421), the mhondoro spirits of the Shona are particularly revered because they help people interpret *Mwari's* (God's) wishes and desires. Lower spirits actually report to them whilst they report directly to *Mwari* or *Musikavanhu* (God). The medium of the mhondoro does not live for herself or himself but to ingratiate the ancestral spirits as well as the living. One who is possessed by a mhondoro does not get married. The mhondoro spirit performs national tasks such as ensuring the well being of large numbers of people ranging from communities to nations. They also send rains and ensure fertility of both flora and fauna, plants and animals. These spirits also ensure that there is peace in the land by protecting the people against marauding intruders. The mediums of mhondoro spirits are therefore highly esteemed. They are expected to even die in the process of executing their role of guiding and leading the people. They are in fact not expected to die like ordinary people. The spirit of Mbuya Nehanda only mounted or possessed those women who were notably virtuous and represented sound moral values. The original Nehanda was believed to have been the daughter of the 15th century King Mutota of the Munhumutapa Empire of the Shona people. When the European settlers lynched Mbuya Charwe Nehanda, they did not understand the essence of her life and role as the medium of a mhondoro or territorial spirit. She was only dying in pursuit of her spiritual role of guiding, leading and protecting her people. She lived a life beyond physical rudiments of fear, pain and scare. Her death through hanging on a tree was therefore a plus to her credits of gallantry and heroism. Her seemingly deprecating death was a ticket into a *υπερυψωσεν* state, that is, a state of high exaltation.

Asante and Mazama (2008) state, "Because of the courage and heroism that she never failed to display, Nehanda is considered by many to be the single most important person in the modern history of Zimbabwe". This is exactly what Jesus Christ experienced as explicated in Philippians 2:8-9, "having become obedient unto death - death even of a Cross, wherefore, also, God did highly exalt him, and gave to him a name that is above every name" (⁸ ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. ⁹ διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα).

Both Mbuya Charwe Nehanda and Jesus were people of peculiar spiritual gifts. They both had large followings and influence beyond places of birth. In the context of the Shona people, Jesus qualified for designation as a *mhondoro*, a spirit that could communicate directly with *Mwari*. The Shona people believe that no one and no lesser spirit other than the *mhondoro* can commune directly with Nyadenga. The same principle is held in the New Testament about Jesus; that He is the only way to the Father, that no one comes to the Father except through Him, that He is the only One Mediator between God and humanity. (Acts 4:12; John 14:6;1; Timothy 2:5). Jesus Christ and Mbuya Charwe Nehanda were both not scared of death. They both anticipated to rise from the dead. Asante and Mazama (2008) remark, "before she was hung, Nehanda announced to the Europeans that her body would rise again to lead the second, and this time, victorious struggle against them".

As we study the Christ Hymn through Afrocentric lens, it is helpful to note that in the African context in general and in the context of the Shona people in particular, death is a transitional process whereby people depart from the physical realm to the spiritual and superior spiritual realm. It should be noted that in Shona cosmology, as in many other African cultures, it is held that the spiritual world is a better place than the physical one. Banana (1991:27) states that Africans believe that the world of the ancestors abounds in peace, joy, harmony, wealth, health and happiness whereas the current world of the living is beset with evildoers, danger, illness and death. Thus, joining the world of the ancestors is interpreted as a promotion into a higher status.

***Kufunga kwedu Komirepi?* (Where shall our mind stand?) Third Strophe, Hymn 21**

Philippians 2:5 says, 'Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus'. The third strophe in Hymn 21 of the Shona Hymns of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe says, '*Kufunga kwedu kwomirepi?*' (Where does our mind stand?) Paul raises a catalogue of virtues which constitutes the 'mind of Christ'. In the catalogue of the moral virtues he highlights the following:

Good Virtues

- Exhortation (παράκλησις)
- Comfort of love (παραμύθιον ἀγάπης)
- Fellowship of Spirit (κοινωνία πνεύματος)
- Bowels (σπλάγχνα)
- Mercies (οἰκτιρμοί)

- Humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη)
- Welfare of others (ἐαυτῶν τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι)

They are to avoid:

Bad Virtues

- Rivalry (ἐριθείαν)
- Vainglory (κενοδοξίαν)
- Selfishness (μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστοι σκοποῦντες).

The above exhortatory composition of virtues strategically builds into the message of the Christ Hymn. To have the mind of Jesus (φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) is to have the thinking pattern of Jesus Christ. It is to have the attitude and frame of mind which Jesus Christ had. Paul teaches the Philippian believers and indeed, the followers of Jesus Christ, that to have the mind of Jesus is to have a humble frame of mind, a mind that places others first, pursues the good and eschews evil, seeks the good of others, builds and maintains friendly relationships. Such a mind epitomises the essence of salvation. Elsewhere within the Pauline corpus, Paul admonishes that believers be transformed by the renewal of their minds. Romans 12:2 says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God". Paul is addressing a Roman church that is geographically located in a European context where the dominant mindset is anchored on capitalism, individualism and privatism. The Apostle continues to stretch the same thread of exhortation in another European city of Philippi, itself being located in Macedonia, Greece, the epicentre of Eurocentrism, with its concomitant characteristics of selfishness, competition, rivalry, social disintegration, and vainglory. Paul is battling a culture of a people who do not believe in social cohesion and harmony. Paul uses protreptic rhetoric to call his audience to a new and different way of life. He then paraenetically encourages them to continue in the frame of mind and attitude which Jesus Christ had, the mind of selflessness, the mind of loving others more than oneself to the point of laying one's life for them. The paraenesis of the Christ Hymn parallels beautifully with the communal norms and values of the Shona people. The mind of Christ; the mind of humbleness; the mind of togetherness; the mind of unity and the mind of loving and sacrificing for others is an important philosophy on Shona cultural cosmology. The stanza, *kufunga kwedu kwomirepi?* translated, ('where does our mind stand? ') in Shona Hymn 21 of the Apostolic Faith Mission speaks to the attitudes and lores that are expected in those that believe in Christ. The question, '*kufunga kwedu komirepi?*', translated ('where does our mind stand?'), directly responds to Paul's exhortation, 'Let this mind also be in

you which was in Christ Jesus'. The hymn points to what Jesus did on the Cross, sacrificing for others; dying for others; humbling Himself and coming down to the level of an ordinary man. Not holding on to supremacy and superiority. The Shona people adhere to an ethical code that values social relationships as opposed to the individualism of Western cultures. Gelfand (1973:11) says, "To this day, the Shona villagers extol the virtues of solidarity, fraternity and equality. In their traditional environment, they are deeply attached to their faith and firmly wedded to the way of life and to the virtues approved by their ancestral spirits. The Shona have a deep-seated loyalty to their kin. They condemn any kind of violence among relatives. They place great stress on harmony and tranquillity."

Akave diramhamba redu pamuchinjikwa (He became our sacrificial bull on the Cross):
Reflections on Phil 2:8: θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (Death on the Cross).

Nziyo Dze Apostolic Faith Mission MuZimbabwe, Hymn 21 second strophe and third stanzas, says:

Table 7.4: Shona Hymn 21 excerpt

SHONA	ENGLISH
Ishe waburuka kudenga	The Lord comes from heaven
Akazova munhu kuvanhu	He becomes a man unto men
Akava diramhamba redu	He becomes our ancestral bull
Pamuchinjikwa	On the Cross

Jesus Christ as the Ancestral Bull (*Diramhamba*) of the Shona People

According to Shoko (2007:58), the ancestors of the Shona people demand a bull that carries the name of the deceased head of a clan. Nyambi, Mangena and Pfukwa (2016:117) say that the ancestral bull is a highly respected animal, revered so much that it is not killed or sold for meat until it is very old. According to an article in the Zimbabwe Herald of 26 November 2016, the ancestral bull carries the name of the extended family clan. Once the conferment of the ancestral name is done, the bull begins to act under the influence of the spirits. It starts to assume a domineering and ungovernable attitude. Usually, it can leave other cattle to graze on its own and may wander around the community sleeping in any kraal of its choice especially where it identifies cows ready for mating. The bull may graze even in people's fields or break into gardens. On the other hand, the bull can be so calm - it can play with young children. Usually, the bull behaves in strange ways which range from friendliness with people especially those belonging to the clan whose name it carries, controlling the movement of the rest of the

cattle herd to becoming extremely ungovernable and violent. The ancestral or clan bull is driven by the spirit of patriarchy in a very stunning way. It often does not tolerate the presence of women near it but can play with young boys and men. It is believed that the spirit of the late clan head possessing the bull will be demonstrating that real men ought to keep away from women and spend time in the family court (*dare*) dealing with serious matters of the clan. When the behaviour of the bull becomes unbearable and resorts to breaking the pen, invading people's vegetable gardens, chasing people at every sight or goring oxen to death, the elders interpret that behaviour to mean that the ancestors now want it replaced in a ritual ceremony where the ancestors will meet with their grandchildren and resolve a number of clan or tribal matters.

