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University**



FACULTY OF ARTS

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

**A HISTORICAL EXPOSITION OF WOMEN LED CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE.A
CASE OF GUTA RAMWARI CHURCH.**

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I, Ratidzo Redzo (R122181C), declare that, this dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in History at Midlands State University has not been submitted at any other University, and that it is entirely my work. All sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Musekiwa family, Mrs Musekiwa my brothers and sisters and friends who provided me with financial support, love and care during my course to complete my dissertation. I cannot do without you. May God continue to shower you with his blessings; you made so many sacrifices during my study period.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to examine and analyse the historical explanation of women led churches in Zimbabwe tracing from GutaRaJehovah which was formed by Mai Chaza in 1954. The study portrays that the church grew during the colonial era where patriarchy was dominant and suppression of women was rampant and were restricted to many sorts of life. The church expanded because of healing practices which were performed in the church, it became popular to many African countries and abroad. This is an empirical study which used in-depth interviews, observation method to both men and women of G.R.M and former members and other secondary sources. Objectives of the study were to explore the growth of G.R.M during colonial administration, to have a close look on how women churches rose and the acceptance by the society. Also to analyse the works by Mai Chaza through faith healing and its contribution the rise of women churches. The study found out that G.R.M managed to break the chains of patriarchy in colonial set-up as she attained the tittle 'faith healer' and prophetess leading an independent church. It reveals also that women now play vital roles in the church as prophetesses. Other finding shows the challenges which emerged after the death of Mai Chaza and power dynamics took place. The study claims that women have broken from the shells except in some AICs like JMAC where women are submissive and humble at home and at church and their voices are not heard.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GutaRaJehovah.....	G.R.J
GutaRaMwari.....	G.R.M
African Independent churches.....	AICs
African Traditional Religion.....	ATR
Organisation of African Instituted Churches.....	OAICs
African Apostolic Church of JohaneMarange.....	AACJM
JohaneMasoweApostplic Church.....	JMAC
MuzikaNkulunkulu.....	MKN
National Archives of Zimababwe.....	NAZ

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research examines and portrays the emergence of women churches in Zimbabwe with reference to Mai Chaza the founder of Guta Ra Mwari church in 1954. She became a public figure and she influenced the rise of other women churches in Zimbabwe and some African countries. It is also vital to explore the contribution of Mai Chaza in Zimbabwean societies through faith healing in an African Independent Church and the role of women in churches. Guta Ra Mwari started as Guta Ra Jehovah in a colonial setup and had expanded. By 1956 it had spread and had many followers who were attracted by healing powers. The research also presents the place of women in G.R.M church and also the stages from the foundation of the church from Guta Jehovah to Guta Ra Mwari. Finally the causes and consequences of church divisions and splits.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Missionary work is highly credited in Cecil John Rhodes's colonial design in Rhodesia. Christian missionaries were scrambling to spread the gospel to the so called "Dark Continent". After the signing of the Rudd concession in 1888, different missionary groups rooted in Southern Rhodesia that is Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed church, Anglican church and Wesleyan Methodist. Methodist by 1893 had 13 preaching places.¹ Methodist Church laid its foundation in Bulawayo. According to Zvobgo, "...after the Ndebele and Shona were defeated by the whites, they rushed to spread Christianity in Matabeleland."² During the 1920s, over 200 males and 130 females were trained as evangelists and teachers at Nenguwo, present day Waddilove.³ It is of paramount importance to highlight that the Independence churches broke out from the main line churches.

Guta Ra Jehova (City of God) was founded by Mai Chaza in 1954, and she is credited as a faith healer with a Methodist root. She then joined the Women Prayer Union or Ruwadzano where they prayed about different sources of life related to Motherhood. She became a committed African Methodist Woman. She had been chased away from her husband's family in 1948 being accused of witchcraft.⁴

She moved to a township near Salisbury (Harare) believing that God restored her life and that she might serve as a prophet and a healer for infertile women, the blind, cripples and those possessed with evil spirits.⁸ In Shona culture, mothering is very central to definition of womanhood. Child bearing is a culturally constructed base of a secure marriage. Wives who were barren were chased away because they had failed to give children to their husbands. In Shona society women's role changed when she became a mother as she gained status and respect. Olivia Muchena explains that once a woman becomes a mother she is no longer referred to by first name but a mother of... Muchena illustrated that barren women were unwarranted just like infertile soil.⁵ Infertile women were at risk of being sent away. Mai Chaza went on with her idea of ministering, though she continued connection with the Methodist, by mid 1950s, the church had gone far ahead the reach of the Methodist. In 1954, about 2500 people lived at Mai Chaza's Guta Ra Jehova.⁶ Barrenness of women is not accepted in an African setting hence many women came for deliverance. Mai Chaza is worthy credit as she founded a women-led church centred in a prophetic nature of African Independent Churches. Hastings is of the view that these churches came to existence in the settler African colonies.⁷ Mai Chaza started her ministry in Seke and moved to Zimunya in Mutare and the church spread as she moved to Zvimba where she finally died. The church spread after Mai Chaza's death and in Gweru it came as Guta Ra Mwari after the splits.

Some women in Africa in the 1950s started their churches in Zambia for instance Alice Lenshina Lumbar.⁸ On a point of view it can be argued that the feeling of marginality led

women to seek empowerment in the churches as the African set up denied women participation in the patriarchal societies which was then worsened by colonialism whereby the capitalist market only allow men to work in towns and cities. Phimister pointed out that the loss of male labour in rural areas forced women to take responsibilities which were previously done by men for instance farming.⁹ Thus women suffered from that time. Due to feminization of poverty, barrenness and witchcraft superstitions , women flocked in numbers to join GutaRaJehovahchurch as it was a centre of attraction for those ones. Hence this paper investigates and analyse how women led churches were discovered and progresses up to date.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the colonial restrictions that fought against African religion and culture Mai Chaza rose and founded a woman led church in a patriarchal and a land-dispossessed society like Southern Rhodesia which was rampant during colonial administration. Both colonialism and African tradition tend to look down upon women in terms of patriarchalistic legacies. During the harsh era Mai Chaza rose to prominence and founded an independent church which attracted many followers especially women as they were liberated from barrenness. It is the purpose of this study to find out the relationship between women fertility and religion. Information on Mai Chaza's church seems to be so limited and somehow it is silenced by other writers. However it is the purpose of the research to focus on the factors that set the platform of its rise. Mai Chaza's became a female religious innovator and this research is appropriate to fill the space which is already there as there is not much literature on Mai Chaza's contribution and influence on Zimbabwean societies .Also the research is to recognise her as a woman of charisma and to unravel her influence to the rise of female leadership in the church and their roles. Hence the research is to show the opportunity which Guta Ra Mwari opened for other women to recognise themselves in male dominance society such as Zimbabwe.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the factors that set a platform for the development of GutaRaJehovah during colonial period.
- To examine how women churches came to existence and how are they viewed in a patriarchal society like Zimbabwe.
- To portray the role and place of women in GutaRaMwari church.
- To analyse the works of Mai Chaza through faith healing and to see how GutaRaMwari contributed to the rise of other women churches.
- Challenges faced by GutaRaMwari church after death of Mai Chaza in terms of divisions and splits.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How did women churches emerge in Zimbabwe? How are they viewed by the society?
- What are the challenges being faced by GutaRaMwari after the death of Mai Chaza in terms of splits and divisions?
- What are the roles played by women in AICs and G.R.M church in particular?
- Why was Mai Chaza chosen to be a woman of God and how did she deal with women problems?
- How has GutaraMwarichurch influenced the growth of other women led churches?

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the study focuses on literature pertaining to the formation of women led churches and also GutaRaMwari in particular. Some relevant literature was consulted in other scholars' work in the related field in order to identify the gaps to carry out the study on the history of women churches and their influence and recognition in a male dominance society. This part also focuses on literature pertaining the rise and expansion of women churches and women leadership in the church. During and before colonialism, African tradition marginalised women and women could not participate in religious events. Colonialism was evil to women. Churches which are male led like JohaneMasowe and Marange looked down upon women and they are the ones which have more literature while on Chaza is silenced. Available literature put much emphasis on the works of Mai Chaza like healing and miracle work putting on their views but they lacked some facts like her contribution and influence as a women church which did rise in a land-dispossessed country of Southern Rhodesia where women were seen as worthless .Also to reveal her importance as the church is still vibrant today, it is therefore necessary to unpack her as a charismatic woman who is worth credit.

Dube wrote about the formation of Guta Ra Jehovah and the mystical emphasis which surrounds Mai Chaza's early life. Some scholars believed that not much is known about Mai Chaza's life .Dube talks of Mai Chaza's early life and her influence in the Methodist Ruwadzano church and her calling whilst she was in the Methodist church.¹⁰ She went on to talk of the death and resurrection of Mai Chaza as to start the devine duties being led by the Holy spirit . Exorcism became the major activity and healing of many kinds of diseases. These became the significant factors to the expansion of G.R.J. However Dube's work mainly focus on healing and neglecting to credit her as a woman of charisma who had a zeal and courage to break the chains of colonialism on women marginalisation.