Why the Bull is called a *Diramhamba*?

The word '*diramhamba*' is a compound word that derives from two words '*dira*' which means 'pour' and '*mhamba*' which means beer. '*Diramhamba*' therefore literally means, 'Pour Beer'. The name of this ancestral bull comes from the process through which the spirit of the head ancestor is introduced to the bull. The animal has to be anointed just in the way the Jewish priests were anointed. The elements used in the anointing process, however, differ. While the Jewish priests were anointed for ministry with oil, the ancestral bull is anointed with traditionally brewed opaque beer called '*mhamba*' or '*ngoto*.' The head of the living clan members fills a gourd with '*mhamba*' and pours it on the selected bull chanting incantations or words of prayer to the clan lead ancestor being given the bull to possess. In his chanting, the elder, who is usually a senior tribesman with great traditional experience, asks the ancestor to protect the family and to ensure that rain comes in its due season, protection from foes and natural calamities. After saying this to the spirits, he pauses intermittently to allow women to ululate and men to clap their hands to endorse the prayers. Once this exercise is done, the bull is now called by the name of the head ancestors which is normally the surname of all clan members. The bull's behaviour is usually associated with the conduct that the possessing ancestor used to have in his physical lifetime. The bull represents dominance, conquest, power, fertility, authority, leadership and genealogy and historicity of the Shona people. The bellowing of a bull is an announcement of presence and patriarchal supremacy. The sound scares away predators. Its horns are not cut as they are for defence and offense as necessary.

Historically, the consecration of bulls - and in some cultures - cows, goes as far back as the second century in Africa, the Middle East and in Europe. The religious practices of the Roman Empire of between the second and fourth centuries reveal that bulls were instrumental in communication between the gods and humanity. In a cult called the taurobolium, a bull was sacrificed for the well being of the people and the state. By mid- second century, the Romans a god called *Magner Mater* by slaughtering a bull as a sacrifice. At the same time, the practice

spread to other places such as Italy, Gaul, Hispania and Africa. The belief in the incarnation of the spirits in bulls was rampant in most of the religions of the Middle East, including polytheistic religions such as Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Baalism and in a number of religions in North Africa.

Among the Shona, the bull which carries the name of the clan does not just die like any other cattle. It is believed that it only dies when the ancestors have demanded its sacrifice. The sacrifice of the ancestral bull brings together all members of the clan. Special beer is brewed under strict instructions by elderly women who have since gone past menopause. When all households have gathered, the elderly members of the clan lead in the proceedings under the guidance of spirit mediums. Usually, the ceremony is held in the night with people dancing to traditional music and drums the whole night. Towards dawn, the spirit mediums get possessed by the ancestors who are then given the time to address their grandchildren rebuking, correcting and commending the living for their acts. The head ancestor whose *diramhamba* is to be slaughtered early in the morning is expected to manifest through his medium and when it is time for the head ancestor, greater respect is given to his speech. The great ancestor should thank the living for the ceremony. After the address of the great ancestor or *mudzimu mukuru*, people troop towards the cattle kraal for the main event, the slaughter of the ancestral bull.

When people arrive at the cattle pen, the ancestral bull behaves in a way that shows unusual submission and tranquillity. It is believed that if the ancestors are happy with the manner in which the ceremony has been done, the ancestral bull will come out of the pen on its own for the slaughter. The bull is tied to a tree and then the priestly elder performs a ritual in which he summons the head ancestor and his entourage from the land of the dead to attend the slaughtering event as well as partake of their share of the sacrifice. After his incantation, men clap hands while women ululate. As the man chosen to lead in the slaughter of the bull takes his position, the spirit mediums start muttering and screaming as they become possessed. The bull does not resist the slaughter because it knows that it is its final day. When the first blow of death is launched, the spirit mediums - led by the medium of the head ancestor - dive for the sliced throat of the bull to drink the warm and fresh blood of the bull. The blood will be oozing in gasps of pressure but the spirit mediums have to guzzle in the blood in a breath-taking spectacle. Those who are not genuinely possessed cannot join in the blood drinking binge. Fake spirit mediums are usually easy to identify when blood drinking time has arrived. Some fake ones will even dodge the event while those that dare participate will develop problems ranging from getting choked to vomiting. After the spirit mediums have had their fill of the warm and fresh blood, the rest of the blood is tapped into dishes and can be cooked for those that are not spirit mediums to eat. The meat is then cut and before it is cooked or roasted for every other person, some special ritual portions are cut and roasted for the ancestors. The spirit mediums and the

senior priestly elders are given the pieces of meat which are eaten without salt. Once the priestly team have gone through the sacred rituals, the rest of the meat can be cooked and roasted for all present as they drink *mhamba* (African beer). The ancestors will, at the end of the *bira* or ceremony, advise through the spirit mediums when the next ceremony for replacing and anointing the slaughtered *diramhamba* can be done.

The Shona say Jesus became their '*diramhamba*' on the Cross. They draw the following parallels between Jesus Christ and their ancestral bull.

Table 7.5: Parallels between Jesus Christ and the Shona *Diramhamba* (anointed bull)

JESUS CHRIST	DIRAMHAMBA/ANOINTED BULL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ is Χριστός meaning Anointed One. • All who believe carry the name of Christ. • Christians have unity in Christ. • Christ died on the Cross to save mankind. • Christ did not resist crucifixion. • The death of Christ involves the shedding of blood. • The death of Christ is celebrated with reference to the eating of His flesh in the Eucharist. • The Holy Communion involves drinking the Lord's blood and eating His flesh. • Only those who believe in Christ can partake of the Holy Communion. • Jesus Christ was given a name above every other name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diramhamba</i> means anointed with beer. • All members of the clan or lineage carry the name of the ancestor. • The name of the head ancestor fosters unity. • The bull is killed at tree and the whole clan is assured of security as the ancestors are appeased. • The bull is not violent during slaughter. • The blood of the bull is considered sacred and is drunk raw by the spirit mediums while some of it is cooked and eaten by the rest of family members. • The flesh of the bull is eaten and its blood is drunk. • Only clan members can eat the sacrificial meat of the bull. • The ancestral bull after coronation is conferred the name of a whole lineage.

Jesus interpreted as a *n'anga* (traditional healer)

Shona Hymnology often addresses Christ as '*Chiremba*' or '*N'angahuru*' (Great Healer). Hymn 123 in Nziyo DzeMethodist says:

Table 7. 6: Excerpt from Shona hymn 123 in Nziyo dzeMethodist Church

SHONA	ENGLISH
<p>N'anga huru yavapedyo Anetsitsi ndiJesu Anoda kutifarisa</p>	<p>The Great Healing Diviner is close by One who has mercy is Jesus He wants to make us happy</p>

The above strophe from the Shona Methodist Hymn describes Jesus Christ as 'a great *n'anga*'. A great *n'anga* is one that has powers to deal with diverse ailments and its operations are not

only confined to the members of the medium's immediate family but can also redress calamities in any family irrespective of clan or creed. The similarities drawn between Jesus and the great *n'anga* include:

- Both Jesus and the great *n'anga* have influence beyond their cultural boundaries.
- Both Jesus and the great *n'anga* are referrals when lesser powers have failed.
- Both Jesus and the great *n'anga* are expected to deal with any problem that comes their way.

Just as Jesus healed all manners of sicknesses and diseases, in the same way the Shona expect a great *n'anga* to treat all manners of ailments.

We notice that the Shona address Jesus as *N'angahuru*, not because He is possessed by the spirit of dead man. In Shona conceptual morphology, ideas are expressed through metaphors which help bring the concept closer to reality. A great *n'anga* or *godobori* is a diviner who attends to enquirers from beyond borders. The catholicity of Jesus' ministry qualifies Him to be viewed as a *N'angahuru*. Chitando (2002:58) refers to the United Methodist Hymn, "*Murapi Aripano*" (The Healer is here) in which Jesus is depicted as a Healer who has come from heaven to cure all manner of ailments. Chitando further states that in the context of suffering and death, musicians call upon God to intervene and restore health. The Shona always responded to suffering and death by turning to *n'angas* or diviner-healers. Upon conviction and acceptance of salvation in Christ, they divert the attention to Christ who now takes the place of the *n'anga* (traditional healer). Muzorewa (2005:60), a former Bishop with the United Methodist in Zimbabwe, also recounts how the hymn, "*Murapi Aripano*" was sung by an Evangelistic Team called Vabvuwi (Soul Harvesters) when a chief in Mutoko district in MaShonaland fell terribly sick; "When they felt they were spiritually ready, they strolled towards the chief's homestead singing one of the well-known healing hymns:" *Murapi aripano chiremba wekudenga* and *Wauya pasi pano korapa mwoyo yese.*" (The heavenly physician is here to heal every sin and sick soul). Muzorewa explains that the ailing chief was miraculously healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth without any medication or physical contact. The Shona mind decodes miraculous healing acts in the name of Jesus in terms of the traditional role of the *n'anga* or *dogobori* who healed sicknesses by the enablement of either an ancestral spirit or a foreign, *shavi* spirit. The Christ Hymn says, ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων "that every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth" (Philippians 2:10). That statement is viewed as a declaration that all spirits that claim to possess any authority or powers, including the kingdoms of the universe as well as the underworld, now report to the greatest one. In a trying to capture the grandeur that

corresponds to Jesus' omnipotence, the Shona liken him to a Great Diviner and Healer or *N'angahuru*. The concept of "n'anga" consists in use of supernatural powers to alleviate human suffering. The *n'anga* in the Shona community is like a consultant that people flock to when they face enigmas and riddles of life. Thus, as Gelfand (1981:57) says, "a Shona, even one who is sophisticated and seemingly living a Western type of life in town, would, if faced with a critical illness either in himself or his family, consult the diviner or herbalist to learn whether there was something he could do to propitiate the anger of the member of his family, or to discover if the illness were due to the influence of a witch". The Shona rely on the *n'anga* to provide explanations and solutions to calamities and suffering. According to Masaka and Makahamadze (2013:134), citing Gelfand, Mavi, Drummond and Ndemera (1985:6), "If one is in trouble or suffers a misfortune, he or she would consult a *n'anga* (traditional healer) whether his or her ancestors (*vadzimu*) are annoyed. The *n'anga* may divine that the disease or death that has visited a person or family is due to the upset of one's *mudzimu* or to the practices of a person (*muroyi/witch*)". Thus, we notice that the *n'anga* or traditional healer is expected to be part of the solution when social or spiritual crises arose in families and communities. A Shona who converts to Christianity and was raised in a society where the term *n'anga* resonated with a provider of answers and solutions to social dilemmas, will conceive of Christ's role in his new life as that of the traditional *n'anga* (traditional healer). Hence, when the Shona Hymnal refers to Christ as a *n'anga* or physician, it is a conceptual metaphor of the real soteriological role of Christ Jesus in their lives.

A popular hymn with the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, Hymn 97, titled, "*Mumwe Musi Ava Mauro*" (One Day in the Evening), strophes 1-3, says:

Table 7.7: Shona Hymn 97 in Nziyo dze Apostolic Faith Mission muZimbabwe

SHONA	ENGLISH
1 Mumwe musu ava mauro Varwere vakaungana Panyasi paJesu Ishe Vakaenda norufaro	1 One eventide The sick gathered At the feet of Lord Jesus They went rejoicing
2 Nanhasi isu tauya Toswadera nezvirwere Mumhu wako hationi Toziva kuti urimo	2 Today we also gather We draw near with sicknesses We do not see your physical stature But we know you are in here
3 Tanda dambudziko redu Vamwe vairwara kwazvo Vamwe havati vakuda Vamwe vakarasa rudo	3 Dissipate our predicament Others are seriously sick Others are not devout Others are backslidden

SHONA	ENGLISH
4 Vamwe vakaneta pano Vakashaya ruyamuro Vamwe vane hama dzavo Dzinovatambudza kwazvo	4 Others here are hopeless They do not have help Others have their relatives That trouble them a lot
5 Vose vanoda rufaro Vanoda noruregerero Navatendi vanoziwa Mwoyo yavo yakaipa	5 They all need joy They need forgiveness The believers know Their hearts are evil
6 Kristu iwe uri munhu Wanga Waedzwa zvikuru Meso ako anoona Zvatinotsvaka kuvanza	6 Christ you are a man Who was tried a lot Your eyes behold Everything we want to conceal
7 Simba rako richigere Unogona kuponesa Tinzwire tsitsi mauro ano Tiponise Mwari tose	7 Your power is still there You can heal Have mercy on us this evening Heal us all, God.

The above Shona hymn, '*Mumwe Musi Ava Mauro*' captures the place of Christ relative to a *n'anga* in Shona cosmology. The hymn itself appears to have been extracted from Mark 1:32-34 where it is written: "And at even, when the son did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils, and all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of diverse diseases, and cast out many devils, and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him". The massive healing and deliverance which Jesus performed took place in the evening. The *n'anga* (traditional healer) does not normally divine during the noon time. The *n'anga* normally does his work either at dawn or at dusk. At the shrine of a great *n'anga*, hordes of people are usually seen. Some come for divination while others come for treatment of ailments or exorcism of evil spirits. The Shona believe that just as Jesus healed in the first century, he can still heal in contemporary times. The Shona also believe in the invisible presence of the spirits. As we notice from the above hymn, they say, "We do not see your physical stature but we know you are in here.". The metaphysical world of the Shona is as real as their physical world. Their faith in life after death is so strong that if one tells them that Jesus is present or that God's presence is in their midst, they readily accept that. This belief is rooted in the Shona belief that there are two worlds of life: on one hand, the world of terrestrial living which Paul in Philippians calls ἐπιγείων (of the earth) (*vepanyika*); and on the other hand, the land of the living dead (the celestial) which Paul calls the ἐπουρανίων (of heaven). The Shona also describe their departed relatives as "*vepas*" (those of the under earth) and Paul uses the term καταχθονίων (those who belong under the earth) to

denote those who died and were buried. When the Shona people say in prayer to Jesus, "Although we do not see your physical body, we know that your presence is here", they are speaking from the platform of an inherent conviction and faith. They do not doubt the existence of supernatural beings and aeons. In the above hymn, we also see the use of Shona traditional epistemology when in the second strophe they say to Jesus, "*Tanda dambudziko redu*" (chase away, dissipate or dissolve our predicament). The word "*tanda*" (to cast away) can be explained by three Greek words which are: ἀποβάλλω (to throw off, to lose); ἀποθέομαι (to push off, to reject, to thrust away); and ριπτῶ (to throw off, to disperse). The idea that Jesus should "*tanda*" (cast, throw, thrust, shove off) the plight of those who come to him, has its deep roots in Shona morality. According to Garan'anga (2015), the Shona believe that when a family is molested by unruly spirits, they go to a *n'anga* for lasting solutions. They are usually advised by a *n'anga* to prepare for a cleansing ritual in which the marauding evil spirit is cast away by transferring it from the family onto an animal or some designated object such as a clay pot. In the case of transferring the troublesome spirit onto an animal, the family is usually asked to look for a hen, a goat or a sheep that is black in colour and without spots. The *n'anga* through clairvoyant powers summons the spirit troubling the family in question and instructs the spirit to take possession of the animal. The Shona describe the process of casting away the accursed animal as "*kurasirira*" (to transfer a bad spell onto). The animal is then cast away into the forest where it wanders with no fixed abode. The curse that was troubling the family is removed and the family is free. If someone finds the accursed hen, goat or sheep and kills it for meat, the evil spirit that was cast onto the animal starts haunting the family of the person who will have killed it. Once the troublesome spirit is cast onto an animal or hen, that animal no longer wants to mingle with domestic animals but heeds the instruction to stray into the forest. The animal is not afraid of people and it is a puzzle that even hunters' dogs do not attack such accursed animals in the forest. In some cases, the *n'anga* (witchdoctor) can transfer the troublesome spirit into objects such as money, jewellery or diamond rings or bangles. The items are put in a clay pot which is then carried either at dawn or dusk by the elders in the troubled family to a point where roads intersect called a *mhararano* (crossroads) where they break the clay pot and leave the items scattered there. The elders have to carry out the operation unnoticed and after doing it, must walk away from the place without turning. If someone takes the money or the jewellery left at the crossroads, he or she will have welcomed the cast away spirit into his/her family. When the Shona therefore ask Jesus to "*tanda dambudziko*" (cast off our problem), they are using a metaphor of driving away a troublesome spirit. The Shona make such prayers with the understanding which is found in Judaeo-Christian circles that Jesus took the sins of the whole world upon himself. Like a cast away animal, Jesus carried the curses of the whole world. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "He (Jesus Christ) himself bore our sins in his body on the Cross"; 2 Corinthians 5:21 also says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf". The role of

Jesus to cast away problems resonates with the interpretation of the Christ Hymn in terms of the Suffering Servant Jewish theme. Isaiah 53:3-5 captures the Shona concept of '*kutanda dambudziko*' (casting away a dilemma) well when he says: "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were, our face from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed". The Christ Hymn describes how Jesus humbled himself and became a man, found in the fashion of a man, and died on the Cross vicariously. The animal or hen or object upon whom the troubling spirit was cast, carried the curse on behalf of the besieged family. Christ became sin so that humanity could be rescued from damnation and suffering.