Hackett notes that African women church founders are renowned and they are rare even in the world.¹¹ This is a result of Biblical quotations that seem to portray women as submissive

and humble to their husband. Missionaries also undermined African women forms of religious expressions. This male dominance continued from Pre-colonial times to colonial where women had a little role to play in all sectors of life. Women were victims of settler policies were not allowed to live in towns, they remain in the rural areas and restricted by ACTS, Mai Chaza despite of those restrictions in a colonial set up she fought a battle through the platform she set. She rose to prominence to start a church which is still vibrant today. She founded a church in politically turbulent times. This research is necessary to reveal a church founding by a woman when it was like a taboo to lead men. Also to fill the space that women leadership is rare, to portray that women religious independence is discovered through her.

Anderson talks of Mai Chaza's spiritual journey which she travelled and he was too religious forgetting the effects of her healing to the society.¹² She contributed positively to social and economic spheres of life. This shows that Mai Chaza was concerned about motherhood as she dealt with barren women. Sheldon points that G.R.J stresses on motherhood and fertility. This thesis is relevant as to prove and fill the gap that barren women in an African setup are outcasts. Socio economic status of women is revealed by Mai Chaza as she healed those who were unable to conceive. The research points that socially Mai Chaza narrowed conflicting cultural notions. Economically scholars failed to point that as fertility rate rose, the demographic increase and through healing of the crippled and the lame economic growth increased because of enough manpower in the farms and industries. So the research seeks to provide the importance of Mai Chaza in the society and its development.

Mai Chaza founder of G.R.M rose as a prominent women occupying a position of power and prestige in a patriarchal society of Southern Rhodesia .She exemplifies those women in

church who do not want to remain treated bad and looked down upon. She rejected to be treated peripherally, neither did she supported women to be totally submissive to their husbands nor to just stand behind priests as teachers and as leaders of women unions (Ruwadzano). These impacted negatively on African women as white missionaries attempted to shape the lives of African women and this resulted into a reaction by blacks to white dominance. This was noted by Hastings.¹³ Zvobgo points out that the movement was highly influential in bringing African women to the forefront in Methodist evangelism. In 1963, African women started to be accepted in some positions in the church when Musa was selected as president of all-blacks movement Ruwadzano in Zimbabwe.¹⁴ This shows that women who have founded their independent churches such as Mai Chaza enjoyed the opportunity of leading and the chain continued to the recent years where African women in AICs saw an opportunity which had been posed decades ago by Chaza who started G.R.J and came to prominence in 1949 within the colonial era with patriarchal legacies as noted by Hallencreutz.¹⁵ Hence Mai Chaza broke the chain that men had natural gifts which were not intended for women This study became an opportunity to some women as Mai Chaza soar the social and religious heights and she sheds some light on other women who are suffering.

The study is also necessary to unravel the myth that women should not dominate. Mai Chaza remodelled history in an extraordinary manner. As colonialism resulted in power dynamics and it formed an unholy alliance of male dominance. In some AICs women status is that of marginality in terms of positions to do with church administration but they are recognised in terms of their spiritual role in the church. They act as prophetesses to eliminate evil spirits of all sorts. This study unpack the way women are placed in the church and how are women involved in positions as healers and miracle workers as seen through Mai Chaza . Lehmann distinguishes ways in which women participate in AICs as office bearers in churches led by men and those who led own groups of followers thus women pioneers of church

movements.¹⁶ Mai Chaza in Zimbabwe and Alice Lenshina of Zambia, Lumpa church as noted by Hastings.¹⁷ Thus Mai Chaza inspires other women in post-colonial era to initiate churches and to have a voice in the church. She created an opportunity for others hence the purpose of the study to explain the gap which had been opened by colonialism and Mai Chaza closed it.

The research is necessary also to unravel the causes of divisions and splits within the church tracing from the origins of G.R.J to G.R.M and finally MuzikaNkulunkulu. Literature pertaining the breakaway of other members from G.R.J to G.R.M and power dynamics is limited. This study is important to trace, analyse and comment on the divisions after Mai Chaza died. The shift of identity of other members. Much of the available work mainly focuses on the conflicts which emerged between different Gutas mentioned by Hallencreutz.¹⁸ Conflicts rose and sour relations rose among the members in Zvimba, Buhera and in Zimunya. The study unpacks the origin of G.R.M after the death of Mai Chaza and its leadership to the present.

In Christianity women position in the church is that of subordination. Women are not allowed to occupy influential position in the church. Catholic Church asserts certain leadership roles for men and women. Women are not allowed to attain the position of the Pope. Pope John Paul II argues that only men can be ordained as clergy and deacons.¹⁹ The position places of women in submissive role and excludes women from leadership especially from formal position requiring any form of ordination. It is the purpose of this study to show that women can do it

1.6 METHODOLOGY

During the research a number of techniques were applied ranging from primary sources of collecting data through in-depth interviews through interaction as an observer and secondary sources were employed. Generally qualitative methods in the form of primary and secondary sources. Research methodology has been defined by Avison as strategies of inquiry which moves from underlying philosophical assumption to research design and data collection.²⁰ For each method chosen, justification is necessary. Therefore this part is exposing methods which were applied by the researcher to come up with a meaningful research.

In this part, the writer used in-depth interviews with open ended questions to different members of Guta Ra Mwari in Gweru district and former members and others from Johane Masowe women. The researcher explained that it's for academic purposes, in depth interviews were conducted as data collection strategy. The researcher interviewed women groups and men groups in the Guta Ramwarichurch at their gatherings and their households. The researcher also gathered information from some students who are members of Gutara Mwari. Also, on the position of women in this church and other Independent churches like Joanne Masowe and interviews were carried out. Interviews are of great importance as they reduce chances of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of questions since there is room for clarification and elaboration. The interviews are important to this study as some respondents are not at liberty in putting their views in writing and due to the low level of education among some participants. Interviews sometimes give information which is out of the study and the interviewer would be flexible. Problems of misunderstanding of their church language were encountered though they tried to explain and the participants were highlighting positive things about them.

Furthermore the methods chosen are determined by the topic under research. Hughes argues that observations and participatory will also compliment interviews , therefore the researcher visited the church understudy in order to gain information.²¹ Participatory is essential in capturing the practices in the church like sitting arrangements and ways of healing and the way they do their things as this avoid false information.

Saarle defines it as a method of observation whereby the observer joins the group being studied.²² This is the ideal method to use because it helps the researcher to notice the subjects involved in the research in their environments therefore giving better results. Important aspects when conducting this are the target population, data collection and data analysis. After collection of data from the active participants, data analysis is vital through development of answers from those questions through interpretation of points and finally data presentation in form of topics and sub-topics. The sampling technique is mainly focused on the women and men participants in the GutaraMwari church and others from outside. Data was collected also from members of the church and religious leaders.

Apart from the methods stated above, the internet through journals and articles other writings, secondary sources were used also incorporated as part of the research tools for example newspapers, archival material, unpublished and published dissertations, and church records. In this study, the use of qualitative tools for data collection enabled the understanding of some of the phenomena, which could have been difficult to understand and interpret using one method. Secondary sources contain some information which cannot be obtained through interviews and observations as some participants will hide information.

1.7 ETHICAL ISSUES AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS.

Ethical issues of confidentiality were applied during research but not to a greater extent. Permission to do the researches was granted by some church leaders in Gweru District. Objectives were clarified. A research letter was provided as a proof that this is an academic research as some thought that the information would be used somewhere. Participation was voluntary and could have a specific time to meet them and no rewards were offered to the participants to avoid crossing academic boundaries and regulations.

1.8 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER: Introduction to the study examines the centre of the research, the main issue to be discussed and it clarifies basic concepts. Background of the study is a motivation to the proposed study. It consists of information that is essential to understand the problem to be addressed. Research Problem is the main issue the research focuses on, the problem or concern of the topic and it answers the question why carrying out that study. Somehow it might be an opportunity posed by the study which needs clarification. Objectives are the main aims to carry out the study. The exact results to be found after carrying out a research. Research Questions is that what the researcher wants to know and these should link with the problem statement and objectives. Literature review is generally the relevant literature to the study. Literature which is available may have some loop holes so the researcher identifies the gaps which had been left out by other writers. Methodology is the way the study was carried out which contains ample evidence through qualitative research in form of primary and secondary sources ranging from personal interviews, archival material, internet

sources and books. Ethical issues and Research process is the way the study was carried out for example in terms of permission by church leaders, academic letters which provides a proof to carry out a research.

CHAPTER ONE: THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES, THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES (AICS) AND THE EMERGENCE OF WOMEN CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE.