It should be noted that although the Shona conceptualise the role of a *n'anga* as encapsulated in the messiahship of Jesus Christ, the variance between Christ and the *n'anga* is that besides the good attributes such as healing and divining, a *n'anga* may also be hired to cause harm to a person. A *n'anga* who operates through the powers of a foreign spirit is usually accused of doubling up as a healer and wizard/witch. In Shona traditional religion, a *shavi* spirit may cause '*chitsinha*, *pfere*, or *chinzvi*' (celibacy). The *shavi* spirit often dictates that its medium will neither marry nor have children. This spirit of *chitsinha*, *pfere* or *chinzvi* can only be exorcised through the intervention of a powerful *n'anga*. The same phenomenon is also replicated in Christianity where in Matthew 19:12 Jesus said that some people are eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Paul also encourages celibacy for the sake of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 7:8.

Gundani (1994:124) states that the Shona cannot associate with the spirit of a deceased person until such a time a ritual has been performed to welcome it into the community of the spirit ancestors. One finds the Shona's trepidation of associating with the deceased's spirit before the *Kurova Guva* ritual resonant with the risen Christ's encounter with Mary soon after His resurrection when He refused to be touched saying, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father", (John 20:17). Some scholars have argued that Jesus stopped Mary from touching Him to demonstrate His approbation of chastity, sanctity and inward purity (Ambrose, 2017:446). It is argued that His spirit needed to pass through some process of approbation with His Father before the living could touch Him. Similarly, the understanding of the Shona, a deceased relative's spirit has to be reintegrated through the *kurova guva* ceremony before the living can freely associate with it as an ancestor.

Sitshebo (2000:55) also defines *Kurova Guva* (striking the grave), or *Kudzora* (to bring back) or *Kugadzira* (to repair or tame) as "the ceremony of officially inviting home the spirit of the

deceased. Sitshebo argues that the purpose of the ceremony is to bring back home the spirit of the dead as a way of repairing the relationship which was broken by death. At the same time, the spirit of the deceased is brought back home, the spirit also gets a place in the spirit world as an ancestor. *Kurova Guva* is thus the deceased's passport into the line of the ancestors. The *Kurova Guva* ceremony has a double function of connecting the deceased with both the living and dead relatives, with the living as a new family ancestor and with the dead as a fellow ancestor.

In the following table, a summary of the meeting points between Philippians 2:5-11 (Christ Hymn) and Shona hymnody is presented.

Table 7.8: Meeting points between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona Hymnody

CHRIST HYMN (PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11)	SHONA HYMNODY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary in style. • Follows strophic arrangement. • Has elements of antithesis. • Divinity is venerated above humanity. • The righteousness of God outshines sinfulness of mankind. • The death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ are salient themes. • Eschatology features. • Didactic in nature. • Draws language style from the Jewish, Greco-Roman and Greek environments. • Aspects of prayer and triumph characterise the genre. • Sound moral ethics are advocated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows an artistic style. • Arranged in strophes and stanzas. • Antithesis is eminent. • Divinity is escalated and humanity abnegated. • God's holiness is contrasted with mankind's depravity. • Highlights the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ. • Eschatology features. • Teaching is a key element. • Language style is an integration of Shona epistemology and biblical terminology. • Prayer and joy characterise the genre. • Sound moral ethics are encouraged.

As can be observed in the above table, there are mostly similarities in style and themes between the Christ Hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 and the Shona hymnody. The point of difference lies in that the Christ Hymn of Philippians 2:5-11 does not relate to any particular cultural context while the Shona hymnody is located in its own *sitz im leben*.

7.9 Summary

Paul uses the hymn genre to escalate his soteriological discourse. For the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Cross of Jesus Christ in the salvation of mankind, Paul uses the hymn genre to create graphic and picturesque images of the sacrifices Christ endured to attain redemption for mankind. The hymn genre illumines the otherness of God in comparison to the sinfulness of humanity. Christ as the God-Man is the protagonist of the hymn genre. The hymnic material in the Pauline corpus is a reflection of early church worship liturgy and practice. Hymns were sung in the early church and were instrumental for uniting the Church, teaching correct doctrine, defending the faith from heretic movements, celebrating the new life in Christ Jesus as well as glorifying God for the wonderful works of Christ.

Shona hymnody uses indigenous thought systems to express an understanding of the salvific sacrifices God wrought for mankind in Jesus Christ. Illustrations and symbols are drawn from

cultural rites of passage, death rituals and social norms and values to create metaphors that depict what Christ did to earn all humanity salvation. Inculturation of the humiliation, death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ through song helps reinforce the appropriation and understanding of the significance Jesus' life of sacrifice for all humanity. The Shona draw illustrations from their ethnography to explicate aspects of the Christ Hymn which would not find reference in Euro-American contexts. The comparison between the death form of Christ and Nehanda Nyakasikana Charwe creates vivid images of what Christ went through on behalf of all mankind. The end of Christ's suffering and death is comic and triumphal. The happy ending of Christ humiliation and shame in triumph and victory finely resonates with Shona philosophy which holds that a "descent portends an ascent" and that "the way down is the way up and vice versa". The hymns which are sung in Shona Churches contain deep feelings, convictions and ideas for which the Shona are willing to lay their lives. The Shona sing hymns not for entertainment but for solemn engagement with the supernatural world. When the Shona sing about human suffering, death and afterlife through hymns, they evoke strong emotions of pain mixed with excitement. Death to the Shona is only a means of transference into a better realm, the ancestral world.

7.10 Conclusion

In this seventh chapter, it has been discovered that to better understand the meaning of Philippians 2:5-11, the text should be read in its song form. Respect of the song or hymn form brings into the hermeneutical process new dimensions of reading the pericope such as for example, the purpose for which hymns were sung. The reasons for singing hymns in the early church included uniting the body of Christ, enforcing Christian apologetics in the wake of erroneous teachings, hortatory and paraenetic reasons. Reading Philippians 2:5-11 in the context of hymn helps the reader to reach the heart of the text. This is opposed to treating the pericope as any literary text, a position that has been taken by Euro-American scholarship. The song approach to the text provides untrained interpreters of biblical texts with a means of interacting with the Gospel. When biblical themes such as Jesus' life, ministry, death, resurrection and exaltation are taken to indigenous communities in the form of hymns, understanding of those themes is enhanced especially if the themes are embellished in indigenous linguistic forms. In this chapter, it has emerged that use in song, of indigenous forms of illustrations, metaphors and symbols for the death and post-death life of Christ can bring the New Testament closer to its readers. The likening of Jesus to a *diramhamba* (ancestral bull) when He hung on the dreadful Cross, likening Him to a *n'anga* (traditional healer) has opened fresh ways of understanding who Jesus is to the Shona and how they think His death will help resolve their plights as an example. The song approach to interpreting Philippians 2:5-11

triggers a need for further research on a new approach to hermeneutics which I can call "a hymnological hermeneutical approach".

This is a unique and fresh way of looking at the text in Philippians, adopting techniques of form criticism to contextualise a biblical text. You may further enhance the technique through utilisation of the function of two or more literary genres. For example, while looking at the text in Philippians as a hymn and compare it with the Chimurenga hymn sung in respect of Nehanda you could have utilised the fact that in Shona, hymns go along with 'myths' about the heroic figures in the hymns. At her death Nehanda is said to have promised the white settlers that surely 'her bones will rise' (*mapfupa angu achamuka*). So, her death was not only significant in so far as it was sacrificial; it reenacts and parallels very well, Jesus' resurrection. So, the literary genre of hymn places emphasis on the sacrificial nature of the death while the literary genre of myth places emphasis on resurrection and eternity.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, THE FINDINGS, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the hymnic genre of Philippians 2:5-11 and how its features relate with Shona hymnody. Cultural beliefs and morality issues embedded in Shona hymnody were used as a tool of interpreting the pre-existence, incarnation, kenosis, death, suffering and soteriology themes of the pericope. This final chapter is set to answer the penultimate question raised in this research that is; *has the Afrocentric hermeneutical study of morality in Philippians 2:5-11 from the perspective of Shona culture yielded new meanings of the pericope?* The chapter shall summarise the study, draw conclusions from the results of the study and provide recommendations for application of the Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm in New Testament studies.