This chapter introduces the churches that were formed as a result of the breakaway from the mainline churches namely Anglican, Catholics, Dutch and Methodist. The key factor to understand the emergence of these churches is undoubtedly the racial oppression exercised by foreign missions in the period before Africans took over leadership of the mainline denominations. It also talks of the rise of women churches and the duties they play in the church.

CHAPTER TWO: MAI CHAZA'S CALLING AND MISSION, FAITH HEALING AND WOMEN'S PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH.

This chapter highlights the early life of Mai Chaza to her calling and the works she did during her time rose as a healer of women's infertility in Southern Rhodesia in the early 1950s. The story of Mai Chaza, founder of GutaraMwari Church, has been told from a variety of angles that points out different aspects of her calling and mission and she had been given many titles as a messenger of God. Mai Chaza dealt with women who were unable to bear children. In an African setup infertility is not tolerated by most men..

CHAPTER THREE: GUTA RAMWARI CHURCH AFTER THE DEATH OF MAI CHAZA.(1961 TO THE PRESENT).

In this chapter, the researcher dealt with the church politics after Mai Chaza died in terms of leadership roles as there become a power vacuum after the death of Mai Chaza. Divisions rose. Furthermore, the next aspect constitutes conclusion and bibliography.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter consist of introduction to the study, background of the study, research objectives and research questions. It also outlines literature which had been used that is other scholarly work identifying gaps. Methodology and ethical issues were involved and explained in greater detail. Finally this chapter contains of chapter breakdown and relevant sub-topics.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0 THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES (AICs)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will unpack and explore factors which led to rise of AICs, how they came to existence, also to consider the rise of women churches in Zimbabwe and female representation and leadership in church and their role in AICs.

This chapter introduces the formation of African Independent churches which were formed to bring people of the region together and also for blacks to be independent in all sectors of life. AICs can be referred to as African Independent Churches, African Initiated Churches, and African Indigenous churches of African Instituted churches. These churches were founded by Africans for Africans as they consisted of African leadership. All these names seek to differentiate AICs from the mainline churches which were formed by the missionaries for example Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and others.¹ Black saw that the 'white men's religion' was racist in nature. AICs are mainly found in every region and countries in Africa, though more dominant in Southern Africa and East Africa. These churches are united because they were all established by African initiative rather than missionary agendas. Undoubtedly this attitude of subordination forbids Africans to leadership roles in main line churches. This racial discrimination was a result of colonial administration which resulted in a colour bar within the church and this venture resulted in the breakaway of Africans to form their non-discriminatory churches. According to Chitando, White missionaries discriminated blacks and regarded them as junior brothers and sisters.² Also missionary attack on polygamy was the other factor which led to the rise of AICs to avoid these restricting rules.

Daneel asserts that the lack of leadership opportunities, personal ambitions, theological controversies and other factors resulted in the rapid multiplication of AICs.³ Africans movements involved indigenous tradition in their ministries for example healing while Missionaries regarded this as unclean. Healing was the tool of rapid expansion and spread of AICs. AICs emphasize healing and exorcism and many flocked for deliverance from evil spirits. Prophecy was dominant through dreams and visions of the church leaders. Missionaries regarded the African culture as something unholy. The African tradition did not consider polygamy as unclean and evil. Polygamy was a way of expressing wealth and power and also it was a way of economic productivity. The earliest AICs did not see anything wrong with polygamy but Guta ra Mwari did not allow polygamy at all.

Mai Chaza's Church never permitted polygamy even to date. Johane Marange allows polygamy though in some AICs the act of polygamy is decreasing because of culture change as a result of westernization. Polygamy was regarded by missionaries as traditional, heathen pagan and wicked. Missionaries believe that marriage ceremonies were somehow connected to ancestral spirits. Missionaries also denounced the Kuzvarira system as it was oppressive and they believe that it exacerbates polygamy. Johanne Marange Apostolic church practiced polygamy and many apostolic churches justified it as they refer to the bible pointing to some polygamists such as David. All these factors led to the formation of AICs as a way of escaping from the ties and restrictive laws of main line churches. Also in AICs the believers are characterised by aspects of dignity and value.

According to Chitando, Some founders of AICs like Johane Masowe had distinctive messages to deliver to the blacks.⁴ This church tried to rise up the status of blacks in the racist and abusive formal sector where blacks were apportioned unfertile land in the fringe and worked in the farms with starvation wages. So they were empowered economically as a measure to the exploitative nature of the colonial government which implement laws which

undermine black superiority. Masowe followers become involved in the informal sector, according to Dillon- Malone they started basket making and metal work.⁵ All these were ways of responding to the exploitative colonial rule. AICs were also fuelled by nationalist movements. Nationalist movements were moving hand in hand with AICs. Both movements were also facilitated with nationalists such as Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. Some founders of AICs were helped by the prophets who were in South Africa.⁶ Migration also influenced as returning migrants from South Africa came with some ideologies. Strong bonds developed between South Africa's AICs and Zimbabwe's AICs.

The Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAICs) was initiated in a bid to present the voices of the indigenous people and Fambidzano was established in Zimbabwe by AICs as a way of uniting the people.⁷ AICs have been characterised by continuous increase and expansion. Mother bodies split into smaller groups for instance Johane Masowe Apostolic church resulted in, many smaller units.⁸ The issue of the 'Holy Spirit' have also influenced the spread of AICs as they mainly engaged in healing commanded by the Holy spirit hence they were opposite to the mainline churches which did not tolerate the gospel of the Holy Spirit. Most AICs put emphasis on the issue of prophesying and deliverance. Missionaries mainly taught their followers the gospel of repentance and hiding issues of equality as the colonial masters were unjust and racist undermining black authority. Many African rushed and flocked to AICs where their problems were being accommodated. Many were delivered from evil spirits, treatment of epidemics and those women who were barren were healed. These practises were mainly done in (Vapostori) Apostolic churches like Johane Masowe, Johane Marange, African Apostolic church established by Paul Mwazha in the 1950s and Gutara Mwari Church established by Mai Chaza in 1954 as Guta Ra Jehovah as an indigenous church emphasized healing and deliverance upon barren women, those who were blind, crippled and even the deaf.

Vapostori mixed both ATR practises and Christianity and mainly focuses on the Old Testament. All these churches were in opposition of mainline churches as missionaries did not preach the gospel of prophesy.

At the height of colonial rule, women were geared to join religious groups and start some church movements. Men migrated to towns and women were left in the rural areas. They were left in isolation and they greatly suffered. They became the back bone of AICs as they were capable of singing and dancing and they constituted a great number in the church. Hence it is essential to look at the emergence of women churches in this case main attention being paid to Mai Chaza of GutaraMwari and others and also the role of women in African Independent Churches.

2.2 A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF G.R.M AND AACJM DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES.

Dube said that the church was established by Mai Chaza in 1954. Like any other AICs, Mai Chaza was once a Methodist member.⁹ The church was originally a Methodist Church and healing centre; it turned to be an independent body with some links of Methodism.¹⁰ Mai Chaza is said to have died and rose again after a food quarrel, she suffered a violent mental disturbance. She died and rose again just as a number of many apostolic church founders did.¹¹ After the 'resurrection' she realised that God risen her from the dead as a way of serving as a prophetess and healer especially for the infertile to conceive. Marange also was called through visions in his early life just as Mai Chaza does. Both were regarded as messianic figures and were believed to have solutions for the African problems.¹² Some scholars believed that these figures played a pivotal role in leading their followers in the liberation.

They acted as messengers of God who represented God to the people and were referred to as Black Messiahs.¹³ In terms of polygamy, G.R.M forbade polygamy at all.

Marange polygamy is highly exercised.¹⁴ They see it as common to have many wives and children and they justified it using the Old Testament narratives and A.T.R. On the issue of patriarchy, in G.R.M it is limited and in AACJM it is rampant and very common, men control women and use polygamy as an excuse to dominate and as signs of manhood. Voices of women are not heard and they remain submissive and some of them are comfortable in their marriages. In G.R.M women play pivotal roles as faith healers and prophetesses as they are given chances to express themselves. Healing is practiced in many AICs churches. In JMA and G.R.M women are respected though somehow decisions are made mostly by male leaders.