8.2 Philippians 2:5-11: Viewed from an alternative perspective

Section 1.4.1 of this study stated that the study aimed for a new understanding of Philippians 2:5-11 through the application of a hermeneutical lens informed by elements alive on the African continent and specifically, in the Shona culture. The study made use of metaphors of morality, kinship philosophy, death and spiritual beliefs and traditional music hymnody of the Shona to interrogate the text. As stated in 1.5, the study has also taken an integrationist, complementarity and multi-focal approach in which Euro-American viewpoints on the text have been summarised with the view to highlight areas where the Afrocentric hermeneutical tool can contribute fresh glimpses into the textual meaning through the lens of Shona culture. The study presented a peculiar hermeneutical study of Philippians 2:5-11 by demonstrating that an African cultural cosmology can be instrumental in searching the meanings of New Testament texts, especially in the area of morality. Those aspects of the pericope where Euro-American scholarship left some hanging questions especially in respect of the death of Christ and his post-death exaltation have been engaged in fresh light from a Shona cultural angle. On the theological value of the text, traditional exegesis has located the purpose of the pericope as a hymn in early Christian worship settings (Martin, 1967:364; Martin, 1983:24-41; Ellis, 2000:319; Collins, 2003:361; Tobin, 2006:92; Fewster, 2015:191). Other scholars strictly confined the theological purpose of the text to the first century Philippian Christian Church (Fowl 2005:115; Fee 1992:29-46). However, this study has proven that Philippians 2:5-11 presents theological and ethical lessons for the universal body of Christ beyond first century Christian settings. The proximity of the text to the African quests for transformational leadership, kenotic or servant leadership, anti-corruption drive and communalism makes it relevant to the contemporary world.

The elements of textual immanence and textual appropriation mentioned in 1.4.1 have been proven beyond doubt as a new interpretation of Philippians has emerged in which the text is alive to challenges besetting contemporary communities, especially in Africa.

8.3 A Shona cultural paradigmatic rendering of phrases marginalised by Euro-American scholarship

Lohmeyer, omits some phrases on the basis of presuppositions that regard un-Pauline authorship of the text¹⁶. Lohmeyer excised at the end of verse 8 the phrase θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (death, even death of the Cross). Again, Lohmeyer went on to also disturb the original arrangement of the hymn's strophic parallelism between the phrases ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος (becoming like men in appearance) and καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος (being found in fashion as a man). The same offense to the text was also committed by Jeremias who excised the phrase at the end of verse 10, ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων (of things in heaven and of things in earth and of things under the earth) and part of verse 11, εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς (to the glory of God the Father). They both argued that the phrases were additions to the original hymn by Paul. As if these two had not done enough disruption to the original form of the hymn, Talbert also removed part of verse 8 which Lohmeyer had removed. However, as the research has shown, recent scholarship is now skewed in favour of Pauline authorship of the phrases (Collins, 2002:261-272; Reumann, 2008:361-362; Brucker, 2014:1-14) thereby justifying the need to interpret the pericope in its current etymology without groping for a slippery pre-Pauline, ancient form.

An interpretation of the text from the Shona cultural perspective finds no justification in subjecting the text to such surgical operation. The Shona cultural perspective has provided a comprehensive interpretation of those “dreaded” aspects of ‘death on the Cross, condescension to the level of mankind, the identity of those in heaven, those on earth and those under the earth, and the phrase, to the glory of God, the Father’. While Euro-American scholars found a stumbling block in the death of the anointed one of God and thought it prudent to remove the “death of the cross” phrase, through Shona spiritual beliefs a new meaning of Christ’s death has emerged. In Shona epistemology, a person who dies a humiliating death on behalf of the masses is a hero. Jesus’ death on the cross resonates with the Shona custom of a sacrificial bull (*diramhamba*) that is slaughtered for the purpose of appeasing the ancestors but at the same time, unite the people through feasting on its flesh and blood. Contrary to the observation by Marshall (1968:104-127) that the death of Christ on the Cross was as a result of His volitional obedience to forces of evil and not to God, the Shona believe that heroes die for the cause of the masses. The Shona believe that those heroes who lay their lives down for the

¹⁶ See page 53 for details on Lohmeyer’s removal of phrases from the hymn.

masses do that in fulfilment of the will of *Mwari* (God) and on behalf of their great ancestors. The Shona draw inspiration on their perception of Jesus as their hero from the way their great heroine of the first chimurenga (resistance uprising), Charwe Nehanda Nyakasikana died after she was hanged on a tree by the colonial government on 27 April 1898 in the city of Salisbury (now called Harare). After her death for the cause of her black Shona people, Mbuya Charwe Nehanda became a hero whose life is celebrated in song and naming of streets and buildings after her (Charumbira, 2013:215).

The following table sums up the interpretational thread that links the death of Jesus Christ to the Shona idea of a hero who dies on behalf of the people. The table draws comparison between Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana the great ancestor and heroine of the Shona and Jesus Christ.

Table 8.1: Similarities between the death of Jesus Christ and that of Mbuya Nehanda

JESUS CHRIST	CHARWE NEHANDA NYAKASIKANA
Was hanged on a tree under an imperial regime (Galatians 3:13)	Was hanged on a tree under a colonial regime (Asante & Mazama, 2008)
Died for the sins of many (Romans 5:8)	Died for the cause of many (Davidson, 1988:4)
Made a public proclamation concerning His executioners while hanging on the Cross (Luke 23:34)	Made a public proclamation concerning her executioners while hanging on the tree (Hove, 1998:53)
Faced the charge of subverting the nation and forbidding payment of tax to Caesar (Luke 23:2).	Faced the charge of subversive activities and forbidding the Shona from paying hut tax. (Chara, 2014, The Sunday Mail)
Promised to rise from the dead (Matthew 27:63)	Told her executioners that her bones would rise again (Hove, 1998:53)
Highly exalted after death (Philippians 2:9)	Was highly exalted at independence with names of streets, names of buildings, schools and an aeroplane named after her (Charumbira, 2013:215).

As the above table shows, the Shona easily relate with the manner and style of Jesus Christ's death. When they worship and praise Jesus, they confer a hero status on Him because He conforms to their perception of a heroic person who dies for the cause of many. His death is therefore a victory and not a defeat or a fall to the forces of evil as Euro-American scholars believe. In the same trajectory, the Shona hymnody depicts Jesus as their sacrificial bull that atones for their transgressions and unites them as a people. The following table summarises comparisons drawn between Jesus and the *diramhamba* (ancestral bull).

Table 8.2: Summary of similarities between Jesus Christ and the Shona anointed bull

JESUS CHRIST	DIRAMHAMBA/ANOINTED BULL.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ is Χριστός meaning Anointed One. • All who believe in Christ are called by His name. • Christians have unity in Christ. • Christ died on the Cross to save mankind. • Christ did not resist crucifixion. • The death of Christ involves the shedding of blood. • The death of Christ is celebrated with reference to the eating of His flesh in the Eucharist. • The Holy Communion involves drinking the Lord's blood and eating His flesh. • Only those who believe in Christ can partake of the Holy Communion. • Jesus Christ was given a name above every other name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diramhamba</i> means anointed with beer. • All members of the clan or lineage carry the name of the ancestor. • The name of the head ancestor fosters unity. • The bull is killed at tree and the whole clan is assured of security as the ancestors are appeased. • The bull is not violent during slaughter. • The blood of the bull is considered sacred and is drunk roar by the spirit mediums while some of it is cooked and eaten by the rest of family members. • The flesh of the bull is eaten and its blood is drunk. • Only clan members can eat the sacrificial meat of the bull. • The ancestral bull after coronation is conferred the name of a whole lineage.

8.4 The kerygmatic versus the ethical interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11

This research has shown that Euro-American scholarship is varied and nuanced in its position on the kerygmatic/soteriological versus ethical interpretation. It has further shown that viewing the pericope from a Shona cultural perspective produces amazing results in support of the latter approach. This section summarises points in support of the rich mimetical and paraenetic value of Philippians 2:5-11. This study unearthed an element of great proximity between the text and Shona moral values. While mainstream exegesis has treated the “mind which was in Christ Jesus” to exclusively refer to a call on the followers of Jesus Christ to walk worth of their faith in Him, this thesis produced results which eclipse that position with overwhelming evidence for the argument that the pericope’s main purpose is ethical. Christ’s life of sacrificing for others, His humility, self-emptying, and Paul’s clarion call for harmony and togetherness in the body of Christ can be better understood from the Shona virtues of communalism and kinship ties. Mandova (2013:359) argues that Shona communities treasure the adage, ‘I am because we

are'. All those who assume leadership positions are therefore expected to pivot their leadership on virtues such as reciprocity, participation, harmony, hospitality, solidarity, connectedness and cohesion. The word φρονεῖτε in verse 5 translated 'mind' in English is variably translated 'moyo' in Shona, which means heart. So when the text says, τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (this heart which was in Christ Jesus,) a Shona reader gropes for the *moyo* (heart) of Jesus. The 'heart' (*moyo*) of Jesus is a hub of virtues of love, mercy, compassion, humility, charity, peace, joy, meekness, longsuffering and goodness. These virtues define the moral ethos of the Shona. Thus from a Shona cultural perspective, the mind which was in Christ Jesus is more than an attitude towards the Gospel of salvation. It constitutes the tapestry of social life.

The new understanding of verse 5 from a Shona ethical model changes the trajectory of interpretation from 'mental concepts' to issues of the heart. Such an approach to the interpretation of the text leads this researcher to the conclusion that the catalogue of virtues listed by Paul in verses 1-4, mainly virtues which flow from the heart, are antecedents of verse 5. Such virtues, which include social harmony, love, unity of purpose, selflessness, humility and mercy for others, resonate with the catalogue of Shona moral virtues as listed by Gelfand (1973:11), Moyo (1973:52), Chimuka (2001:23), Jackson (2004:28), Murove (2007:179), Chingombe (2013:103) and Bewaji (2014:81). The Shona moral virtues which are listed by the above scholars include togetherness, oneness, caring for others and the need to maintain communal ties.

8.5 The mind which was in Christ (φρονεῖτε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)

The Shona interpret the mind which was in Christ in an entirely new perspective. While mainstream Euro-American scholarship confines the interpretation of the mind which was in Christ to a cognitive and rationalistic domain, the Shona interpret the word "mind" as "moyo" (heart). The perception of Jesus' mind (φρονεῖτε) as "a heart" changes the platform of the text's meaning from sheer espousal of a pattern of life guided by religious norms to a new platform of meaning where Christ's virtues of compassion, mercy, empathy, sympathy, selflessness and sacrificial love are definitive of a believer's relationship to others.

8.6 In the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ)

In Shona cosmology, the idea of μορφῇ θεοῦ assumes new meanings other than the usual understanding of the form of God as implying that Jesus shared same dietary attributes with God. From the perspective of Shona cultural values, 'form of God' (*kufanana naMwari*) depicts a virtue of innocence or blamelessness. The Shona often liken to God a person whose character is above reproach. Gelfand (1973:52) notes that a person bearing the attributes of God bears the following moral traits:

- Does not practise witchcraft.
- Does not bear grudges and is not quarrelsome.
- Is favoured by the people, the ancestors and *Musikavanhu* (God).
- Does not succumb to evil powers.
- Lives a chaste life.

In reference to Jesus Christ, the Shona would read the likeness of Jesus to God as implying that He was sinless, did not harbour any evil in His heart and was a man of peace. The Shona would also understand ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ to mean that together with all other human beings, Jesus was a spirit being whose roots are in God. The Shona believe that all human beings come from God and end up with God. When a person dies, the Shona say *Mwari atora munhu wake* (God has taken back His person). That statement implies that before birth, the dead person was with God and now has returned to his maker. Such a belief is an endorsement of pre-existence. That marks a point of departure from those scholars who argue that Jesus' promotion into the form of God started sometime after His parthenogenesis or virgin birth. Kamudzandu (2007:253) argues that the life of the Shona has three levels namely, the unborn level, the living level and the living dead level. The unborn are with God and they are believed to exist in bodies that are known by God Himself. When they return to God, they reassume the bodies they had before they entered the world of the physical.

8.7 Self-emptying to the form of a servant (ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου)

Whereas some Euro-American scholars have interpreted ἐκένωσεν to refer to the act of Jesus divesting Himself of the attributes of God such as omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, in Shona cosmology, the term refers to a voluntary decision which a person in authority takes to come down to the level of his subordinates. That process does not reduce or empty the person of his power but will in actual fact, accentuate the power. It is a 'down is up and up is down' philosophy applicable in leadership principles of the Shona. The Shona believe that the extent to which a person goes down for the good of others determines how high that person rises in life. In the same vein, in Shona epistemology, the condescension of Jesus Christ portended His rise which is confirmed in verse 9 καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν (and God highly exalted Him). Kummel (1973:153) aptly describes the process of Jesus' exaltation in terms of this down-is up principle when he says, "for this reason God has exalted the humiliated One even above His previous divine nature and has given to Him the highest name, the name of Lord, so that now all beings in the world should confess Jesus Christ as Lord and thereby

honour God". To the Shona, the kenosis of the Lord is a method of aggrandisement. As a virtue, self-emptying is a trait expected in leaders from a Shona cultural perspective. Gelfand (1973:153-154) points out that a traditional leader such as a chief or kraal head (*sabhuku*) is expected to climb down to the level of his subjects if his leadership is to be acceptable. Thus, when Jesus emptied Himself to the level of a servant, He met the expectations of the Shona people for a leader. It follows then that Jesus' self-abnegation is not something to attract shame or pity but is a virtue that is highly commended. What develops from Christ's kenosis and his descentance to a servant level are two types of leadership, kenotic and servant leadership models respectively. Humility which was displayed by Christ when He descended to the level of a servant is viewed among the Shona as an indicator of excellent leadership qualities.

8.8 Made in the likeness of men, being found in fashion as a man (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος)

The new meanings that emerge from this phrase arise from the way the Shona interpret the word ἄνθρωπος. When the Shona say in reference to Jesus Christ, "*akaitwa nomufananidzo womunhu*" (He was made in the likeness of men) (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) and, "*akawanikwa anomufananidzo womunhu*" (found in fashion as a man) (σήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), they are saying things that are vastly philosophical, metaphysical and epistemological. The discursive engagements by Euro-American scholars on the two phrases, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος and σήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος have tended to be confined around the sense of One who was God becoming a human being, His humanity as an expression of humility, His humanity as an assumption of slavery to world powers leading to a shameful death on the Cross. In this section, the various shades of interpretation that the Shona would sculpture from the two phrases is discussed.

What is "*munhu*" (man) (ἄνθρωπος) or "*vanhu*" (men) (ἀνθρώπων) in Shona philosophy?

Before I attend to the meanings attached by the Shona to the term "man", it is important to explain that the Shona belong together with the Ndebele, the Zulu, the Xhosa, the Sesotho and the Ndaou to dialectical family called *Bantu* languages (Battle, 2009:2; Mangena, 2012:11). In Shona, *Bantu* (people), is *Vanhu*, a plural form for *Munhu*, translated Man in Philippians 2:7-8. A *munhu* (man) is expected to show *unhu* (humaneness). In Southern Africa, the idea of '*hunhu*' or '*ubuntu*' connotes community, communalism, moral attributes of a person in relation to others and how individuals relate with societal norms and values. *The New World Encyclopaedia* (2018) states that the concept of *hunhu* or *ubuntu* among African communities captures the ideas of humanity towards others, a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity, human generosity, having consideration and being human towards others. Mandova (2013:100)

defines *unhu* as a social philosophy which embodies virtues that celebrate the mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust and sharing, unselfishness, self-reliance, caring and respect for others among other ethical values.

When the Shona read the phrase ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων (likeness of men) which they translate "*mufananidzo womunhu*", the following ideas flash in their mental faculties.

Samkange and Samkange (1980) argues that in Shona philosophy *unhu* (being a man) means that one recognises the humanity of others and on that basis, seeks to establish respectful human relations with them. Samkange and Samkange (1980) further state that one who has *unhu* (humanity), is one who, if faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, the one should opt for the preservation of life. Samkange and Samkange (1980) further aver that the king owes his status and all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him. Thus, in relation to the pericope under this study, when Jesus was made in the likeness of men, in Shona philosophy that means that He identified with human beings and regarded them as belonging to the same status and esteem as Himself. The Shona would, in that sense, view Jesus as one of them, perhaps as an elder brother (Sawyer, 1968:72; Schreiter, 2002:121). According to the second maxim of *unhu* (humanity) given by Samkange and Samkange (1980), one who has *unhu* (humanity) will choose to preserve human life over wealth or self-benefits. This is exactly what we see in Jesus choosing to become a man, taking on the form of a slave, a dying the death of a criminal on the Cross instead of clinging to His equality with God (ἴσα θεῷ). Samkange and Samkange (1980) also describe a scenario in which a king owes his status and its concomitant power to the people under him. The exaltation of Jesus is as a result of the sacrifice He made for all who believe in Him. The Shona believe that kings are kings because of the people.