2.3 ROLE OF WOMEN IN AICS ,GUTA RAMWARI IN PARTICULAR.

It is said that women are active members who carry forth the church's mission .Many AICs failed to admit that women are capable of preaching and handling some church issues. Men fail to receive and respond to women's spiritual gifts in the church.¹⁵ Women played significant roles in the rise and expansion of the AICs .Anderson said that Mai Chaza the founder of Guta Ramwari served as a healer, church leader and an African reappearance of Christ. She connected with the Holy Spirit as a mediator, performed divine duties and when she died she left some footprints which have great contribution to other women churches. To date in GutaraMwari some women are more involved in duties as healers, they are referred to as Holy messengers of God (Vatumwa).¹⁶ Their contribution is rooted from the time of their founder as Mai Chaza is one of the legendary women, founder, healer, prophetess and miracle worker like Dona Beatrice of Congo and their deaths and resurrection has a symbolic meaning.¹⁷ Women act as healers and they are very instrumental in these healing

practices .Mai Chaza's calling revealed that she was supposed to bring Africa out of its problems.¹⁸ Women are respected in G.R.M as they are the ones who sing hymnals. They play a significant role in this spirit-type church. This shows that women in G.R.J are highly recognised as the church was founded by a woman and the leading of women is a recent phenomenon.

There are a number of prophetesses in Guta Ra Jehovah and women are believed to be lay leaders and prophetesses. In G.R.M women are not much dominated by scriptures like women in J.M.A.C, in G.R.M patriarchy is limited in the church as they do not tolerate polygamy. Women sing when healing is taking place and they participate freely during church services as seen through observation. Preaching is mainly done through songs. Women stand and say whatever the spirit had commanded them to deliver in front of men as this is commanded by the Holy spirit.¹⁹ About 95% of Holy Messengers are women. So women are recognised and have a prominent role.²⁰ They heal different types of diseases and free many people from their troubles. They also stand in front to testify the good works that God did in their lives. Women also sing and as a way of providing the message to the congregation, they are recognised of their spiritual touch of the Holy Spirit. The messengers lay hands and the individual to receive healing and deliverance. They believed that the power of God come through the messenger. The Ruwadzano women group deals with women issues in the church and counselling of young couples.²¹ Women, through God teaches about marriage and divorce and the family. There is a day called (zuvara Janet) every Thursday where some issues are being discussed especially between couples.²² They serve marriages of many couples who came with their problems. Elder women also teach about faithfulness between partners. Before the technology era of cell phones and computers, girls were tested for virginity by elder women as a way of protecting them from unwanted pregnancies and

saving them for marriage but this is seen as primitive and backward style. Women educate young girls about dangers of fornication as God does not allow this.

Women's roles in the AICs has been reduced to child bearers though they are the ones who played an important role in the rapid spread of African Initiated churches in South Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. Women in many AICs are marked by submissiveness and humbleness and are God obeying. Women cross borders in the 1990s spread the message of African-self-reliance from outside Zimbabwe. Women constitute the majority of people in the AICs, some acted as preachers spreading the gospel from one area to another. Women's role in the church cannot be ignored though their images have been brushed negatively because of male dominance in the society. Men roles are God given, women in some AICs like Johane Marange Apostolic play minor roles. Women are reduced to the lowest position and some of the duties they carry have no high value. Some women especially in Guta Ra Mwari have prophetess roles as messengers. Women led in the singing and dancing on events such as all night meetings. Mwaura states that:

Women all over the world are the pillars, they witness to the image of God within them and the hope and renewal for the church rests within this witness.²³

In Johane Masowe women are not allowed to exercise power in the church. Women are viewed as inferior than men as women are given less influential roles in the church. In many if not all AICs there is no equality. Masowe women play roles of healing though they do not hold positions of pastoring. In Gweru District, JMAC was established in 2012 near Mutapa Residential. Women especially younger women are the main singers (vaimbiri).²⁴ It is rare to see a man leading a song but they just chip in. The Holy Spirit speaks through some women preachers as they do not read the Bible so women spend more time singing. Elder women (madzimai murai) are responsible for women issues, they act as councillors to newly married

women teaching them about how to handle their husbands. Also these women are responsible for advising young girls about abstinence from sex. Women and girls are referred to as 'madzimai'²⁵ for instance madzimai Loveless. In Gweru women meet every Tuesday at 12 to 3pm for Chipiri chemadzimai formed by (mudhama), the leaders have a role to play in teaching other women about church doctrines how to dress, which colours to wear etc. Young girls are taught to get in relationships with the boys in that same church not outsiders. Women do not exercise opening or closing prayers at the sowe.²⁶ Chakawa said that women are not allowed leadership roles during their menstruation, they are not allowed to attend church services or if they are to attend they are not allowed to participate in any activity.²⁷ They will be regarded as unclean. Some elder women and young have a crucial role to play as they preach and heal the sick as healing is the instrument responsible for the expansion of AICs. The role of women in AICs is that of inferiority.

2.4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF G.R.M TO THE EMERGENCE OF WOMEN CHURCHES AND FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN ZIMBABWEAN CHURCHES

From the colonial era in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, women played limited roles in the church and missions. People were colonised mentally and religiously. Women flocked to churches at missions for instance when Catholic and the Dutch Reformed were established and other mainline churches women roles were undermined but they played important roles directly and indirectly. After the emergence of AICs women subordination doubles especially in churches such as Vapostori women are given limited positions and only men occupy higher posts. Hence women churches started as a response to oppression and subordination in either spheres of life and in this case in the religious arena. Women in the church constitute about 75% of people in the church yet their powers were suppressed for example in Johane Marange women do not exercise and preaching and in Methodist, Bishops were only men who could lead women. By this women felt inferior and they felt as strangers in the

church hence some were called like Mai Chaza and start their own church. Women thought to initiate that for them to be acknowledged as pastors and deacons in some Pentecostal churches. The church was considered and is still considered somehow as one of the oppressive structures in the society and since colonialism were treated unequal to men. In many AICs women were and are still regarded as inferior not capable of leading. Women could attend services, teach children and were not ordained or serve in higher positions. This oppression made women to become zealous to rise and work for God. Some women shifted from Mainline churches like Mai Chaza moved from Methodist to initiate Gutara Jehovah because it was not allowed to be used by the Holy Spirit in mainline churches and also some people rejected her teachings and messages from the Holy Spirit. She occupied an influential position of healing as she was the first Holy Host of the church. She raised the dead. She became the holy messenger and this inspired some women to have confidence to lead men. In the early 1950s, GutaRaJehovah emerged led by Mai Chaza in Seke and later moved to Zimunya in Mutare. She became a remarkable woman, she emerged as an aggressive woman who wanted women religious empowerment in a colonial and patriarchal set up. She wanted to restore womanhood and women status through healing the barren. Mai Chaza wanted a gender balanced society.

Mai Chaza exemplifies the fact that women can also lead in a male dominance society. Dube et al wrote about recent women led churches and one of them is Zvikomborero Apostolic Church which is led by Agnes Majeche, a prophet and a miracle worker in Marondera area.²⁸ Majeche established a healing ministry as a way of dealing with problems which are rampant in the country. She mainly do away with issues of healing, chasing away evil spirits and dealing with magical objects and getting rid of zvikwambo. Dube makes a comparison of women in healing ministry in dealing with indigenous tradition and Christianity and Majeche became an instance of the latter.²⁹ Zvikomborero church spread and many people are getting

help there as healing is central and was central during Mai Chaza's time, by that time some believed that healing was something peripheral or out modelled rather but in the recent year in many AICs healing dominates as it is largely confined to spirit type AICs. This shows that women are rising to greater heights like men for example prophet Makandiwa and Magaya. Women are closing the gap that has been created during colonialism. In G.R.M healing acted as a recruiting technique and today women church leaders are also taking the call. People flock for healing and deliverance and it is called where miracles happen. The church is a ministry of exorcism and faith healing.

“Women can be church leaders”, An interview with the Sunday Mail editor, Professor Ezekiel Guti said that the Holy Spirit was and still not meant for men only.³⁰ United Church Of Christ International female bishop, Marvellous Mhloyi, the veteran evangelist who founded ZAOGA FIF 55 years ago said that Jesus was surrounded by women during his ministry. She stated that both men and women are equal before God, “Rather it is mostly women who prophesied like Hudah(2 kings 22:4) and Deborah (Judges 4). In many spheres women were prohibited to take leadership roles and were not able to take influential positions in the church though the holy spirit does not select on sex.³¹ Because of gender equality women status in some churches is changing from that of subordination for instance in Methodist church some women carry out some duties and Christian work directed to the church. Also in Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM), women are trained to become pastors and led their own assemblies. Women in church lead services, prayers as men do and also women train as evangelists and deacons. In ZAOGA church, Mai Eunor Guti was ordained as the first bishop and the first female marriage officer in Zimbabwe and she is helping her husband Ezekiel Guti with their ministry for the past decades.

In African societies women and children fill the church while men are leading them but women are the ones who built the church but they are not given opportunities to express what

God is saying. Nyasha Gumbeze from Zimbabwe discovered that women were and some are still not accepted to become ministers in the Anglican Church. She had an anointing and a desire to lead the church as a woman priest but this was unacceptable. She had a zeal to help those in chronic poverty as she was once a victim. She wanted a change in the female clergy from their parish.³⁰ The fact that women were not accepted to do so in Anglican Church made her to travel thousands of Kilometres to preach in New Zealand.