Another version of the meaning of *unhu* (humanity) is given by Gelfand (1973:139). Gelfand says *unhu* refers to a person's character and personality (Gelfand, 1973, *ibid*). *Unhu* is a very critical requirement for every member of the Shona community. An ill-mannered child is said to lack *unhu*. The parents of a child who misbehaves are blamed for failing to train their child. Gelfand (1973:139) writes, "*Unhu* is the correct way of living according to the teachings of the Shona elders. A person with *unhu* behaves in a good way, respects his parents and sets a good example." In the pericope Jesus sets a good example as a son who is obedient to His Father. He maintained His obedience to the point of dying on the Cross. A child who is rude and does not respect his or her parents is said to be devoid of *unhu*. Jesus had *unhu* in that He did what pleased His Father, who in turn rewarded Him by giving Him a name which is above every name (διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα). Shona parents have a custom of rewarding their sons who display *unhu hwakanaka* (good manners).

When God saw what Jesus had done by demonstrating humility and obedience to the point of death, He rewarded Him with the name κύριος (Lord). What God the Father did is typical of what is done to a male child who excels in acts of bravery especially as a hunter. Such a child is given the name *hombarume* (distinguished hunter). One who excels in farming is given the name *hurudza* (master farmer) (Gombe, 1998:130). The Shona reward *unhu* with names that speak to achievement and outstanding personality.

The other sense of *unhu* among the Shona refers to maturity. A grown up child is called *ava munhu* (has become a man) (Gelfand, 1973:140). As the child grows more, his *unhu* also increases. Such an increase in maturity is depicted in Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.". From that perspective, it can be argued that Jesus increased in wisdom to such an extent that He reasoned that if He humbled Himself to the point of dying on the Cross, His Father was going to reward Him with a glorious name and status which would exceed the one He had before He became a man.

The Shona describe Jesus' condescension by saying, "*akazova munhu kuvanhu*" (He became a man among men). In that sense, the Shona will be claiming that Jesus became an embodiment of *unhu* which encompasses all those virtues that maintain harmony and the spirit of sharing among members of a community (Samkange & Samkange, 1980). The phrase "*kuva munhu kuvanhu*" (becoming a man among men) (ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) means that one becomes an exemplary figure, one who shows everyone else the way. Thus, when Jesus was found in fashion as a man (σχήματι εὑρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), He became the perfect embodiment of moral virtues that are approved by the people, the ancestors and God (Gelfand, 1970:1; Mbiti, 1990:108). There is also a sense in which Jesus' becoming a man among men might mean that He actually became a kinsman, a close relative who can take care of the concerns of His relatives. The Shona believe that only kinsfolk can settle spiritual enigmas for one another. Gelfand (1970:3) explains that if an avenging spirit (*ngozi*) is haunting a certain family, only a member of the family's clan can appease or placate the anger of that avenging spirit. In that vein, the Shona would view Jesus Christ as a kinsman redeemer when He sacrificed His life on the Cross. This kinsman redeemer concept is also found in the Jewish tradition where it refers to a male relative, who according to laws found in the Pentateuch, had the privilege or responsibility to act for a relative who was in trouble, danger or need of vindication.

The Shona also conceptualise of "man" in terms of the philosophy that a man is part of a whole and therefore cannot make decisions for himself and disregard society (Gelfand, 1970:5). In this sense, when Jesus became "*munhu kuvanhu*" (a man to men), He could not make decisions for Himself but had to bow His own will to the needs of mankind at large. Gelfand (1970:5) sums up his article on *unhu* by observing that Shona philosophy revolves around "*munhu*" (the human

being) with an almost complete neglect of the material aspects of life, a feature of the Shona way of life that contrasts so greatly with that of the Euro-American world. Gelfand's view illumines our appreciation of how the Shona understands the humanity of Christ.

To the traditional Shona, *unhu* (virtue or character) is more precious than material wealth. When Jesus emptied Himself (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), of the loftiest of all statuses as an equal to God (εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ), choosing instead, to live in fashion as a man who dies without anything to His name (καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθείς ὡς ἄνθρωπος), He qualified as *munhu kuvanhu* (man among men) (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος) in Shona epistemology. Christ could have used His power to establish Himself as a superhuman oligarch but chose to humble Himself (ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτὸν), holding on to the virtues of humility, obedience and selflessness. To the Shona, that which Christ did constitutes *unhu*, hence Jesus was *munhu kuvanhu* (man to men). If Jesus had chosen glamour and splendour instead of the virtues of humility, obedience and selflessness, the Shona would say *arasha unhu* (he has lost good manners). A child *anorasha hunhu* (who loses goodmanners) does not represent his father well in public and brings reproach and shame upon his family. Gelfand (1973:139) notes that a child who pays no respect to his parents and disobeys them is devoid of *unhu*. Thus, in obeying His Father even unto death, death of the Cross (ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ), Jesus displayed *unhu* as an obedient Son.

In Shona cultural cosmology it is noticed that Jesus' humanity is a lot more than Him appearing in human flesh. His humanity is to do with His moral standing, His relation to the whole human race, all creation and to His Father. Euro-American scholarship has commendably reflected on the humanity of Jesus but has tended to limit the notion of His humanity to the level of σωματική ἐμφανίση (bodily appearance) or outward form (εἶδος). The Shona do not ascribe the designation *munhu* to every person. To be conferred with a *munhu* status like Jesus, a person has to pass the test of godness or virtuous living of which the major attributes include communalism, solidarity, kinship, sharing, humility, harmony, unselfishness, connectedness and cohesion. This scenario is different in Euro-American cultural settings where competition, individuation, distinctiveness, privatism, classes and status symbols define life (Mandova, 2013:100).

8.9 Thought it not robbery to be equal with God (οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ)

The meaning that emerges from this important statement from the Shona cultural perspective pertains to leadership. Just as Jesus did not take advantage of His being equal with God to create a citadel of power for Himself, the Shona expect their leaders to avoid sumptuous lives that create wide inequalities between them and their subjects. Gelfand (1973:150) observes that the leaders of the Shona excluded the profit motive in all its forms. Selflessness is expected in

leaders among the Shona. Gelfand (1973:151) further observes that even in matters of goods and services exchange the Shona prohibit usury and interest. Jesus' decision in Philippians 2:6 to climb down to the level or form of a servant (μορφὴν δούλου λαβών) resonates with the Shona virtue of subservience as a virtue of leadership. The Shona expect their leaders to act like servants to the community. As Gelfand (1973:153) observes, the traditional leader of the Shona is expected to set an example by not living differently from the rest of the people. Gelfand (1973:153) notes that the chiefs in MaShonaland (land of the Shona) are expected to behave in the same fashion as the ordinary man. This is the same attitude that was in Christ who took on the fashion of an ordinary man (σχήματι εὔρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος). A chief of the Shona is not supposed to create an impression of superiority above other members of society. His style of life including that of his family must not appear different from that of his subjects. The chief's subjects actually respect him more if he humbles himself (ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν). In his study of the lifestyle of the children of the Shona chief, Gelfand (1973:154) notes with awe that the sons and daughters of chiefs followed the same pattern of life lived by the children of their clansmen.

8.10 Who are those in Heaven, those on earth and those under the earth whose knees shall bow at the mention of Jesus new name? (πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων)

The language of the pericope is consanguine to Shona death and afterlife beliefs. Jesus is highly exalted after death. This is consistent with Shona belief that those who die assume higher statuses in the spiritual realm. The pericope refers to those in the heavens (ἐπουρανίων) (*vari kumhepo*) and those on earth (ἐπιγείων) (*vepanyika*) and those under the earth (καταχθονίων) (*vepasi*) (verse 10). The above categorisation of beings resonates with the categorisation of people in Shona cosmology. The Shona believe that there are three categories of people namely, those who are still living in the flesh (ἐπιγείων), secondly, those who have died but their spirits have not been repatriated through post death obsequies (καταχθονίων) and those whose spirits have been redeemed from the underworld and now occupy positions of rank among the ancestors (ἐπουρανίων). Jesus' resurrection is viewed by the Shona as part of His initiation into the ranks of the ancestors where He takes position as the proto-ancestor who reports directly to *Musikavanhu* (creator of mankind). As the most senior ancestor among the dead, all the living (ἐπιγείων) (*vepanyika*), those in heaven (ἐπουρανίων) (*vekumhepo*) and those under the earth (καταχθονίων) (*vepasi*) report to Him before they reach *Mwari* (God) who is also called *Zame* (the transcendent One).