Clara Pindurai analysed burdens which are being faced by Zimbabwean women, they suffer most, taking care of the family. They have an important role to play though they are treated as second class citizens. She wanted to address the disadvantages faced by women mainly in the church. Clara Pindurai is the leader of Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ).³¹ She is an empowered women, she also set a community centre at the Covenant Fellowship Church in Chitungwiza. Every Thursday they meet and have some discussions about women

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter explores the origins of African initiated churches, it also unpacks the role of women in G.R.M church and its contribution to the rise of other women churches in Zimbabwe. The findings show that AICs rose as a response to colonial administration and racial inequalities. It shows that women in G.R.M patriarchy are limited and women have role to play especially as prophetesses and healers as Mai Chaza was very influential. The chapter also pointed out the contribution of G.R.M to the rise of other women churches like Zvikomborero Apostolic and female leadership in church.

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CHAPTER THREE.

3.0 MAI CHAZA'S CALLING AND MISSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will investigate how Mai Chaza came to be a faith healer and miracle worker. Also to analyse her early life .The stages which she stepped through and facilitated her calling and her mission through healing which is considered vital in many AICs and exorcism.

3.2 THE FIRST HOLY HOST OF GOD AND HER EARLY LIFE

Mai Chaza was born in Nyamushanya family in Chief Mutekedza village in Buhera District.¹ They were three in their family and she was the second, their parents died when they were still young and they grew up as orphans but she grew under the guidance of the big brother who took care of her since the time they were orphaned in 1924 until at a tender age ready to be a mother, she got married. She got married to Chiduza Chaza of Wedza and they wedded in the Methodist church as Mai Chaza like many other founders of African Initiated Churches was a member of Methodist church before she was raised by God to a faith healer and prophet.² Mai Chaza was deeply religious in the Methodist church as she led the women's movement of Ruwadzano at Chemhanza Methodist church in Wedza, that is Women's prayer union which was mainly aimed at solving women issues of marriage and praying.

3.3 HER CALLING

In 1954, God revealed himself using Mai Chaza when she was in Buhera, God started ministering through her. She would go in the forests and mountains and spent some time alone praying not talking to anyone but God only. She became the first Holy Host of God that is someone who have been appointed and given all the powers to heal the sick and help those

with sorts of troubles. She was taught what to do and how to do it by God and this was done through a process. Mai Chaza remained in the Methodist until the spirit of God visited her and was incarnated. Many people did not understand her teachings encompassed in an African Initiated Churches, some credited her as a true prophet and some said she was a “ false prophet” and they rejected her messages and teachings.³ What they were taught in the church was different from the messages delivered to Mai Chaza by God so the people failed to interpret and many doubted her and she was labelled as being used by the ‘evil spirits’ but Mai Chaza as she has been by God to carry out some duties she did not turn back.

Mai Chaza had many names and amongst them is messenger (mutumwa) meaning God spoke through her, she was appointed a faith healer and a prophet and many scholars attributed her as a leader of an independent church in a colonial setup. Though she continued some practices of Methodism, her ministry had far outstripped that of Methodism.⁴ Scarnecchia noted that much information about Mai Chaza is available by many writers like Reverend Canaan Banana which shows that Mai Chaza’s mission was clean and real.⁵ Mai Chaza’s calling and mission is mainly centred on visions and dreams and also the mission being that of healing sick and praying for those who had problems. Healing played an important role in the expansion of Guta Ra Jehova as people flocked from different countries to get help.

The most mysterious event which happened as a calling of Mai Chaza was her death and resurrection. She died in 1948 and rose again to life. This incident is vital because it is believed that as Jesus died and rose again some people thought that Mai Chaza was the second Christ. Many Scholars believed that when she died she rose after some hours. This happened in 1948. An interview with Mai Chaza on 3 November 1954 explained that she went to heaven when she passed on where she met Jesus who ordered her to come back on earth to heal the sick and to make the blind see and the deaf hear and also for the infertile to conceive.⁶ Hence her resurrection is credited to none other than a healing mission. She was

being led by the Holy Spirit sometimes unconsciously into thick forests and mountains to receive powers from God to carry out certain duties to the people.

Interview with Margaret Hwesa shows that:

Mai Chaza was not ready for heaven so she rose as a way to cleanse herself as she had been involved in many deeds on earth like ancestral veneration when she was still in the Methodist Church.⁷

The death of Mai Chaza is seen as a way of proving that she really a 'daughter' of God and that God was willing to use her. At Chivhako mountain, God revealed himself and Mai Chaza kept on going with God's work.⁸ The Holy Spirit descends on the mountain and this was a great shock to the people around the area who were surprised and frightened with these mysterious. After the incident at Mt Chivhako, Mai Chaza's name changed to 'Matenga' meaning heavens that is God.⁹ The encounter at Chivhako made her to start her ministry and this healing ministry undoubtedly influenced the growth and expansion of Guta Ra Jehovah which was later changed to Guta Ra Mwari in 1961 and MuziKaNkulunkulu in 2003. In Reverend Banana's book it is written...While African women tended to be viewed as docile followers of male, there is a remarkable women who goes against the stereotype."¹⁰ Mai Chaza resurrect to free humanity from spiritual and physical sufferings. The second incident when Mai Chaza was being called by God happened at Mt Chomuwuyu where Mai Chaza received different songs which she used during healing the sick and delivering the blind for example the song " Baba ndirimwanawako and Hosanawekudenga."¹¹ Her life was full of supernatural things and she was extra ordinary and this shows that she had been called by God. The resurrection miracle is crystal clear that this was a new mission of Mai Chaza on earth which was different from that which she had before death. Mai Chaza's power was supernatural and extraordinary and it cut through evil spirits and infertility. Before she established the first centre she does her healing within a Methodist setup and by this time this

type of healing was no longer accepted in Methodist doctrines. Before proceeding to Seke in 1954, the 'women of God' went to Mhondoro to fulfil God's work. She paid a visit to her son at a mission school of Methodist and she began her work at that mission, she attended Sunday church services. She emphasized the issue of repentance before healing took place, as miraculous healing and deliverance was believed to happen on a repented soul. Some members did not believe the healing of Mai Chaza, they opposed her work in Mhondoro and Mr Magorimbo an Evangelist there was not in line with Chaza's teachings and exorcism as the Methodist was founded by the missionaries and they never taught people about the holy spirit and he quickly chase her away from the place.¹² He thought that many people will be converted and he knew some members would follow her. From Mhondoro many scholars concure that Mai Chaza went through Harare. By this time people in Methodist still doubted all her powers and by 1954 she started healing mission in Seke Reserves, Chihota where the first Guta Ra Jehovah centre was established. The Holy Spirit directed her to do God's work.

3.4 GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF GUTA RA JEHOVAH CHURCH THROUGH EXORCISM AND HEALING

In 1954, Mai Chaza became a prominent figure, built the first centre in Seke and by this time she was both a prophetess and a faith healer. She was now believed to be an outstanding spiritual healer who heals people suffering from all kinds of diseases and even with mental disturbances. Daneel categorises Chaza as messianic.¹³ Work from journals and some church reports suggested that Chaza image had a vision and that her work was relevant but other scholars and other outsiders view this as an injustice. Taylor and Francis claimed that Chaza had an ability of a charismatic female healer.¹⁴ Her mission was mainly centred on healing and to make the childless bear fruits as God in Genesis revealed that 'Be fruitful and multiply'. She became a well-known healer and she remains a popular personality especially

in the older people's minds who were helped in GutaRaMwari by Mai Chaza .An interview with Mudzingwa who was once crippled shows that he was healed by Mai Chaza in Seke and he is a living testimony.¹⁵

From the website of the church, it is written that , after the rejection of God's teachings at the Methodist , Mai Chaza moved to Seke,and chief welcomed her and she seek refuge there where she was given a place in Kandava village.¹⁶Within weeks, the word of a 'healer'and a miracle performer had spread and reached many countries.Thousands of people from different countries and races approached Mai Chaza at the congregation.All sorts of problems and diseases which were seen as incurable were dealt with.The Holy Host was able to cure diseases like asthma, the blind could see, the childless could become fruitful after their bellies were touched and the lame could walk.Whites came in large numbers and many of them were crippled and to date some are still there.An interview with GogoMuzenda indicated that Mai Chaza healed by a touch of a hand on top of the head or chest or stomach to those who needed children.¹⁷ Houses sproutedlike mushroom around the Holy Host's house and houses numbering to a hundred were built .By this time she was believed to be a spiritual healer and a number of people followed her for help. The name GRJ meant that she and her followers stayed there and God's works were revealed and there was the presence of the Holy Spiritat the healing centre.It was named 'GutaRaJehovah, where illness and troubles are cured' .¹⁸This new mission was a result of her miraculous death as this set out to create faith opportunities and expressions.

Hackett in L.Dube 's book suggested that , Church founding by a woman is therefore the ultimate act of religious independence and self- determination.¹⁹Her super natural powers were commanded by the Holy spirit and her power goes beyond that she possessed in Methodist as the leader of Ruwadzano prayer union.Daneel postulates that in Seke Mai Chaza initiated a movement strongly oriented towards combating heathen practices.²⁰ On 2 June

1954, Kozina Mandaza was healed as she suffered from a persistent menstrual flow for more than ten years, she was finally healed after spending some days at GRJ congregation. She had been healed by prayer and the flow suddenly stopped and her health was recovered. By the end of June, approximately people numbering to forty had been attended to and delivered including the childless for instance Margaret Makamba and Mrs Chengetai who have not given birth for nine years of marriage and after their encounter with Mai Chaza they conceived.²¹ These testimonies greatly show that her healing was supernatural. Scarnecchia notes that a certain doctor who had a surgery removed a certain woman's uterus as it was infected by a disease and that woman later went for help at G.R.J and she was able to bear children.²² When the Doctor heard that he remarked, "Anyone who wants to see real doctoring should visit G.R.J."²³ Many coloureds, Africans and even Indians were ready to testify the great healing spirit of Chaza. Mai Chaza's power was beyond medical discovery and anti-biotics. By this time approximately two hundred people were attended per day. They confessed all their evil doings before a touch came on their heads. Some were smokers and drinkers and others were involved in sexual activities, all this was opposed by God because when Mai Chaza rose again she said that God said she should cease drinking of alcohol. After confession their heads were touched and for those who were barren their bellies were squeezed. Some scholars believed that some men and women could stay at the Guta until women fall pregnant. The African weekly of November 1954:

Thousands of people bring their sick ones at the Guta ... In Seke Reserve sprawls a shanty town of grass huts-It is called Guta Ra Jehovah- the City of God. There are thousands of Africans from all parts of Southern Rhodesia and the Federation had brought their sick to Mai Chaza who claims she can cure people of their physical troubles by faith... In this midst was a long line of women sitting on the ground and

Mai Chaza came from an end touching and praying. She touched and squeezed Bellies for those who were barren...²⁴

Within few weeks almost seventy women had become pregnant.

Healing remained influential in G.R.J and it led to the expansion of the church as many people were attracted, which is still vibrant to date. Before she journeyed to Zimunya, Mutare, Mai Chaza had another miracle healing in Salisbury. There was a dead woman who died because of heavy stomach bleeding. Account to MKN website the woman had severe abnormal uterine bleeding and the woman died after some days at her home.²⁵ Her husband rushed in the city to look for the Holy Host. He wanted Mai Chaza to put her hands on the dead body. This incident needed extra ordinary faith for resurrection to take place. When Mai Chaza saw the dead body lying in a pool of blood she touched her belly and she rose to life. The woman had a spirit but it was freed. This woman became a living testimony after risen from the dead by God. The prominence of Mai Chaza increased in an African setup.²⁶

Mai Chaza became a famous miracle-worker and it is said that the childless were touched and bear children. Mai Chaza was given many names and titles as 'Muponesi', Saviour. Gelfand notes that by her successful healing activities.²⁷ At this time in 1955, Mai Chaza moved from Seke and still the reason is unknown for the relocation, but some oral sources and archival sources confirmed that God once warned the members of G.R.J about a fire that would destroy their property because they were sinning too much in front of the Lord so God destroys by fire and Mai Chaza seeks refuge in Chief Mangwende's area in Mrehwa but the chief did not like it.

Mai Chaza departed and were directed to Manicaland. On their way to Umtali (Mutare) with her followers they passed through Buhera in Chitsunge area and when the people of the area heard about her presence, thousands of people possessed with evil spirits followed her ranging from the crippled to the blind. Many shouted, 'Save Us' and The Holy Host replied by saying your faith have saved you my children.²⁸ Others sang hymnal songs and they went

ontopof the mountain known as Chivhako where Mai Chaza once received supernatural powers in her initial stage as a Holy Host when God called her.All of a sudden,many people came, the adulterers, drinkers,those who were mentally disturbed , those witches with goblins,snakes, herbs and hynasfirst confessed to the one known as (Mabharani) or ‘ Gate keeper’ at the gathering gate and all the problems were written down in a book and would be read when these were being attended to .Songs were sung and Mai Chaza touched the heads of those who needed help as they were taught to believe for them to be healed.The song ‘Tenzitaungana ‘, Lord we are here was being sung for the holy spirit to come out.After the service in Chitsunge,the Holy Host and her followers proceeded with their journey to Umtali.

The Holy Host and her followers drove from Chitsunge to Zimunya near Mutare, Chief Zimunya welcomed them as he was a man who knew God. They were given a site in that land to do God’s work .This is a remarkable day and was done on 22 July 1956 when G.R.J was first established in Mutare and the first Head Quarters of G.R.J was established there.The Holy Host told the villagers about God’s good works which he performed since in Seke and on their way, she testifies that different kinds of epidemics were cured, the lame could walk and the blind could see and some of those who were healed were among the followers of Mai Chaza as they saw miracles of God in their lives. The people of Zimunya were shocked and frightened by the works of the Holy Host.Many were converted and the Holy spirit descends on the congregation and those who confessed and believed that God is a healer and a saviour of many souls were redeemed.Mud and grass houses were erected and all of a sudden many people flocked in and about 1145 houses were built within a while and this area was known as The Holy Settlement.People believed that in the Bible it is written by God that,Iwill sent you the Holy Spirit and it shall guide you so people believed that Matenga Mai Chaza was being referred to because she symbolises it through healing all sorts of troubles and diseases and no disease was impossible to her like Jesus Christ he rose a girl from the dead so did

Matenga ,she rose awoman from the dead and a boy. The blind could see so did Jesus when the blind man Bathemeous begged to see.Anderson says that:

Mai Chaza spiritual journey is a crossing over that took her to the other side of the power bridge. Beginning as a divorced woman ,she climbed religious and social hierarchies to attain a status of the preacher, healer and Messiah,an African reappearance of Christ. ³⁰

Through faith healing, Chaza possessed many titles.Through dying she became used with the resurrection power.She started healing because she had a special mission,as God’s Messenger, and was God’s source of power.Many countless miracles took place in Zimunya and a number of people flocked and were healed from different countries ranging from Indians to blacks from Botswana, Zambia just to mention a few.An Indian woman was crippled and she came to G.R.J and she was healed and could stand up and walk.Water was also used to heal some certain diseases.Water was put in large pots and she could pray like what Jesus did on the wedding at Cana.(John 2 vs. 6-11).The water could be sprinkled on the people’s faces and some carry and use it at home. In that same year in 1956 at G.R.J Mutare, she healed :

Crippled	56	Mentally disturbed	72
The barren	952	Kuuchika	96
Females with different diseases		460	New ones
Males	569		
The dump and the blind	89.		

3.5 G.R.JBULAWAYO (1956-58) AND THE DEATH OF MAI CHAZA

By this time of the year another branch was necessary in Bulawayo. Some Bulawayo residents who were members of G.R.J travelled to Mutare for church services and other events. These G.R.J members started prayer sessions in Bulawayo at Philemon's house who was also a member of the church. These prayers were initiated by a member who deeply loved God, TaxwellTayali. Interview with Mahachi shows that Tayali becomes the leader and others did not reject him as he was the one who initiated those sessions. In 1957 the group members initiated a prayer hall project and they contributed to that project. This was done between 1957-1958 and Mai Chaza was supposed to visit the new branch. Tayali was a hard worker and he contributed more inputs. In May 1958 the hall was finished and The Holy Host visited Bulawayo and the centre is still there in Bulawayo to date.

DEATH OF MAI CHAZA

Scarnecchia notes that for almost three years ministering in Mutare, Mai Chaza moved from Mutare to Zvimba along Chinhoyi road. She died in Zvimba after a short illness on 25 December 1960 after six years of ministering. MKN website shows that this year was a remarkable year, the Holy Host departed and about 17 countries in Africa got their independence. After Six years of ministering and under the control of the holy spirit. To them 25th is so much recognised, something important as they will be remembering their 'mother'. So it is treated with respect and sadness. She passed on this day which is regarded as Christmas by other churches as they believe that is the day when Jesus was born. The members of G.R.M do not celebrate Christmas as they do not believe that Jesus was born on 25 December and they say that the actual date is not known even in the Bible. An interview with Gora shows that to them Christmas is a fake. It was said that after 40 days from the day

she passed on, there was a promise that she will come back in a spiritual form. MKN states that:

I have no grave on this earth and no one will inherit me(handigarwinhaka)

Because this is Holy work, not wrought by flesh, my children in Guta Ra

Mwari.³²

Mai Chaza was buried in Zvimba communal lands in Zimbabwe at KazangarareGuta. She was seen standing on top of the hill while people were preparing to bury her and that's a fulfilment that she said she had no grave on earth.³³

3.6 CONCLUSION

This whole chapter discussed the way by which Mai Chaza was called by God from her early life to the time she became a faith healer. It also unravels the growth and expansion of G.R.M through faith healing and exorcism. Different methods of healing were discussed like laying hands on the sick or touching the bellies of the barren and the chapter highlighted certain diseases which were cured and many problems which people came with and this is still happening in the church today through the use of messengers. In the chapter in-depth interviews were contacted more and archival sources.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 GUTA RA MWARI AFTER THE DEATH OF MAI CHAZA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows the developments which occurred after Mai Chaza departed on earth. It looks from the choosing of the Second Host ,the formation of Guta Ra Mwari and healing practicesand the change from Guta Ra Mwari toMuzikaNkulunkulu.Their church beliefs and doctrines and the divisions and splits as a result of different ideologies.