8.11 Summary of the findings of the study

In 1.3.1 under the background of the study section, it was stated that scholars agree that the selflessness exemplified by Christ in Philippians 2:2-11 serves rhetorically to steady volatility and to admonish towards love, equality, humility, condescension, oneness, unity, mercy and servitude (Martin, 1967:88; Hooker, 1975:152; Fee, 1992:29; Dunnett, 2001:68; Brown, 2013:2). An important statement was made that, when viewed through African eyes situated in a Shona context, the degrees of identification and proximity to the events depicted in the text are much closer. This study, as stated in 1.3.2 under the problem statement is an effort to achieve a new understanding of Philippians 2:5-11 morality from a Shona cosmological perspective and in the process of doing that, the researcher contributes to the study of biblical literature from an African cultural perspective. As stated in 1:4.1, the overall aim of the research was to grope for a new understanding of the text through the application of a new hermeneutical lens informed by elements alive on the African continent and specifically in the Shona culture. This aim was to be pursued through implementation of five objectives which included a critical and exegetical study of existing literature on Philippians 2:5-11, the identification of gaps in Euro-American research on the text, an analysis of morality concepts in the text from Shona cultural lens, reflections on the hymnic character of the pericope in light of Shona hymnody and in the last stage, an assessment of the Afrocentric method in New Testament studies vis-à-vis results of the study.

Chapter 1 of this thesis addressed the background of the study and the problem statement. The chapter further demonstrated the concern concerning the dearth of academic analysis of biblical texts and in particular, Philippians 2:5-11 from an Afrocentric and specifically, Shona cultural perspective. The method of the study was articulated as an integrationist hybrid model that emphasises on the Afro-optic model in a complementarity with existing Euro-American paradigms. The ethical considerations of the study were also outlined in the first chapter.

In Chapter 2, the Afrocentric hermeneutical model was unpacked, its strengths and weaknesses discussed and the vindication for its choice as the main method of this study given. Chapter 3 presented a review of current scholarship on Philippians 2 with the view to discovering gaps where a complementary Afrocentric hermeneutical praxis can contribute towards a deeper understanding of the passage. Chapter 4 specifically focused on Euro-American views on the salient themes of the pericope such as the mind of Christ, His self-emptying or kenosis, His self-abnegation to the levels of mankind and slavery, humility and exemplary life. Outstanding gaps in the interpretation of the key themes were highlighted as a prelude to the investigation of the meanings of the same through Shona cultural lens. The gaps include the tendency to circumscribe hermeneutics of the text to the worlds behind and inside of the text at the expense

of the worlds in front of the text, changing the syntax of the text to conform to the interpreters' determinacies, limited or piecemeal discussion of spiritual, death and life after death issues raise in the text as well as disregard of the ethical value of the text. Chapter 5 laid out a tapestry of the Shona cultural framework. A consanguineous and homologous relationship was discovered between the text and the Shona cultural framework. The chapter proved that there are conceptual, textual and contextual proximities between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona cosmology. The ethical value of the text viewed from Shona morality perspective eclipses the overarched kerygmatic/soteriological interpretation emphasised by Euro-American scholarship. The chapter thus opened trajectories of analysis for the study of the text's key themes through the lens of Shona cultural framework in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 interrogated the key themes of the text through Shona cultural perspective. The chapter demonstrated that the aspects of the text which were excised or changed or avoided by Euro-American scholars can be interpreted with cogent results from a Shona cultural lens. Those aspects include *τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* (let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus) (*moyo uyū ngauve mamuri wakanga uri muna Kristo Jesu*), *θανάτου*, *θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ* (death, death of the Cross) (*rufu, rufu rwemuchinjikwa*), *καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν* (therefore God highly exalted Him) (*naizvozvo Mwari vakamusimudzira zvikuru*), *καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνόματα* (and gave Him a name above every name) (*wakamupa zita riri pamusoro pemazita ose*) *ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων* (of things in heaven, and of things in earth and of things under the earth) (*ezviri kudenga nezviri panyika nezviri pasi penyika*) and *εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς* (to the glory of God the Father). The Shona cultural perspective has unearthed valuable trajectories of meaning on these aspects of the text which aspects received very limited, little or no attention at all from Euro-American scholarship. The chapter also provided an enhanced interpretation of the ethical value of the pericope revealing the extent to which the humility, kenosis and condescension of Jesus Christ constitute virtues that culminate in kenotic and servant leadership forms. The chapter also highlighted how the pericope's morality resonates with the Shona cultural values of communalism, selflessness, solidarity, sharing and unhuism, also known as Ubuntu generally in Africa.

Chapter 7 discussed the Pauline hymn genre with a special focus on Philippians 2:5-11, the features and functions of the hymn as read and interpreted in light of Shona traditional hymnody. The study showed that there are common themes between Shona hymnody and Philippians 2:5-11. Themes which are commonly highlighted in both the text and Shona cultural hymnody include the pre-existence of Christ, the incarnation, kenosis, death on the Cross, the suffering of the Saviour and His love for mankind. It was also discovered that Shona hymnody syncs with the Philippians hymn in emphasis on moral virtues such as love, mercy, humility, selflessness, charity and regard for other people. Shona Christian hymnody enmeshes

metaphors from traditional cosmology whereby Christ is likened to a great ancestor, a great traditional healer, an ancestral bull (*diramhamba*) that is sacrificed to usher communal unity, togetherness and social cohesion. The chapter has demonstrated that interpreting the text through the lens of Shona hymnody helps in understanding in a deeper way those aspects of the pericope which are to do with death, exaltation and life after death. A hymnological approach to the study of the text deserves to be given attention for further insights on Philippians 2:5-11.

Chapter 8 summarises the main findings and results of the research and presents recommendations for the implementation of Afrocentric hermeneutical study of the New Testament morality as well as views on possible future trajectories for research from the Shona cultural perspective. The research ends with a listed a bibliography of all cited sources.

8.12 Summary of key results of the study

- Studying Philippians 2:5-11 from the Shona cultural perspective has shown that biblical texts can be alive to existential, everyday life issues if they are engaged through context-based methodologies.
- Cooperation and complementarity between and among interpretation communities yield balanced discoursing on intricate biblical subjects such as the pre-existence of Christ, suffering, death and life after death.
- Philippians 2:5-11 presents a new model of leadership, the kenotic leadership model, which aims to make leaders realise that the way up is down, corruption, narcissism and megalomania bring woes to humanity.
- There is a dire need to demythologise, demystify and de-imperialise biblical hermeneutics so that the New Testament can be studied through multicultural perspectives as demonstrated in this Shona cosmological study.
- A hermeneutical approach that fosters unity and mutual engagement of different races and cultures of the world is possible. This research has demonstrated that African scholars need to respect the traditional interpretational tools of the West so that the former's hermeneutics does not degenerate into tribal or racial repertoire.

8.13 Recommendations for an Afrocentric Hermeneutical Study of New Testament Morality

- Considering the amount of homology between Philippians 2:5-11 and Shona morality worldview, massive research can follow this methodological praxis from the perspectives of other cultures on the African context.
- The subject of textual proximity to African culture opens up a Pandora 's Box in other research areas such as pneumatology, resurrection, miracles and faith healing. This realisation emanates from the researcher's observation that Africans are highly spiritual; they believe in mysteries, magic and life after death.
- The study has shown that scholars who use the Afrocentric paradigm of hermeneutics should be wary of being sucked into cultural historiography at the expense of faithfulness to biblical meaning.
- This study has shown that while the English language may be at variance with the Shona language epistemologically, the latter is very close to the New Testament Greek. It follows that more research in New Testament can be done in New Testament Studies from a Shona cultural perspective.

8.14 Recommendations for future research

Given that the African perspective has been ignored or non-existent for so long, the possibilities for future research from an African point of view are endless. The study recommends the following areas for future research:

- The parables of Jesus bear some similarities with the folktales (*ngano*) of the Shona people. An interesting study can be done on the form and purpose of Jesus' parables from a Shona *ngano* (folktales) perspective.
- Another New Testament subject that can also be studied from an Afrocentric hermeneutical perspective is the genealogy of Jesus Christ presented in Matthew 1:1. African ancestry constitutes an interesting motif in this hermeneutical model as it balances discourse between eschatology and human history.
- Morality issues in Jesus' sermon on the Mount can also be studied from a Shona cultural perspective and one can isolate specific topics such as peace-making, salt and light of the earth metaphors and love for enemies for such a study.

- Intensive research is also needed in the area of how New Testament hymn passages can be interpreted from an Afrocentric educational perspective.
- Biblical research from an Afrocentric perspective is inexhaustible because the Bible should be interpreted for posterity and social transformation. Such an approach will be a point of departure from academic research which does not deal with practical life issues.
- Subjecting biblical texts to an Afrocentric and culture specific analysis, as exemplified hereto by the Shona cultural perspective on Philippians 2:5-11, yields new and enhanced textual meanings and is therefore recommended.

8.15 Conclusion

Chapter 8 summarised the main findings of the research and provided recommendations for future study of New Testament morality through the Afrocentric hermeneutical paradigm. The study has successfully proven that the Afrocentric paradigm opens new ways of interpreting Philippians 2:5-11 from a cultural perspective.

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