4.2 INCARNATION OF THE SECOND HOLY HOST

After the first Holy Host of God departed on earth in 1960, the name changed from Guta Ra Jehovah to Guta Ra Mwari as God departs on the congregation because of certain disobedience by church members. Guta Ra Jehovah is still existing as some G.R.J members rejected to follow others to Guta Ra Mwari because of reasons such as power hungry and they did not really believe that God revealed himself as a spirit through someone's body. One group is based in Zvimba where Mai Chaza was laid to rest. The other is in Dangare and the last one has a centre in Mhondoro.¹Others are small groups but are still under G.R.J.In February 1961 in Bulawayo, Taxwell Tayali became the Second Holy Host as he was dedicated to the works of God.He was born in 1920 in Zambia which was known as Northern Rhodesia and for over four decades he ministered faithfully and he changed the lives of many people.God used him as the holier among others and when he was incarnated a voice was heard saying :

I have come, I am God of all nations.I have made you the holy temple
where I will dwell at Guta Ra Mwari,hi time is up that I should do
my work.²

The spirit of God entered into the human spirit and body. From this day God continued to do great things and earthly deeds were reduced, it then meant that what was being done on the body was also done to God. It meant that where ever he goes God was with him, the holy spirit descends to the human to be used by him. The Holy Host act as a messenger for instance during the time of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descends saying, ' this is my beloved son.

As the first Holy Host had promised that after 40 days the Host will return in another form but many people did not take it seriously. It was on the 31st of January 1961 The incident took place in Chinhoyi, (Sinoia) where the members were to meet.³The event had been foretold when the Holy Host was still in Bulawayo before the journey to Chinhoyi. As he appeared in a human form people rejected him .God appeared in him in spiritual form and was the one talking. The congregation failed to recognise him and he was attacked and beaten by some members .The incident was like that when Jesus was attacked and crucified. Two man stand and he was put between them at the centre. They say history will never repeat itself but at that time it did.⁵ The same manner which happened to Jesus is the one to the Second Host .The members rejected God's return as he had promised. They failed to recognise that it was God, they were expecting that Mai Chaza would return in her pure form wearing a uniform as they saw when she died, but it was different as God used another vessel. Others believed that the Spirit will manifest on those leaders and the elderly who were seen as deeply religious. But God chose the most humble. People did not understand what was really happening, they just attacked the man of God and they had forgotten that when Mai Chaza died and there was a promise that she will return on the 40th day from the day she departed.

4.3 REJECTION OF GOD AT GUTA RA JEHOVAH

As the Holy was embarrassed, disrespected and was regarded as worthless, they did not recognise him as the members strongly opposed the chosen Host. Tayali and family came back to Bulawayo to the G.R.J branch where dismissal, mortification and swearing by firmly contradicting G.R.J individuals proceeded.⁶ The Holy Host family was offended and bothered by numerous individuals and their life became troublesome. Individuals went to the degree even the off springs of the Host. One such stunning occasion happened on a Thursday when the mother of the Host wife from church, there were some noise and when she arrived the Host's daughter was being beaten by an aggressor and if the mother deferred further the girl could have been executed.

From Bulawayo, Tayali and family went to Mutare in chief Zimunya's area which was the former Head Quarters of Guta Ra Jehovah in the time of Mai Chaza as the first Holy Host of God. The unexpected happened, the members of G.R.J at that congregation did not allow the Host to enter the gate.⁷ The gate men were told not to allow him to enter, they were all angry and he was harassed. Many members thought that the second Host would come like Mai Chaza used to be. They failed to accept the incarnation of the second Holy Host. They have put much trust in Mai Chaza so they did not want Tayali to become their Host. After being harassed in Mutare, he departed and went through Mhondoro where there was the other Guta Ra Jehovah centre and God revealed himself saying the time for humiliation was over. Those who had done that were isolated by God and left in darkness as a way of punishment. The spirit said:

You have rejected the light, you will remain hating each other, you will fight amongst yourselves and report each other to the police, Since you rejoice over your great numbers of old member, you are like a person who relies on an old harvest but has no hoe. I am leaving with the hoe (Holy spirit). I will till another

field...⁸

This shows that God uses anyone besides the fact that you are hated by other people. This is also another reason why the church has many factions to day because of people who fail to accept the new leadership and who reject the messages of God. Some are still in Guta Ra Jehovah and some went to Guta Ra Mwari and a number of court cases are reported especially in 2014 in Bulawayo. This also reveals that after Mai Chaza died problems emanated and some people failed to accept it as the second Host became a man.

4.4 FROM GUTA RA JEHOVAH TO GUTA RA MWARI

A new congregation of G.R.M was formed on 22 July 1961 and God began his work but a few were chosen. Account to MKN website, only twelve families were present at the opening of the new branch in Bulawayo and this events had been prophesied when the congregation was in Chinhoyi. It is recorded that over 70 000 G.R.J members only twelve members were chosen and the main agenda for these ones was to teach others.⁹ Many others remained in Guta Ra Jehovah as they believed the powers which Mai Chaza possessed. The Bible teaches that many are called but a few are chosen. Healing power was present in G.R.M. The Headquarters was established in Bulawayo and other branches in Masvingo, Harare-Norton, Kwekwe, Gweru. Tayali founded the 'City of God' in 1974 which is an intensely spiritual religion in which illness and troubles are cured.¹⁰

Mai Chaza's death brought some changes. The change to Guta Ramwari meant that even some of Guta Ra Jehovah doctrines changed. In G.R.M, people were taught for them to understand better about who was God. In G.R.J numerous individuals just attended services for healing and deliverance not knowing precisely who God was. In G.R.J members were given some knowledge to separate the difference between God the spirit and the Holy Host. G.R.J did not provide enough information to the congregation. Through Mai Chaza,

God revealed himself and used her to direct other people but they did not actually differentiate God the spirit and The Host.¹¹ Even after the death of Mai Chaza, in terms of healing, members first surrender their problems to God that is confession of sins before getting healed in the Holy of Holies. God assumed responsibility of healing even when he incarnated Tayali, its God who does the miracles of raising the dead and healing the sick like Lazarus's story, Jesus raised him from the dead as a tool of God, a (hoe). Tayali taught individuals not to praise him but they should give praise to God as their maker as he was sent to do the works of God to please him. God's teachings are conveyed through someone in a human structure for better understanding. The Holy spirit helps through the path way as he is the life. Where there is God, the Holy spirit is likewise there. Even on the creation of the universe, God was with the Holy spirit.

4.5 HEALING IN GUTA RA MWARI

God's work continued through the Holy Host Tayali, People flocked in large numbers as the healing power worked. It was now in Bulawayo where the centre was established. Guta Ra Mwari where illness and troubles are cured..it was believed that even chronic diseases were healed like Cancers, HIV/AIDS and exorcism was practised where people were freed from evil spirits. Many people from Botswana, South Africa and Zambia came and that is how it spread to other countries like Botswana where Tayali died. It further spread to overseas in the UK and USA where other Messengers are ministering there. Some people came to test the power of the messenger as some people of other churches don't believe the way G.R.M does it works. Some people say that G.R.M is flexible with the use of medicine and some believe that they don't use the bible hence they have their own God. Interview with Mr Mashangu shows that the outsiders do not believe the healing powers of G.R.M church.¹² People

thought that these people uses goblins to become rich and it is said that there is a time when the first borns of the G.R.M member would die mysteriously but interviews with church members denounced that as they say that God help them to become rich as they rely on the fact that if you tell God your problems he will help you out.¹³They don't use the Bible because they believe that what is written in the bible is past and Jesus time is over placed so they believe in the Holy Host of God as the one who replaced Jesus as they say that the way Jesus did his miracles is similar to what Mai Chaza did and the Second Holy Host so they believe in their holy messengers.Healing in G.R.M is done on Sundays ,morning and afternoon services when the messenger is there who could do that work.¹⁴Tayali went to Botswana for ministering and after some days he departed in 2003 on 6 December.

CHURCH DOCTRINES AND BELIEFS

CHRISTMAS BELIEF

G.R.M do not celebrate Christmas as they denounce the fact that Jesus was not born on 25 December , they say that the actual date and month is not known even the Bible does not offer that .They believed that December was made the month of Jesus birth to suit other people's interests. On 25 December, Mai Chaza departed in 1960, this day is greatly remembered and respected so they observe it as she rested on that day.They believe that Christmas is fake and does not exist.Neither do they buy expensive clothes nor delicious food or drinks on Christmas.They will be having some sad moments .The other reason is that they believe that Christmas was started by non-believers in Ancient Rome at a festival which took place from 17 to 24 December on the eve of Christmas.¹⁵ G.R.M members on the website shows that “ Western churches held their feasts at the same time in the same way on the 25th of December .So people suddenly framed that Jesus was born on that day of which they used that day to celebrate the birth of the sons of Queens .¹⁶So on 25 December members of

G.R.M use that special time to have some time with God confessing their sins which they committed from year beginning so they transgress and pray for forgives to be clean and enter into another year.

They take Christmas issue as a misconception and a myth which does not exist.They condemned those people who initialise Christmas day and now it cannot be reversed. Other researchers said that G.R.M denounced Christmas as they do not believe much in the Bible and they believe much in the Holy Host. They don't believe in Jesus Christ as their personal saviourbut they just honour the name as a tool used by God.

4.6 DIVISIONS AND SPLITS IN GUTA RA MWARI CHURCH AFTER THE DEATH OF TAXWELL TAYALI

After God departed from G.R.M when Tayali died in 2003, the church began to face some challenges and these challenges were emanating from the issue of power .Two factions were formed in the early years of the Host's death. The first faction was named G.R.M 7 and this meant that the service of that faction were held at 7 am for one hour and the second was G.R.M 10 meaning at 10am that's when they would gather for a service.¹⁷ These factions were a spark to the other break aways that follow and this clearly shows that members of G.R.M church mainly believed in their chosen Host of the time and they does not really understand their God, Many misunderstandings continued among the congregation and this had been told by the Spirit of God that some will reject me. Fights within the church developed and this affected other branches as some followed the leaders they wanted. The problem started in Bulawayo but it even affected Gweru branch whereby some families could move from one faction to another. Death of Tayali was God's way of testing faith and humbleness of believers.The divisions shows that members believed more in the human form of the chosen Holy Host rather than God himself.

Three other factions followed in Guta Ra Mwari before the formation of MuziKaNkulunkulu. There developed Guta Ra MwariZvimiso, Guta Ra Mwari Religion and the new Guta Ra Mwari .Guta Ra Mwari religion is the one which was founded by Mai Chaza as G.R.J and Tayali took over until his death. Joseph Bongo Malinga who led another faction opened a new centre in Tshabalala area in Bulawayo and many families followed. Malinga barred other groups to enter and disturb the services and functions at that place. A number of court cases were recorded and this had been foretold before. Sunday Mail posted one of the cases :

Respondents and/or their agents or assignees to and are hereby permanently

Barred from unlawfully impeding or interfering in any manner or fashion

With the applicants peaceful and undisturbed church services at Tshabalala,”

Read the court order.¹⁸

This intensified the hostility amongst former members and faction leaders .The hostility widened as a result of these court cases. G.R.M after the death of Mai Chaza became much more different because of misunderstandings and power hungry which originated from the rejection of the Second holy host , people failed to accept that Mai Chaza died and as a prominent faith healer who rose in a patriarchal society and gender sensitive society and Mai Chaza’s healing is undoubted by some insiders and even outsiders who were healed. Hence there was a shift of ideologies from Mai Chaza’s era to the time these splits started.

Guta Ra Mwari Religion, the original which was led by Taxwell Tayali came under Joseph BakuruTayali, Joel Tawedzera, Stephen Sibanda, Francis Mwene, Calvin Chauke and Sam Mkithika. G.R.M Zvimiso was based in Old Lobengula and members of different factions insulted each other even attending services.¹⁹ These court cases worsened the hostility and the Spirit of God departed as these people were disobedient. Legal interventions worsened the rivalry amongst the three factions as the court was in favour of G.R.M Religion and against Zvimiso. J. Mabhena a leader for another faction was once arrested for causing violence in

Old Lobengula in relation to the peace order but was found guiltless.²⁰This make G.R.M Religion angry .It shows that G.R.M drastically changed after the death of TaxwellTayali and his wife in 2003, the church is in havoc, chaos and much confusion,disorders and fights.

These divisions were being done in the name of God and God became angry about that and the disappointments which occurred. God declared that the leaders of the breakaway factions were to be punished and there was no forgiveness .Members of the church said that God wanted to test the level of their faith when the Second Host died ,the spirit said that God will not return or if he is to return he manifested in a child and many people rejected the message.People tend to follow the flesh not the spirit and this led to those splits and misunderstandings. All the events of humiliation of the Host which occurred make God angry and he declared that he will sent some fire because the fighting and separation of members disappointed God.

4.7FROM GUTA RA MWARI TO MUZI KA NKULU NKULU

Changes continued in G.R.M after the death of Tayali, God had declared that the name of the change should change to MuziKaNkulunkulu (MKN).Million Nyathi was tasked to deliver that message on a meeting with other members of Guta Ra Mwari Religion .Before Tayali's death on 6 December 2003, the declaration was directed to Nyathi on 6 October 2003 on a meeting he held with other G.R.M members .God reviewed him an aggregate of three times in his report that he was not to say he was not going to G.R.M but to MKN.²⁰During the messages delivery to the congregation at a later time with a couple of interpreters who were interpreting the commandment to distinctive vernaculars a blunder was made by the interpreters who translated the new name of the congregation to their particular dialects rather than expressing it as it seemed to be. It is said that G.R.M had over 200 000 people but a few were chosen , many rejected the message and they did not understand the reasons behind the

change and they remained in G.R.M factions.MKN spread from Bulawayo where the Head Quarters is found.

The branches in Bulawayo are found in Pumula, Nkulumane and Nketa areas. The H.Q is in Filabusi Bulawayo .Other branches had been established in Harare, Kwekwe, Norton and Gweru in 2012 and at the moment few families have moved to MKN. Some members of G.R.M rejected the message and they did not turn up. The formation of MKN affected the rivalry amongst the factions which already existed. God continues his works at MKN, the sick are healed and the troubles are cured. The name City of God or Guta Ra Jehovah was a combination of Shona and English soNkulunkulu replaced God.

4.8 CONCLUSION

It highlighted the changes which occurred after the death of Mai Chaza. This also considers field research done with the G.,R.M members. The major findings include: causes of divisions after the death of Mai Chaza, opposition to TaxwellTayali as the second host and the change from G.R.J and healing practices in G.R.M .

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OVERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to clearly unravel and find out how women led churches came to existence and Guta Ra Mwari in particular which rose during colonialism. The study put in place the origin and flourishing of Mai Chaza's church which was formed in a colonial set up on Southern Rhodesia where equality in the church was rare. The study credited Chaza as a prominent woman who founded an Independent church in that harsh time as she found a platform for the rise. The study also portrayed the influence of Guta Ra Mwari church on the rise of other women churches and female leadership in the church as she provided fertile grounds for the formation of women movements with the church. Researches were carried out using oral sources that is interviews with the members and the outsiders ,observation method and secondary sources like newspapers and textbooks.

Mai Chaza's emergence can be traced back from the break away from Methodist when African Initiated churches rose as a response to colonial injustices which was rampant in main line churches as they also forbids healing which Mai Chaza is worthy credit as she became a miracle worker of chronic diseases, evil spirits ,the lame could walk and the barren conceived. The healing process was best described through personal interviews backed up by secondary sources. The study also looked at the role and place of women in AICs and it portrayed that in many of AICs like JohaneMarange and Masowe women do not hold higher positions like that of pastors or preachers , they are taught to be humble and submissive at home and at church .This kind of women subordination was worsened during colonialism ,but Mai Chaza despite the tough time she rose to prominence. Women's role in the church remains that of singing though some act as prophetess and healers in Masowe and as messengers in Guta Ra Mwari. The study revealed that in the post colonial era some women rose and are leading ministries and in some churches especially Pentecostal, women preaches

and hold positions as deacons .This study shows indicated that Mai Chaza opened a way for other women as she is the first woman to start an Independent church in Zimbabwe.

Chapter three unpacks Mai Chaza's faith healing which emanated from her calling .She dealt with barren women as infertility in an African setup was not tolerated much hence she broke that cultural chain .She is credited for that as the healing is still practiced .Chapter four traced the church History from Guta Ra Jehovah to Guta Ra Mwari and to MuziKaNkulunkulu and tried to unravel the major causes of the splits and divisions after the death of Mai Chaza in 1960 to the present. The research also tried to look at church beliefs and doctrines which many scholars tend to leave out.

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